
**Early Learning & Human Services
Committee**

SSB 6222

Brief Description: Concerning expansion of extended foster care eligibility.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Carlyle, O'Ban, Frockt, Darneille, Walsh, Zeiger, Palumbo, Hasegawa, Billig, Hunt and Kuderer).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Removes the requirement that a youth be in foster care at the time that he or she reaches age 18 to be eligible for extended foster care.
- Extends the time period that an individual can request extended foster care from up to age 19 to age 21.
- Allows individuals to unenroll and reenroll in extended foster care an unlimited number of times.

Hearing Date: 2/21/18

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

Extended Foster Care Program.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) operates the extended foster care program which allows individuals who are dependent and in foster care at age 18 to receive services if that youth is:

- enrolled in a secondary education program or equivalent program;
- enrolled and participating in a postsecondary academic or postsecondary vocational program, or has applied for and can demonstrate an intention to timely enroll in a postsecondary academic or vocational program;

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- participating in a program or activity designed to promote employment or remove barriers to employment;
- engaged in employment for 80 or more hours per month; or
- not able to engage in the above activities due to a documented medical condition.

For eligible youth who choose to participate in the extended foster care program on his or her eighteenth birthday, the dependency court action will continue. An eligible youth may choose to participate in the extended foster care after his or her eighteenth birthday and until the youth turns 19 years old through a voluntary placement agreement with the DSHS.

The DSHS must allow a youth who has received extended foster care services but lost his or her eligibility to reenter the extended foster care program through a voluntary placement agreement when he or she meets the criteria again.

The services that 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;
- case management through the DSHS; and
- referrals to community resources.

On January 10, 2018, there were 609 youth receiving extended foster care services.

Summary of Bill:

The requirement that a youth must be in foster care at the time that he or she reaches age 18 to be eligible for extended foster care is eliminated. The time period when an individual, who is eligible for extended foster care, may request extended foster care services is extended from up to age 19 to age 21. The limitation that individuals can reenroll in extended foster care once is eliminated. The substitute bill allows individuals to reenroll an unlimited number of times.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect July 1, 2018.