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Measure Description:

Requires Oregon Volunteers Commission for Voluntary Action and Service to maintain volunteer staff of court appointed special advocates sufficient to meet statutory requirement to appoint court appointed special advocate in every juvenile dependency proceeding.

Government Unit(s) Affected:

Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Justice, Housing and Community Services Department, Judicial Department

Analysis:

The measure requires the Oregon Volunteers Commission for Voluntary Action and Service to maintain a volunteer staff of court appointed special advocates (CASA). The number of CASA staff must be sufficient so that courts shall appoint a CASA for every case that meets statutory requirements, and that the program meets the National CASA Association standards for supervision and caseload. The measure provides a blank General Fund appropriation for the Volunteers Commission for the 2017-19 biennium. The Legislative Fiscal Office notes that the Housing and Community Services Department provides funding to Oregon Volunteers, which serves as the administrator of grant funding for local CASA area programs; the 2017-19 agency budget includes \$2,373,672 General Fund special payments designated for these local CASA programs.

The fiscal impact is indeterminate. According to Oregon CASA Network data for 2015-16, there were 11,238 children that spent at least one day in foster care in Oregon. Of those, 5,034 children were served by a CASA, with each CASA serving three children on average. Based on that current ratio of 3:1, and the estimate of 6,200 children needing a CASA, the need for additional CASA's is approximately 2,068 volunteers across the state. In order to meet the national standards for CASA supervision, that number of volunteers would require another additional 69 supervisors.

This fiscal impact statement is for the purpose of transmitting the measure from the House Judiciary Committee to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. A more complete fiscal analysis of the measures impact will be completed as the bill is considered in the Joint Committee on Ways and Means.

Further Analysis Required