

STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Ways and Means

**Fiscal:** Has minimal fiscal impact

**Revenue:** No Revenue Impact

**Action Date:** 06/19/15

**Action:** Do Pass With Amendments To The A-Eng Bill. (Printed B-Eng.)

**Meeting Dates:** 06/19

**Vote:**

**Senate**

Yeas: 7 - Burdick, Devlin, Johnson, Monroe, Roblan, Shields, Steiner Hayward

Nays: 4 - Girod, Hansell, Thomsen, Whitsett

Exc: 1 - Winters

**House**

Yeas: 9 - Buckley, Gomberg, Komp, McLane, Nathanson, Rayfield, Read, Smith, Williamson

Nays: 3 - Huffman, Whisnant, Whitsett

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**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 cases of threat to personal safety. 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:**

- Proposed amendment
- Fiscal impact

**EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:**

Removes language establishing the Task Force on Safety for Child Welfare Employees. The amendment does not change the minimal fiscal impact.

**BACKGROUND:**

The number and severity of threats made against front-line employees of the Department of Human Services (DHS) has reportedly increased in recent years, particularly for child welfare workers. There are ways that DHS can and does support threatened employees; however, there are situations that call for further legal action. To proceed with further legal action, a DHS case worker is currently personally responsible for retaining legal counsel if they wish, and for paying associated costs.

House Bill 3391 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.