

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1808

As Passed House:
March 2, 2017

Title: An act relating to providing support for foster youth in obtaining drivers' licenses and automobile liability insurance.

Brief Description: Providing support for foster youth in obtaining drivers' licenses and automobile liability insurance.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Clibborn, McDonald, Kagi, Caldier, Senn, Graves, Lovick, Dent, McBride, Farrell, Wylie, Slatter, Macri, Doglio, Robinson, Ortiz-Self, Ormsby, Sells, Fey, Frame, Muri, Riccelli, Springer, Jinkins, Gregerson, Stanford and Pollet).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/15/17, 2/21/17 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/2/17, 95-3.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Requires the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to contract with a private nonprofit organization to work with independent living providers to provide driver's license support to foster youth.
- Mandates that the foster youth driver's license support provided include reimbursement of Department of Licensing license issuance fees, fees for a driver training education course, and motor vehicle liability insurance costs.
- Requires the nonprofit organization administering the program to report to the DSHS and the appropriate committees of the Legislature, including the transportation committees, by December 1, 2019.
- Directs that specific funding must be provided in the 2017-2019 Transportation Budget for this act to take effect.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 24 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Farrell, Vice Chair; Fey, Vice Chair; Wylie, Vice Chair; Orcutt, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Harmsworth, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chapman, Gregerson, Hayes, Irwin, Kloba, Lovick, McBride, Morris, Ortiz-Self, Pellicciotti, Pike, Riccelli, Shea, Stambaugh, Tarleton, Van Werven and Young.

Staff: Jennifer Harris (786-7143).

Background:

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) was established in 1970 and consists of seven program area administrations: the Aging and Long-Term Support Administration, Behavioral Health Administration, Children's Administration, Developmental Disabilities Administration, Economic Services Administration, Financial Services Administration, and the Rehabilitation Administration. The Children's Administration responds to allegations of abuse and neglect, offers child welfare services to families, and licenses foster homes, among other responsibilities.

A child is considered "dependent" or part of the child welfare system and may remain in foster care until the age of 18. The DSHS foster care services include: (1) determination of needs of the child; (2) determination of need for foster care; (3) placement of the child in the type of foster care setting that best meets the child's needs; (4) referral of a child to a private child placement agency or institution to meet the child's specific needs; (5) medical services according to the rules of the DSHS's medical program; (6) reimbursement for the care of a child in a licensed family foster home; (7) purchase of care from a licensed private child-placing agency, behavioral rehabilitation services provider, or maternity home; (8) supervision of the foster care placement by direct supervision through departmental social work services, or indirect supervision through evaluation of periodic reports from private child-placing agencies, rehabilitation services providers, or maternity homes with which the DSHS has contractual arrangements.

The DSHS provides licensed foster parents with a monthly foster care maintenance payment to assist licensed foster parents in meeting the needs of their foster child. A basic rate payment is paid to foster parents to help cover the cost of food, clothing, shelter, and personal incidentals.

The DSHS also operates the extended foster care program, which allows individuals who are dependent in foster care at age 18 to receive services if they are: (1) enrolled in a secondary education or equivalent program; (2) enrolled and participating in a postsecondary academic or postsecondary vocational program, or have applied for and can demonstrate an intention to timely enroll in a postsecondary academic or vocational program; (3) participating in a program or activity designed to promote employment or remove barriers to employment; (4) engaged in employment for 80 or more hours per month; or (5) not able to engage in the above activities due to a documented medical condition.

For eligible youth that choose to participate in the extended foster care program after they turn 18 years old, the dependency court action will continue. Eligible youth may also choose

to participate in extended foster care after they turn 18 years old and until they turn 19 years old through a voluntary placement agreement with the DSHS. The services youth may receive through the extended foster care program include foster care placement or supervised independent living setting placement, medical (including mental health), dental, independent living skills training, case management through the DSHS, and referrals to community resources.

The Department of Licensing (DOL) requires individuals under the age of 18 to obtain an instruction permit and to complete a driver training education course to be eligible to obtain an intermediate driver's license. This requirement does not apply to individuals age 18 or older. The fee for a learner's permit is \$25. Fees for a new intermediate or standard driver's license total \$89. Private driver training schools and some high schools offer driver training education courses. The cost of a driver training education course and the knowledge and driving tests varies by provider. Motor vehicle liability insurance rates also vary.

Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill:

Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for the purpose, the DSHS is required to contract with a private nonprofit organization to work collaboratively with independent living providers and the DSHS to provide driver's license support to foster youth. The organization will be selected through a competitive application process. Support in navigating the driver's license process must be provided to foster youth between 15 and 21 years old. That support must include: (1) reimbursement of fees necessary for a foster youth to obtain a driver's instruction permit, an intermediate license, and a standard or enhanced driver's license, including any required examination fees; (2) reimbursement of fees for a driver training education course if the foster youth is under the age of 18; and (3) reimbursement of the increase in motor vehicle liability insurance costs to the foster parents, relative placements, or other foster placements who add a foster youth to their motor vehicle liability insurance policy, with a funding preference given to reimbursement of motor vehicle liability insurance costs for foster youth who practice safe driving and avoid moving violations and at-fault collisions.

The nonprofit organization selected must submit a report to the DSHS and the appropriate committees of the Legislature, including the transportation committees by December 1, 2019, that documents the number of foster youth served by the program; the average cost per youth served; negative outcomes of the program reported by foster youth, including a foster parent's inappropriate use of a foster youth's ability to drive; and recommendations for future policy, statutory, or funding changes necessary to improve the effectiveness of the program.

For this act to take effect, specific funding must be provided for it in the 2017-2019 Transportation Budget.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Teenagers in the age range this bill addresses are trying to become independent and go out on their own. Being a foster parent can be very challenging, and foster parents do not always have the ability to pay for driver training or to take on additional automobile insurance liability for their foster teenagers. The Mockingbird Society patterned this program after a similar program in Florida.

This bill would create a program to contract with a nonprofit to provide funding for costs associated with driver education, driver's licenses, and related costs. The program would also help foster youth navigate barriers to getting an instructor's permit from the DOL faced by foster youth who cannot always get a hold of their original birth certificate, a Social Security card, or a parent's signature. The obstacles in place now can force foster youth to have to wait until they turn 18 years old to get a driver's license.

Having a driver's license opens the door to the outside world, enabling holders of it to work and attend college. Many foster youths are expected to be independent at an early age, but they are not able to obtain a driver's license to further this independence. They often move frequently and do not have anyone who can teach them to drive. Some foster youth who are not able to obtain driver training or get a driver's license will try to drive when they are not prepared to—this can result in vehicle collisions.

This program can provide foster youth with the help they need to drive safely. It can also provide them with the tools they need to succeed when they exit the foster care system.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Clibborn, prime sponsor; and Sabian Hart, Zack Zibrosky, Tatyana Barron, and Liz Trautman, The Mockingbird Society.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.