

**HB 2033 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**

**Carrier:** Sen. Heard

**Senate Committee On Human Services**

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**Action Date:** 05/14/19

**Action:** Do pass the A-Eng bill.

**Vote:** 4-0-1-0

**Yeas:** 4 - Fagan, Gelser, Heard, Monnes Anderson

**Exc:** 1 - Knopp

**Fiscal:** No fiscal impact

**Revenue:** No revenue impact

**Prepared By:** Jamie Hinsz, LPRO Analyst

**Meeting Dates:** 5/7, 5/14

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Modifies minimum degree requirements, from at least a bachelor's degree to at least an associate's degree, for Department of Human Services (DHS) caseworkers who conduct child abuse investigations or make determinations regarding the protective custody of children. Requires caseworkers with degrees unrelated to human services to complete sufficient relevant training as determined by rule.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Skills required for child protective caseworkers
- Qualifications for comparable fields of work
- Current turnover in child welfare workforce
- Goals for direction of child welfare workforce

**EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:**

No amendment.

**BACKGROUND:**

Law enforcement agencies and Child Protective Services (CPS) (within the Department of Human Services) share responsibility for investigating suspected child abuse. CPS caseworkers receive reports of abuse, assess situations, and prepare safety plans to assist children and their families. Children may be taken into protective custody if their condition or surroundings reasonably appear to jeopardize their welfare, or when a juvenile court orders them into protective custody, or when it reasonably appears they have run away from home. Children who appear to have run away from home must be released into the custody of a parent or other responsible person. CPS received 80,683 reports of suspected child abuse or neglect in federal fiscal year 2017, and 43,976 were referred for investigation, according to the 2017 Child Welfare Data Book. CPS caseworkers are currently required to possess at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.

House Bill 2033 A reduces the minimum educational requirement for child welfare caseworkers from a bachelor's degree to an associate's degree plus additional training related to human services.