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HOUSE BILL 1774

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State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2013 Regular Session

By Representatives Freeman, Goodman, Haler, Roberts, Farrell, Kagi, Stanford, Stonier, Bergquist, Ryu, O'Ban, Morrell, Fey, Pollet, and Santos

Read first time 02/08/13. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & Human Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to measuring performance of the child welfare  
2 system; adding new sections to chapter 74.13 RCW; and creating a new  
3 section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature recognizes that the  
6 goals of the child welfare system are to protect the safety,  
7 permanence, and well-being of the children it serves. The legislature  
8 further recognizes the importance of maintaining publicly accessible  
9 data that tracks the performance of the child welfare system, leading  
10 to transparency and accountability of and public confidence in the  
11 system. The legislature acknowledges that, although there have been  
12 many efforts to improve the child welfare system, including  
13 legislation, policy making, and litigation, and while all of these  
14 efforts have led to improvements to the system, there has not been a  
15 comprehensive legislative mandate regarding the comprehensive  
16 functionality of the child welfare system.

17 (2) The legislature believes it is important to codify key  
18 indicators of safety, permanence, and well-being such that the public  
19 and the legislature may understand how the child welfare system is

1 performing at any given time and may evaluate the success of the  
2 practices of the department of social and health services in achieving  
3 its objectives. The development of a methodology to measure these  
4 indicators is an essential tool to assist the legislature in  
5 determining priorities for the investment of public dollars as well as  
6 identifying any need for policy changes to facilitate improvement.

7 (3) The reports to the legislature will be used to provide feedback  
8 to the department. The agencies referenced in section 3 of this act  
9 will not disclose individually identifiable private information except  
10 as allowable under federal and state law.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW  
12 to read as follows:

13 The indicators of safety, permanency, and well-being described in  
14 this section must be used to measure the delivery of appropriate  
15 services for the children and families served by the child welfare  
16 system, to identify areas for future improvements to the child welfare  
17 system, and to maintain public accountability.

18 (1) The following are the safety indicators that must be used:

19 (a) Prevention of placement in out-of-home care;

20 (b) Recurrence of contact with the child welfare system for  
21 children in home care; and

22 (c) Recurrence of nonroutine child welfare interventions regarding  
23 children in out-of-home care.

24 (2) The following are the permanency indicators that must be used:

25 (a) Safe reunification of children placed in out-of-home care;

26 (b) Length of time to permanence for children placed in out-of-home  
27 care; and

28 (c) Placement stability for children placed in out-of-home care.

29 (3) The following are the well-being indicators that must be used:

30 (a) Maintenance of family relationships for children placed in out-  
31 of-home care;

32 (b) Levels of educational readiness and attainment for children  
33 served by the child welfare system;

34 (c) Behavioral and physical health of children served by the child  
35 welfare system; and

36 (d) Adult functioning of youth who have aged out of the child  
37 welfare system, including social integration and independence.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 3.**    A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW  
2 to read as follows:

3        (1)    Within existing resources, the University of Washington,  
4 through partners for our children, within the school of social work,  
5 and in cooperation with the department, including the research and data  
6 analysis division, and other stakeholders, shall develop measurements  
7 for each of the indicators identified in section 2 of this act.    Such  
8 measurements must be developed using existing and available data.  
9 Measurements must be calculated from data used in the routine work of  
10 the state agencies' data and information technology departments.    Any  
11 new record linkage or data-matching activities required in fulfillment  
12 of this section and section 2 of this act must be performed by partners  
13 for our children pursuant to agreements developed under subsection (6)  
14 of this section.

15        (2)    For the purposes of this section, "state agencies" mean any  
16 agency or subagency providing data used in the integrated client  
17 database maintained by the research and data analysis division of the  
18 department.    Any exchange of data must be in accordance with applicable  
19 federal and state law.

20        (3)    All indicator measurements must use a methodology accepted by  
21 the scientific community.    Wherever possible, all measurements must  
22 address any disproportionate racial and ethnic inequality.    The  
23 University of Washington, through partners for our children, shall  
24 develop the measurements by December 31, 2013.

25        (4)    The measurements developed pursuant to subsection (3) of this  
26 section may not require the state agencies to revise their data  
27 collection systems, and may not require the state agencies to provide  
28 individually identifiable information, as described in RCW 42.56.230.

29        (5)    The state agencies shall provide the University of Washington  
30 with all measurement data at least quarterly, consistent with  
31 subsection (3) of this section, beginning March 1, 2014.    Partners for  
32 our children shall make the data publicly available and shall issue a  
33 public report at least twice a year, beginning on September 1, 2014.  
34 Partners for our children shall report on the data to the legislature  
35 and the governor annually starting December 31, 2014.

36        (6)    By December 31, 2013, the state agencies shall execute

1 agreements with partners for our children to enable sharing of data  
2 sufficient to comply with this section and section 2 of this act.

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