

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1936

As Reported by House Committee On:
Children, Youth & Families

Title: An act relating to the membership and subcommittees of the oversight board for children, youth, and families.

Brief Description: Concerning the membership and subcommittees of the oversight board for children, youth, and families.

Sponsors: Representatives Dent, Eslick, Sutherland, Wicks, Robertson and Chase.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children, Youth & Families: 1/20/22, 1/26/22 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Adjusts membership of the Oversight Board for Children, Youth, and Families (Oversight Board).
- Requires the Oversight Board to convene a subcommittee to focus on hearing from individuals with lived experiences in foster care and a subcommittee to focus on hearing from individuals with current or recent experience in the juvenile justice system.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Harris-Talley, Vice Chair; Rule, Vice Chair; Dent, Ranking Minority Member; Chase, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Callan, Eslick, Goodman, Klippert, Ortiz-Self, Wicks and Young.

Staff: Lena Langer (786-7192).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:

Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) was created in 2017. In 2018 the DCYF assumed responsibility over child welfare and early learning functions previously held by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Department of Early Learning. On July 1, 2019, the DCYF assumed responsibility over juvenile justice programs currently administered by the DSHS.

Oversight Board.

The Oversight Board for Children, Youth, and Families (Oversight Board) was created in 2017, along with the creation of the DCYF. The Oversight Board held its first meetings in 2018. The Oversight Board is authorized for the purpose of monitoring and ensuring that the DCYF achieves certain outcomes and complies with policies and rules.

The Oversight Board has powers to:

- receive reports of the Office of the Family and Children's Ombuds (OFCO);
- obtain access to relevant records in the possession of the OFCO;
- select its officers and adoption of rules for orderly procedure;
- request investigations by the OFCO of administrative acts;
- request and receive information, outcome data, documents, materials, and records from the DCYF relating to children and family welfare, juvenile rehabilitation, juvenile justice, and early learning;
- determine whether the DCYF is achieving the performance measures;
- review whether the DCYF licensors appropriately and consistently applied agency rules in inspection reports; and
- conduct annual reviews of a sample of the DCYF contracts for services from a variety of program and service areas to ensure that those contracts are performance-based.

The Oversight Board consists of 21 members, outlined as the following:

- two Senators and two members of the House of Representatives from the Legislature, with one member from each major caucus;
- one nonvoting representative from the Office of the Governor;
- one subject matter expert in early learning;
- one subject matter expert in child welfare;
- one subject matter expert in juvenile rehabilitation and justice;
- one subject matter expert in eliminating disparities in child outcomes by family income, race, and ethnicity;
- one tribal representative from west of the crest of the Cascade mountains;
- one tribal representative from east of the crest of the Cascade mountains;
- one current or former foster parent representative;
- one representative of an organization that advocates for the best interest of the child;
- one parent stakeholder group representative;
- one law enforcement representative;

- one child welfare caseworker representative;
- one early childhood learning program implementation practitioner;
- one current or former foster youth under age 25;
- one individual under age 25 with current or previous experience with the juvenile justice system;
- one physician with experience working with children or youth; and
- one judicial representative presiding over child welfare court proceedings or other children's matters.

Nonlegislative members of the Oversight Board are nominated by the Governor, subject to approval of the appointed legislators and serve four-year terms. When nominating and approving members of the Oversight Board, the Governor and appointed legislators must ensure that at least five of the Oversight Board members reside east of the Cascade Mountain range. The Oversight Board must convene at least two stakeholder meetings per year regarding contracting with the DCYF. The Oversight Board must also review surveys of providers, customers, parent groups, and external services to assess whether the DCYF is effectively delivering services.

The Oversight Board members must be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred while conducting business of the Oversight Board when authorized by the Oversight Board and within resources allocated for that purpose. Legislative members of the Oversight Board must be reimbursed for travel expenses according to current law.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The membership of the Oversight Board is adjusted in the following manner:

- one representative of an organization that advocates for the best interest of the child is changed to a current or recent representative of such an organization;
- the 25-year-old age limit on the current or former foster youth is removed and the member is changed to a current or recent foster youth;
- the 25-year-old age limit on the individual with current or previous experience with the juvenile justice system is removed, and the member is changed to an individual with current or recent experience in the juvenile justice system; and
- one subject matter expert on education for youth who are placed in an institution as defined in statute or dependent is added.

The Oversight Board must convene two subcommittees:

- a subcommittee to focus on hearing from individuals with lived experiences in foster care, focusing primarily on children and youth; and
- a subcommittee in partnership with the youth and young adult committees of the Washington State Partnership Council on Juvenile Justice to focus on hearing from individuals with current or recent experience in the juvenile justice system.

Each subcommittee must convene at least once per year and provide feedback to the Oversight Board at the Oversight Board's stakeholder meetings.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The membership of the Oversight Board is adjusted in the following manner:

- one current or former representative of an organization that advocates for the best interest of the child is changed to a current or recent representative of such an organization;
- the 25-year-old age limit on the current or former foster youth is removed and the member is changed to a current or recent foster youth;
- the 25-year-old age limit on the individual with current or previous experience with the juvenile justice system is removed, and the member is changed to an individual with current or recent experience in the juvenile justice system; and
- one subject matter expert on education for youth who are placed in an institution as defined in statute or dependent is added.

The Oversight Board must convene two subcommittees:

- a subcommittee to focus on hearing from individuals with lived experiences in foster care, focusing primarily on children and youth, instead of a foster youth subcommittee to gather testimony from individuals with lived experiences in the child welfare system; and
- a subcommittee in partnership with the youth and young adult committees of the Washington State Partnership Council on Juvenile Justice to focus on hearing from individuals with current or recent experience in the juvenile justice system, instead of a juvenile justice subcommittee to focus on hearing from current and former youth with lived experience in the juvenile justice system.

Language prescribing membership of each subcommittee is removed.

Each subcommittee must convene at least once, instead of twice, per year and provide feedback to the Oversight Board at the Oversight Board's stakeholder meetings.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on January 26, 2022.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) None.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.