

Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Carrier – House: Rep. Garrard
Carrier – Senate: Sen. Carter

Revenue: No revenue impact

Fiscal: Fiscal statement issued

Action: Do Pass the B-Engrossed Measure

Vote: 20 – 0 – 2

House – Yeas: D. Edwards, Galizio, Garrard, Hanna, Jenson, Morgan, Nathanson, Nolan, Shields
– Nays:
– Exc:

Senate – Yeas: Bates, Brown, Courtney, Devlin, Johnson, Morse, Nelson, Schrader, Verger, Westlund, Whitsett
– Nays:
– Exc: Gordly, Winters

Prepared By: Sheila Baker, Legislative Fiscal Office

Meeting Date: 6/22/07

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Modifies the definition of “foster home” to allow a person related by blood or marriage to maintain a foster home for a child related by blood or marriage and as a result be reimbursed to the same extent that unrelated foster parents are currently being reimbursed. Requires the Department of Human Services to adopt payment standards for foster care, and allows the Department to take into account financial circumstances of relative foster parents when establishing standards.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Benefits of relative care for children
- Fiscal impact of SB 282-A, income “means test” at 150% of federal poverty level and July 2008 start date
- Ability of the Department to modify a means test in administrative rule to pay relative caregiver reimbursement within funds available

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: Family foster care reimbursement rates are currently: (1) \$387 per month for a child under age six; (2) \$402 per month for a child age six to thirteen; (3) \$497 per month for a child over age thirteen. Additional Special Rates foster care reimbursement is provided for children with unique physical or mental health care requirements. About 70% of all children in foster care are placed with non-relatives, who receive monthly reimbursements. About 30% of all children in foster care are placed with relatives, but the Department provides reimbursements to only about 75% of the children in relative foster care, based on the child’s eligibility for federal Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance funding. Under current practice, for the 2007-09 biennium, the Department of Human Services estimates the relative caregivers of about 471 children a month would not receive reimbursement. This measure would require reimbursement to all relative foster caregivers regardless of the child’s eligibility for federal funding. However, the Department’s budget includes funding beginning in July 2008 for an average 264 children a month, based on an income means test for relative caregivers at 150% of the federal poverty level.