

PRELIMINARY STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**CARRIER:**

Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood

REVENUE: No revenue impact**FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued****SUBSEQUENT REFERRAL TO: Ways and Means****Action:****Vote:****Yeas:****Nays:****Exc.:****Prepared By:** Cheyenne Ross, Administrator**Meeting Dates:** 5/21

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Directs Attorney General to file suit in circuit court on behalf of employees of Department of Human Services (DHS) in certain internally-substantiated cases. Creates Task Force on Safety for Child Welfare Employees staffed by DHS. Outlines membership, objectives, and process. Requires report to legislature by September 15, 2016. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:**EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:**

BACKGROUND: The number and severity of threats made against front-line employees of the Department of Human Services (DHS) has increased in recent years, particularly for child welfare workers. There are ways that DHS can and does support employees threatened by clients; however, there are cases where further legal action is necessary. Currently, a DHS worker experiencing threats in their private life as a result of their work, is personally responsible for retaining legal counsel, and paying fees and court costs relating to taking further action.

House Bill 3391-A allows the Department of Justice to provide legal assistance to DHS employees when their personal safety is threatened as a result of their work. The measure also creates a task force to give further consideration to worker safety issues.

*House Committee: 9 – 0 – 0**House Floor: 45 – 3 – 8*