

SB 942 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Human Services

Action Date: 04/10/17

Action: Do pass with amendments and requesting referral to Ways and Means. (Printed A-Engrossed.)

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Dembrow, Gelser, Knopp, Monnes Anderson, Olsen

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Matt Doumit, LPRO Analyst

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Department of Human Services (DHS) to make specified findings in child abuse investigation. Requires investigations be conducted in accordance with statute and result in findings until specified criteria are met. Requires DHS conduct child exit interview upon removal from substitute care. Operative January 1, 2018. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Amendment
- Current procedures and status of DHS child protective services
- Effect of current funding, training, and child abuse assessments on quality of programs and services
- Role of legislative oversight
- Findings of audits and federal assessments
- Prioritization of DHS resources to programs
- Role of outside organizations in child abuse prevention/response programs

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces measure.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon law requires the Department of Human Services (DHS), or a law enforcement agency, to conduct child abuse investigations as soon as it receives a report. If a law enforcement agency finds there is reasonable cause to believe abuse has occurred, the agency is required to notify DHS. DHS is not required to make a particular finding at the conclusion of a child abuse investigation. While DHS does have requirements for assessing substitute care placements, it is not currently required to conduct an exit interview with a child being removed from substitute care for the child's perspective on the placement.

Senate Bill 942-A requires DHS to conduct child abuse investigations as outlined in statutes relating to the Reporting of Child Abuse, and to make findings of "founded," "unfounded," or "cannot be determined" in those investigations until specified criteria are met. Such criteria include specified statewide metrics and program goals. The measure also requires DHS to conduct exit interviews with children over age five that are removed from substitute care within 14 days of removal. Such interviews must include specified information regarding the child's perception of the safety and quality of life at the placement, as well as improvements that could be made.