

HB 3191 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Human Services and Housing

Action Date: 04/08/19

Action: Do pass with amendments and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference.
(Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 6-2-1-0

Yeas: 6 - Meek, Mitchell, Sanchez, Schouten, Williams, Zika

Nays: 2 - Helt, Noble

Exc: 1 - Keny-Guyer

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 3/20, 4/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Department of Human Services (DHS) to improve child welfare employee training and track the efficacy of the training. Requires additional training to include organized job shadowing, and information on mental health issues. Requires that training must be complete in 12 months or less after date of hire. Requires DHS to incentivize continuing education, including formal education, by providing tuition reimbursement for those who qualify. Stipulates that for those caseworkers whose caseload exceeds the most recent workload model, they must have the opportunity to meet with their immediate supervisor every 14 days to establish or adjust priorities. Appropriates indeterminate moneys from General Fund, beginning July 1, 2019.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Chronic understaffing of child welfare caseworkers
- Chronic underfunding of human services generally and child welfare programs specifically, especially for high-needs children
- Detrimental health effects and risk of ongoing trauma for employees and clients
- Agency's ability to recruit/hire and retain caseworkers is suffering
- Caseworker preference for reduced caseloads to a healthy number, rather than more pay
- Ongoing conversations around these issues

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Requires that DHS provide an opportunity, for those caseworkers whose caseload exceeds the most recent workload model, to meet with the caseworker's immediate supervisor every 14 days to establish or adjust priorities. Appropriates moneys from General Fund.

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Human Services (DHS) administers programs that provide food assistance, cash assistance, child care assistance, services for victims of domestic violence, assistance for children with developmental disabilities, services for seniors, services for adults with disabilities, and more. DHS assists more than a million Oregonians every year.

DHS child welfare provides adoption assistance, manages the foster care system, assists foster parents and caregivers who are relatives, investigates child abuse and neglect, and provides services that transition youth to independent living. Child welfare programs serve some of Oregon's most vulnerable children: they may be in need of protection, dependent, neglected, abused, threatened, mentally or physically disabled, and court-ordered into DHS custody. Child welfare caseworkers provide direct services through a network of local offices in every county

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in Oregon.

House Bill 3191-A requires (DHS) to improve child welfare employee training, incentivize continuing education, provide an opportunity, for those caseworkers whose caseload exceeds the most recent workload model to meet with the caseworker's immediate supervisor to establish or adjust priorities. Appropriates indeterminate moneys from the General Fund beginning July 1, 2019.