
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6227

AN ACT CONCERNING A REGIONAL STRUCTURE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND MISCELLANEOUS CHANGES TO THE GENERAL STATUTES CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF) commissioner to appoint up to two program directors and up to six regional directors in the unclassified service. Under current law, she must appoint directors as necessary, in the classified service, and with duties she determines. By law, unchanged by the bill, she must make the appointments after consulting with the State Advisory Council on Children and Families (SAC). The bill replaces the department's structure of area directors, offices, and advisory councils in current law with regional directors, offices, and advisory councils.

It conforms state law to federal requirements for foster care programs, making the state eligible for federal reimbursement of subsidized guardianship assistance funds (see BACKGROUND). The bill removes obsolete language.

Finally, the bill repeals two DCF reporting requirements and the Connecticut Juvenile Training School's (CJTS) Public Safety Committee.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2011

DCF ORGANIZATION

Program Directors

Under current law, the DCF commissioner must appoint and may remove directors as she deems necessary, after consulting with SAC. The bill identifies them as "program directors," limits their number to two, removes them from the classified service, and authorizes them to

oversee community programs and services and the operation of DCF institutions and facilities.

Regional Directors

The bill requires the commissioner to consult with SAC then appoint up to six regional directors, and it gives her authority to remove them. Each regional director must have skill and experience in providing and administering children's services. At the commissioner's direction, they are responsible for the operation and administration of DCF services in regions the commissioner creates. They replace area directors, who are currently in the classified service. The bill authorizes the commissioner to create distinct service regions with offices, rather than areas and area offices. It makes a corresponding change by renaming area advisory councils as regional advisory councils.

REPEALER

The bill repeals:

1. DCF's annual reporting requirement regarding the Kinship Navigator Program, which helps relative caregivers find services and become foster parents and is not changed by the bill;
2. the CJTS Public Safety Committee and transfers its responsibility to review safety and security issues affecting the host municipality (Middletown) to the CJTS Advisory Group; and
3. DCF's annual report on the status of the children committed to its custody as of January 1, and the central registry on children for whom a permanency plan has been formulated and a monitoring system on implementation.

Currently, the Kinship Navigator Program report goes to the Human Services Committee; the CJTS Advisory Group review goes to (and continues to do so under the bill) the Human Services, Children's, and Judiciary committees; and the central registry and monitoring system report goes to the governor and the Human Services and Judiciary committees.

BACKGROUND

Federal Law

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351, 42 U.S.C. § 670 *et seq.*) provides federal Title IV-E of the Social Security Act support for relatives caring for foster children. Among other things, it gives states the option for federal reimbursement for guardianship subsidy payments, promotes permanency, and requires states to make reasonable efforts to keep siblings together in foster care.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Select Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference
Yea 10 Nay 0 (02/22/2011)

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 18 Nay 0 (03/22/2011)