

SB 222

Relating to appearance by attorney in juvenile court proceedings

The Capital Construction Subcommittee recommends approval of a \$175,707 General Fund appropriation for the Office of the Governor and the establishment of one limited duration position to staff a Task Force on Legal Representation in Childhood Dependency. The measure has an emergency clause and is effective on passage.

The key provision of this measure is an extension of a sunset from June 30, 2015 to June 30, 2018. The extension will allow Department of Human Services child welfare case workers to continue to appear in juvenile court dependency proceedings without counsel in post-jurisdictional, uncontested hearings.

However, if this bill does not become law, the authority to appear without counsel will sunset on June 30, 2015. The state would then have to appear by attorney in all juvenile court dependency hearings at a significant cost to the state.

In order to find a long-term, the measure establishes an 18-member Task Force on Legal Representation in Childhood Dependency. The task force is required to submit a report to the legislature by July 15, 2016. The task force sunsets on December 31, 2017.

The Capital Construction Subcommittee recommends SB 222 be amended by the -A7 amendment and be reported out do pass, as amended.