

## HB 2957 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

### House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

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**Action Date:** 03/29/23

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

**Vote:** 10-0-0-0

**Yeas:** 10 - Andersen, Cramer, Elmer, Hartman, Hieb, Nelson, Neron, Nguyen H, Reynolds, Scharf

**Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued

**Revenue:** No revenue impact

**Prepared By:** Matthew Perreault, LPRO Analyst

**Meeting Dates:** 2/22, 3/29

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#### WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Department of Human Services (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 community-based organizations (CBOs) for covering the cost of immigration legal services or fees. Specifies grant award amounts according to individual income. Authorizes DHS to establish eligibility criteria for grant recipients and to adopt rules for implementation. Sunsets January 2, 2026. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

#### ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Features of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program
- Costs of DACA status renewal
- Impact of COVID-19 public health emergency on DACA recipients
- Whether income limits should be considered
- Modifications to proposed program via amendments

#### EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Removes directive for the Department of Human Services (DHS) to distribute funds to community-based organizations (CBOs) for assistance to individuals with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals status. Removes appropriation of American Rescue Plan Act moneys. 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.

#### BACKGROUND:

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) within the Department of Homeland Security is the federal agency that processes applications for citizenship and immigration statuses. Examples of statuses include refugee, asylum, temporary protected status, humanitarian parole, and lawful permanent resident (also called "green card"). Individuals who wish to change their immigration status or apply for a green card must follow a process with USCIS to petition for a change in status and pay related fees. Those who lack documentation of their immigration status are at risk of civil penalties and deportation.

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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 USCIS to receive a renewable two-year deferment on immigration enforcement actions, as well as temporary employment authorization, but does not grant lawful permanent resident status. The program is currently operating in a limited capacity pending federal litigation and is only processing renewal applications for current recipients.

House Bill 2957 A directs the Department of Human Services (DHS) to establish a grant program to assist noncitizens who lack valid immigration documentation with changing their immigration status; appropriates \$7 million General Fund to DHS to implement the program.