OLR Bill Analysis
sSB 452 (File 215, as amended by Senate "A")*

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CHILD WELFARE AND POLICY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes a 10-member Child Welfare Policy and Oversight Committee. The committee must monitor and evaluate state child welfare system policies and practices to ensure that:

1. children are protected from abuse or neglect;
2. preventable child fatalities are reduced or eliminated;
3. children have permanent and stable living situations, are placed in family settings whenever possible, and do not leave the child welfare system into homelessness;
4. minority populations are not disproportionately represented in the child welfare system;
5. children timely receive appropriate and adequate services to meet their physical, mental health, and developmental needs;
6. children do not remain in institutional settings longer than necessary; and
7. state agencies collaborate to establish protocols to achieve these goals.

The bill requires the oversight committee to annually report its findings and recommendations to the Children’s Committee, beginning by January 1, 2020.

*Senate Amendment “A” decreases the oversight committee’s membership from 29 to 10, modifies the qualifications for the
legislative appointees, and requires the committee to elect its chairpersons.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

MEMBERSHIP

Under the bill, the oversight committee must include the child advocate and the chief public defender or their designees. It must also include eight legislative appointees, as described in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appointing Authority</th>
<th>Number of Appointees</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House speaker</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>• One who is a child and family advocate</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• One who is a person with expertise in providing services through the</td>
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<td>Department of Children and Families (DCF) family assessment response program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senate president pro tempore</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>• One who is a licensed attorney with expertise in children’s legal issues</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• One who is a children’s behavioral health services expert</td>
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<tr>
<td>House majority leader</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>Former recipient of DCF in-home services or supervision who is between age 18 and 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>House minority leader</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>Therapeutic foster care provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate majority leader</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>Licensed child psychiatrist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate minority leader</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>Practicing member of the American Academy of Pediatrics – CT Chapter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The appointing authorities must make their appointments by July 31, 2019. The first appointees must serve a two-year term and subsequent appointees must serve a three-year term. Within 30 days of a vacancy, the appropriate appointing authority must fill the vacancy for the rest of the term. Any member may be reappointed.

The bill requires the committee to elect the chairpersons from its
members. One of the chairpersons must not be an executive or legislative branch representative. The chairpersons must schedule the first committee meeting by August 30, 2019, and meet at least quarterly after that.

Under the bill, each member gets one vote and a majority of members (6) constitutes a quorum to transact business, exercise power, or perform any legally authorized or imposed duty.

**ANNUAL REPORT**

The annual report the committee provides to the Children’s Committee must include:

1. a description of the committee’s activities;

2. an evaluation of the efficacy of state child welfare policies and practices with respect to the committee’s goals; and

3. recommendations to improve such policies and practices.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 14 Nay 0 (03/12/2019)