



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 346

February Session, 2012

Substitute House Bill No. 5186

House of Representatives, April 11, 2012

The Committee on Human Services reported through REP. TERCYAK of the 26th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT ADOPTING A FOSTER PARENT BILL OF RIGHTS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2012*) (a) There is established a
2 foster parent bill of rights for any person who is licensed as a foster
3 parent by the Department of Children and Families. A foster parent's
4 rights include, but are not limited to, the following:

5 (1) To be treated with consideration and respect as a member of the
6 placement team for the foster child;

7 (2) To be notified of meetings scheduled by the department
8 concerning the foster child in order to allow the foster parent to
9 actively participate and have input into the case planning and
10 decision-making process regarding the foster child;

11 (3) To be notified of court hearings and administrative case review
12 meetings concerning a foster child in his or her care;

13 (4) To be provided with support services to assist in the care of the
14 foster child that are consistent with the foster child's approved
15 permanency plan;

16 (5) To be provided with open, complete and timely responses to
17 requests for additional information that is relevant to the care of the
18 foster child;

19 (6) To be provided with information concerning the foster child's
20 medical history, general behavior and relationships with other foster
21 parents, as permitted under state and federal law;

22 (7) To be provided with information concerning the educational
23 history, life experiences and placement circumstances of the foster
24 child, as permitted under state and federal law;

25 (8) To be provided with information on all department policies and
26 procedures that relate to the role of a foster parent;

27 (9) To be provided with appropriate training to enhance relevant
28 skills and abilities of the foster parent;

29 (10) To be provided with information on support services that are
30 available through the department for a foster child;

31 (11) To be provided with an opportunity to be heard regarding
32 department decisions and practices with respect to the foster child or
33 the role of a foster parent, without the department retaliating against a
34 foster parent who questions or appeals a decision or practice of the
35 department;

36 (12) To be provided with information that allows the foster parent to
37 contact the department twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week
38 for the purpose of receiving departmental assistance to address the
39 needs of a foster child in such foster parent's care; and

40 (13) To be provided with a copy of the foster parent bill of rights
41 when a child is placed in foster care with the foster parent and at any

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 13 \$	FY 14 \$
Children & Families, Dept.	GF - Cost	less than \$100	less than \$100

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

There is an annual cost to the Department of Children and Families of less than \$100 to provide foster parents with a copy of a foster parent bill of rights (A) when a child is placed into foster care with the foster parent, and (B) upon request.

The rights established in the bill reflect current agency policies and do not result in a fiscal impact.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 5186*****AN ACT ADOPTING A FOSTER PARENT BILL OF RIGHTS.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill establishes a bill of rights for the state's licensed foster parents. The bill of rights designates the actions the Department of Children and Families (DCF) must take to support these parents, and it prohibits DCF from retaliating against them for challenging an agency decision or practice. The bill does not provide a cause of action for licensed foster parents who allege a violation of these rights.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2012

FOSTER PARENT BILL OF RIGHTS

Under the foster parent bill of rights, DCF must provide to each foster parent:

1. consideration and respect as a member of the placement team;
2. notice of meetings DCF schedules concerning the foster child to enable the parent to actively participate and have input into the case-planning and decision-making process for the child;
3. notice of court hearings and administrative case review meetings regarding the child;
4. support services to assist in the child's care that are consistent with the child's approved permanency plan (see BACKGROUND);
5. open, complete, and timely responses to requests for information relevant to the foster child's care;

6. information on the child’s medical history, general behavior, and relationships with other foster parents, as the law allows;
7. information on the child’s educational history, life experiences, and placement circumstances, as the law allows;
8. information on all DCF policies and procedures related to his or her role;
9. appropriate training to enhance his or her relevant skills and abilities;
10. information on available DCF support services for the foster child;
11. an opportunity to question or appeal DCF decisions and practices without DCF retaliation;
12. information that allows the foster parent to contact DCF 24 hours a day, seven days a week to receive departmental assistance to address the foster child’s needs; and
13. a copy of the foster parent bill of rights (a) when a child is placed in foster care with the foster parent and (b) at the foster parent’s request.

BACKGROUND

Permanency Plan

Existing law requires a permanency plan to include:

1. a description of any problems or offenses that necessitated the child’s placement of the child with DCF;
2. a description of the type, and an analysis of the effectiveness of, the care, treatment, and supervision DCF has provided for the child;
3. the current visitation schedule between the child and his parents and siblings for any child in substitute care;

4. a description by the department of every effort by DCF to reunite the child with a parent or to find a permanent placement for the child and every effort to assist each parent in remedying factors that contributed to the removal of the child;
5. a proposed timetable for the reunification of the child and a parent, a permanent placement if substitute care is recommended, or a justification of why extended substitute care is necessary; and
6. whether the child has been visited at least every three months by a state or private agency, if the child has been placed in foster care out-of-state. (CGS § 17a-15a).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Select Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference
Yea 12 Nay 0 (03/06/2012)

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable
Yea 16 Nay 0 (03/22/2012)