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TO: House Committee on Human Services and Housing

FROM: Jamie Hinsz, LPRO Analyst

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 1518 A Summary

DATE: February 17, 2020

Senate Bill 1518 A is an omnibus bill from the Senate Committee on Human Services. It addresses pending adoptions, implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act, background checks for child care providers, and new child welfare policies. The measure declares an emergency and is effective on passage.

Section 1 – Pending Adoptions.

According to the Department of Human services, over half of children who are “legally free for adoption” do not achieve adoption within twelve months of becoming legally free. Senate Bill 1518 A directs the Department of Human Services to make reasonable efforts to submit to the court documents necessary to finalize pending adoption proceedings no later than June 30, 2020, and to submit a report to the Legislative Assembly regarding finalized adoptions no later than September 1, 2020.

Section 2 – Candidates for Foster Care.

The federal Family First Prevention Services Act, signed into law in 2018, permits states to use previously restricted federal financial supports for specific, time limited services for families in order to prevent children from entering foster care. Family First specifies these services must be provided to youth in foster care who are pregnant or parenting, as well as children and youth who are “candidates for foster care” but can remain safely with their families with these services. States electing to use prevention funds through Family First must create a definition for “candidate for foster care.” Senate Bill 1518 A directs the Department of Human Services to submit a report to the Legislative Assembly regarding adopting a definition for "candidate for foster care" in rule. The measure directs the Department of Human Services to consider a definition that allows families access to services prior to children entering foster care, allows for collaboration with the courts, and includes opportunities to improve alternatives to removal for populations at risk of disproportionate removal.

Section 3 – Central Background Registry.

An exempt prohibited individual is defined as an individual whose certification, registration, or enrollment in the Central Background Registry has been revoked or removed. The Office of Child Care may not enroll exempt prohibited individuals in the Central Background Registry. Senate Bill 1518 A allows the Office of Child Care to conditionally enroll an individual in the Central Background Registry upon successful completion of criminal, child abuse, and neglect records checks.

Section 4 – Central Background Registry.

An exempt prohibited individual is defined as an individual whose certification, registration, or enrollment in the Central Background Registry has been revoked or removed. Senate Bill 1518 A clarifies the definition of "exempt prohibited individual" to specify an individual whose certification, registration, or enrollment in the Central Background Registry has been revoked or removed for cause.

Section 5 – Nondiscrimination in Child Welfare.

Senate Bill 1518 A declares a policy that an individual may not be disqualified from providing child welfare services on the basis of race, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender expression, disability, or for the sole reason that the individual received child welfare services as a child or youth.

Section 6 – Nonretaliation in Child Welfare.

Senate Bill 1518 A declares a policy that a child, ward, or youth may not be prohibited from, disciplined for, or retaliated against for publicly or privately speak about their personal experiences receiving child welfare services.

Section 7 – Miscellaneous.

Section captions in Senate Bill 1518 A are provided for the convenience of the reader only.

Section 8 – Emergency Clause.

Senate Bill 1518 A declares an emergency and is effective on passage.