

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

Action: Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed

Vote: 5 - 0 - 0

Yeas: Beyer, Kruse, Prozanski, Walker, Burdick

Nays: 0

Exc.: 0

Prepared By: Bill Taylor, Counsel

Meeting Dates: 2/20, 3/15

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Prohibits the Department of Human Services from filing a petition to terminate parental rights to his or her child only if a court has previously approved the permanency plan for the child. Clarifies that the measure applies to other sections of the dependency code when termination of parental rights are at risk.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Adoption resources
- Best interest of the child

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Clarifies that the measure applies to other sections of the dependency code when termination of parental rights are at risk.

BACKGROUND: One of the grounds for termination of parental rights is that the child has been in substitute care for 15 of the last 22 months. The Department of Human Services (DHS) must develop a permanency plan for every child under the jurisdiction of the court on a dependency matter. This plan may involve steps to re-unify the child with his or her family, or it may set steps to terminate parental rights and move toward adoption. The court reviews these plans every six months. In between hearings, the department may decide that re-unification is not possible and start the process for parental termination and adoption. This can, and does, result in confusion for parents and children with a court-approved plan for reunification and DHS moving toward adoption.