

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5740

C 240 L 15
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning extended foster care services.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Fain, Billig, Litzow, McAuliffe, Frockt, Miloscia, Darneille and Jayapal).

Senate Committee on Human Services, Mental Health & Housing
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Early Learning & Human Services
House Committee on Appropriations

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 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,

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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: The eligibility for extended foster care services is expanded to include youth who are not able to engage in any of the activities that would make him or her eligible due to a documented medical condition. The language "within amounts appropriated specifically for this purpose" is removed for purposes of extended foster care eligibility when a youth is engaged in employment for 80 or more hours per month.

Medical condition is defined to mean a physical or mental health condition as documented by any licensed health care provider.

The DSHS must make efforts to ensure that extended foster care providers maximize Medicaid reimbursement. This must include ensuring that extended foster care health and mental health providers participate in Medicaid.

For youth aging out of foster care, the Children's Administration (CA) must invite representatives from the Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery, the Disability Services Administration, the Economic Services Administration, and the Juvenile Justice and Rehabilitation Administration to the youth's shared planning meeting that occurs between age 17 and 17.5 years old that is used to develop a transition plan. The CA must direct youth who may qualify for developmental disability services to apply for those services and provide assistance in the application process.

The act is null and void if not funded.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	1	
House	88	9	(House amended)
Senate	43	2	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 1, 2016