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82nd LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD & HUMAN SERVICES

State Capitol
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Date: January 10, 2024

To: Members of the House Interim Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services

From: Matthew Perreault, Legislative Analyst, Legislative Policy and Research Office

Re: Committee drafts for introduction for the 2024 legislative session

LC 165 limits the scope and jurisdiction of child abuse investigations conducted by the Department of Human Services. It specifies that the department is only required to investigate a report of child abuse if the suspected individual is a child's parent, caregiver, guardian, child care provider, educator, or other person responsible for the child; a person living in, or has access to, the child's home or has access to the child through a relationship; a person suspected of trafficking; or individuals affiliated with the Oregon Youth Authority or county juvenile department employees under certain conditions. It also ensures that a law enforcement agency is empowered to conduct its own criminal investigation into the same incident. The measure directs the department to report to interim legislative committees by September 15, 2024.

The measure also directs the System of Care Advisory Council to convene an advisory committee to study and make recommendations regarding the state's response to children exhibiting problematic sexual behavior. The measure specifies the advisory committee's membership and responsibilities and the scope of the study and recommendations to be reported by the council. The council is directed to report to interim legislative committees by September 15, 2024. These requirements sunset on January 2, 2026. The measure declares an emergency, effective on passage.

LC 131 directs the Department of Human Services to provide grants to assist individuals who are noncitizens and who lack valid immigration documentation to change their immigration status or obtain lawful permanent resident status. The measure specifies that grant moneys must be paid on behalf of an individual to an approved immigration legal services provider to cover the costs of providing legal services or the fees charged by U.S. Customs and Immigration Services. The measure specifies grant award amounts that scale according to an individual's income. It also authorizes the department to establish eligibility criteria for individuals in consultation with relevant community-based organizations, and to adopt rules to operate the

program. The measure appropriates \$6 million from the General Fund to the department for the current biennium and takes effect on the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

LC 203 directs the Department of Human Services to establish an Emergency High Acuity Youth Initiative program to provide care and services to children with high acuity needs who are in the protective custody of the department. The measure requires the department to contract with up to ten child-caring agencies to provide and coordinate services and supports for such children, including health care, mental health treatment, behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment, residential therapeutic services, and post-discharge community and wraparound services. The measure specifies the parameters of these contracts relating to residential bed capacity, provider reimbursement structure, minimum staff compensation, length of contract term, quarterly reporting requirements, continuity of services for children upon discharge, and incentives for providers meeting certain benchmarks. The measure requires the department to report to interim legislative committees on these contracts annually by September 15 starting in 2025.

Additionally, the measure also directs the department to contract with a provider association representing child-caring agencies to facilitate data sharing among agencies and provide recommendations on best practices and proposals for improvements in the system of care for children. The measure appropriates \$350,000 from the General Fund to the department for this contract. The department is required to enter into both of the above contracts within 60 days of the measure's operative date.

The measure becomes operative on July 1, 2024 but authorizes the department to take any necessary action ahead of that date, and declares an emergency, effective on passage.