

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action:	Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed
Vote:	9 - 0 - 0
Yeas:	Boone, Cowan, Dembrow, Freeman, Huffman, Maurer, Olson, VanOrman, Tomei
Nays:	0
Exc.:	0
Prepared By:	Keely West, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	4/1, 4/13

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Requires the court to include in its written findings whether there were relatives or persons with a caregiver relationship available for placement, and reason placement with relatives or caregivers did not occur when a court determines that a child or ward be removed from a home or continued in care.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Benefits of relative care for children in foster care

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Requires that a court make written findings about the court's reasoning when, contrary to the Department of Human Services placement decision, the court determines that placement of a child or ward with an available relative is not in the best interest of the child.

BACKGROUND: When children are removed from the care of parents, the primary policy directive of the Department of Human Services (DHS) is family reconciliation. If it is determined that reconciliation is not an option, the preferred placement for children is with other family members or established caregivers. Enacting HB 2897 would ensure that if children were placed with other than available family members or established caregivers, the court would make a written finding regarding why the placement did not occur.

The amendment to the bill alters the statute amended by the bill from ORS 419B.185 ("Evidentiary hearing") to 419B.192 ("Placement of child or ward; preference given to relatives and certain other persons.") This change decreases the frequency with which judges would be required to issue written findings to occasions when their findings contradict DHS placement decisions.