

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5740

As of February 6, 2015

Title: An act relating to extended foster care services.

Brief Description: Concerning extended foster care services.

Sponsors: Senators Fain, Billig, Litzow, McAuliffe, Frockt, Miloscia, Darneille and Jayapal.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services, Mental Health & Housing: 2/09/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH & HOUSING

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7444)

Background: In 2008 the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act was signed into federal law. Among its many provisions, the Fostering Connections legislation created a pathway for states to use Title IV-E funds, or foster care funding, to extend foster care services to youth ages 19–21 if the youth engages in certain qualifying activities.

In 2011 the Legislature established the Extended Foster Care program in Washington. Currently a youth age 19–21 is eligible for extended foster care services if the youth:

- is participating in or completing a secondary education program or a secondary education equivalency program;
- is enrolled, or has applied for and demonstrates intent to enroll in a postsecondary academic or postsecondary vocational program;
- has as an open dependency case at age 18 and is participating in a program or activity designed to promote employment or remove barriers to employment; or
- engages in employment for 80 or more hours per month, within amounts specifically appropriated for this purpose.

Extended foster care services may include, but are not limited to, foster care placement or placement in a supervised independent living setting, medical or dental services, transitional living services, case management, and assistance meeting basic needs.

The court must dismiss dependency cases of foster care youth who turn 18 years of age if they are not participating in one of the qualifying activities. Youth whose dependency cases

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were dismissed at age 18 or after may request extended foster care services through a Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA) if they request services before turning 19 years of age. A youth may enter into a VPA only once but may transition among eligibility categories, so long as the youth remains eligible during the transition. When the youth is at least 17 years of age but not older than 17 years and six months, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) must provide the youth with written documentation explaining the availability of extended foster care services and detailing instructions about how to access those services after they reach age 18. DSHS is relieved of any supervisory duties over a youth who is age 18 but has not requested extended foster care services. While a youth receives extended foster care services, the youth is under the care and placement authority of DSHS.

Summary of Bill: If a youth is not able to participate in any of the qualifying activities due to a documented medical condition, the youth may still qualify for the Extended Foster Care program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 2, 2015.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.