



PA 22-135—sSB 308
Committee on Children

AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF THE CHILD ADVOCATE

SUMMARY: This act makes several changes in laws related to the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA). Specifically, it does the following:

1. expands the age range, from children ages 20 or younger to children ages 21 and under, for which the child advocate must report confinement conditions;
2. requires the child advocate to report at least three times each year to the OCA advisory committee on the office's goals and projects, within available appropriations, that are consistent with the child advocate's responsibilities;
3. requires the OCA advisory committee to (a) meet at least three times each year with the child advocate and her staff to receive her reports and (b) annually evaluate OCA's effectiveness; and
4. extends existing law's whistleblower protections that prohibit municipal agencies from discharging, discriminating, or retaliating against employees who make good faith complaints to OCA, or cooperate with OCA investigations, to cover employees of any agency or entity providing publicly funded services.

Under existing law, the child advocate has the right to inspect and copy any records necessary to carry out her responsibilities. The act specifies that the child advocate has the right to request and promptly inspect and copy these records. Additionally, the act requires requested records to be provided to her within 14 days of the request. By law, the child advocate may issue a subpoena for records she is denied access to.

The act also allows the child advocate to disclose confidential information to a child's legal representative if the disclosure is necessary to enable the child advocate to perform her responsibilities or to identify, prevent, or treat a child's abuse or neglect. Under prior law, the child advocate could only disclose this information to the appropriate agency responsible for the child's welfare.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2022

REPORTING ON YOUTH CONFINEMENT CONDITIONS

Prior law required the child advocate to prepare an in-depth report on the conditions of confinement for children ages 20 or younger who are held in secure detention or correctional confinement in any state-operated facility. The report must address the facilities' compliance with the law limiting the use of restraint and seclusion. The act expands the age range of children for which the child advocate

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

must report on to include children ages 21 and under. Under existing law, the child advocate must submit the report biennially to the Children's Committee.