

HB 2957 -4 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/22, 3/27

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Department of Human Services (DHS) to establish a program to distribute funds to community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide financial assistance to individuals with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) immigration status. Appropriates \$7 million from one-time federal funds to DHS to implement program. Requires participating CBOs to spend no more than \$695 per individual for assistance with DACA status renewal and legal costs. Directs DHS to consult with CBOs to develop eligibility criteria and to adopt rules for implementation. Sunsets January 2, 2026. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Features of DACA program
- Costs of DACA status renewal
- Impact of COVID-19 public health emergency on DACA recipients
- Whether income limits should be considered

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-4 Removes directive for DHS to distribute funds to CBOs for assistance to individuals with DACA status. Requires DHS to establish grant program to assist noncitizens who lack valid immigration documentation with changing their immigration status or obtaining lawful permanent resident status. Appropriates \$7 million General Fund to DHS for implementation. Requires DHS to consult with and distribute funds to approved CBOs for covering the cost of immigration legal services or fees. Specifies grant award amounts. Authorizes DHS to establish eligibility criteria for grant recipients and to adopt rules for implementation.

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

BACKGROUND:

The federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was developed in 2012 to provide temporary immigration status to individuals who were brought to the United States as children and who lack documentation related to their status. The program allows individuals to apply to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to receive a renewable 2-year deferment on immigration enforcement actions as well as temporary employment authorization. Applicants must provide documentation related to their identity and pay up to \$495 in associated fees. The program is currently operating in a limited capacity pending federal litigation and is only processing renewal applications for current recipients.

House Bill 2957 directs the Department of Human Services (DHS) to establish and operate a program that would distribute funds to community-based organizations for the purpose of assisting individuals with applying for and paying the costs associated with DACA applications. The measure appropriates \$7 million in federal funds received under the American Rescue Plan Act to DHS implement the program.