

Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Carrier – House: Rep. Thatcher
Carrier – Senate: Sen. Bates

Revenue: No revenue impact

Fiscal: Fiscal statement issued

Action: Do Pass the A-Engrossed Measure

Vote: 24 – 0 – 1

House

Yeas: Beyer, Buckley, Cowan, Freeman, Garrard, Komp, Kotek, McLane, Nathanson, Richardson,
G. Smith, Thatcher, Whisnant

Nays:

Exc: Nolan

Senate

Yeas: Bates, Devlin, Edwards, Girod, Johnson, Monroe, Nelson, Thomsen, Verger, Whitsett, Winters

Nays:

Exc:

Prepared By: Sheila Baker, Legislative Fiscal Office

Meeting Date: June 8, 2011

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) and county partners to implement Strengthening, Preserving and Reunifying Families programs by October 1, 2012. Allows DHS, Oregon Health Authority or Housing and Community Services Department to enter into contracts and make payments to eligible programs. Describes services programs may provide; requires services provided by programs be culturally competent and include evidence-informed or evidence-based practices. Requires DHS to establish by rule client-focused functional outcome measures for programs and allows measures to be used as a basis for funding and contracting. Requires programs to develop and implement training and continuing education curricula. Allows programs to seek private and public funding. Requires DHS to report annually to the Governor and the Legislative Assembly on progress. Creates the Strengthening, Preserving and Reunifying Families Program Fund; prescribes uses; continuously appropriates moneys. Requires DHS to seek approval or renewal of federal waivers needed to access federal savings accrued as a result of cost reductions in foster and substitute care for children in DHS' custody. Requires DHS and juvenile courts to include in their consideration of reasonable efforts whether services offered by the programs are most likely to prevent or eliminate the removal of a child from the child's home or most likely to make it possible for the child to safely return home. Requires DHS to adopt rules. Declare emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Jackson County and Oregon Intercept program models
- Focus on performance-based contracts, and improved client and family outcomes, rather than program outputs
- Importance of bill for preservation of families, reduction in foster care rolls
- Limitations of fiscal process in identifying offsetting cost savings or cost avoidance, other long-term social benefits
- Need for changed approach for county courts, judges, agencies, and other community partners
- Revised DHS implementation plan with slower roll-out due to budget constraints

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: ORS 418.015 provides that the Department of Human Services may, in its discretion, accept custody of children and may provide care, support and protective services for children who are dependent or neglected, who have mental or physical disabilities or who for other reasons are in need of public service. Further, the department shall accept any child placed in its custody by a court under, but not limited to ORS chapter 419B or 419C, and shall provide such services for the child as the department finds to be necessary. Senate Bill 964-A requires DHS and county partners to implement programs to provide family preservation and reunification services for children in the custody of DHS, with a goal to foster collaboration across programs and resources to help children remain safely with their families and thereby reduce the number of Oregon children in foster care.