OLR Bill Analysis
sSB 929 (File 139, as amended by Senate "A")

AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF ADDITIONAL MANDATED REPORTERS, THE DURATION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT INVESTIGATIONS AND THE REPEAL OF CERTAIN REPORTING REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

SUMMARY

This bill adds to the statutory list of mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect (1) individuals who have regular contact with and provide services to or on behalf of children through a contract with or credential from the Department of Children and Families (DCF), (2) victim services advocates employed by the Judicial Department’s Office of Victim Services, and (3) employees of a Court Support Services Division-operated or -contracted juvenile justice program.

The bill expands requirements for DCF to check the state child abuse and neglect registry for individuals employed by certain DCF-licensed facilities. It also requires DCF to (1) check the child abuse and neglect registry in any state in which various individuals resided in the previous five years and (2) comply with any request from a child welfare agency of another state to check the child abuse and neglect registry.

The bill modifies, from 45 calendar days to 33 business days, the time DCF has to complete a child abuse or neglect investigation.

The bill also repeals a law requiring DCF to (1) annually report to the Children’s Committee on certain at-risk children and youth in its care, including the number and age of children who are living in psychiatric hospitals, who are runaways or homeless, and (2) conduct case and service reviews for such children.
Lastly, the bill repeals a law requiring DCF to provide written notification to the guardian and attorney of a child committed to DCF care as a delinquent (1) within 10 days of the receipt of a report of suspected abuse or neglect of such a child, and (2) within 10 days of the conclusion of a DCF investigation substantiating abuse or neglect.

*Senate Amendment “A” expands DCF child abuse and neglect registry checks for certain individuals. The amendment also requires DCF to comply with any request from a child welfare agency of another state to check the child abuse and neglect registry.

The amendment also removes a provision in the underlying bill removing the DCF commissioner or her designee from the Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019, except that the mandated reporter provision takes effect October 1, 2019.

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REGISTRY CHECKS**

**DCF Vendors or Contractors**

Existing law requires DCF to check the state child abuse and neglect registry for the names of DCF vendors or contractors and their employees who have access to DCF records or clients. The bill specifies that this requirement applies to employees who have access to these records or who provide direct services to children or youths in DCF care and custody.

It additionally requires DCF to check the child abuse and neglect registry in any state in which any such vendor, contractor, or employee resided in the previous five years.

Existing law already requires these vendors, contractors, and employees to submit to state and national criminal history records checks.

**Foster and Adoptive Parents**

The bill requires DCF to check, for any person applying for licensure or approval to accept placement of a child for foster care or
adoption, and for any person 16 or older living in the applicant’s household, the child abuse and neglect registry in any state in which the applicant or person resided in the previous five years.

Existing law requires (1) any such applicant and any person 16 or older living in the household of such applicant to submit to a state and national criminal history records check, and (2) DCF to check the state child abuse and neglect registry for the name of these individuals.

The bill specifies that persons a licensed child placing agency approves to adopt are subject to the same requirements as those approved to provide foster care.

**DCF-Licensed Child Care Facility Employees**

Under existing law, DCF must require applicants for DCF-licensed child care facilities and child placing agencies to submit to state and national criminal history records checks. The bill extends this requirement to employees age 18 or older of DCF-licensed child care facilities. (This does not include day care facilities which are licensed by the Office of Early Childhood.)

The bill additionally requires DCF to check, for any such person, the child abuse and neglect registry in any state in which the person resided in the previous five years.

**BACKGROUND**

**Related Bills**

sSB 891 (File 136), reported favorably by the Children’s Committee, makes several changes to the statutes related to the failure to report suspected child abuse and neglect. Among other things, it requires DCF to expand its policy for the investigation of delayed mandated reports to include the failure of mandated reporters to make reports within the required time period.

sHB 6998 (File 120), reported favorably by the Children’s Committee, expands existing DCF child abuse and neglect investigation notification requirements to include notifying public and private schools when an employee of a school contractor is the subject
of an abuse and neglect complaint.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 14  Nay 0  (03/07/2019)