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**HOUSE BILL 1754**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Dent, Dye, Graham, Schmidt, and Eslick

AN ACT Relating to evaluating the performance of the department of children, youth, and families in delivering child welfare services; adding a new section to chapter 43.09 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that:

(1) The department of children, youth, and families was established by the legislature in 2017 based on concerns that state services were not organized and delivered in a way that achieved the optimal outcomes for children, youth, and families. Certain outcome measures were established to determine whether the creation of the department of children, youth, and families is effective in carrying out its important duties to maintain child safety, promote healthy development, provide prevention and intervention services, and deliver early education services.

(2) Since the creation of the department of children, youth, and families, dependent youth have continued to experience exceptional placements in hotels and department offices and multiple placements. The disappearance of Oakley Carlson has also raised questions about whether the department is maintaining the safety of children that are dependent and appropriately supporting families.

(3) It is necessary and appropriate to require a performance evaluation of the child welfare functions of the department of children, youth, and families to determine whether the creation of that agency has been effective in achieving its stated goals.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.09 RCW to read as follows:

By December 1, 2024, the state auditor must conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the child welfare functions of the department of children, youth, and families established under chapter 43.216 RCW and deliver a report, including a conclusion, recommendations for improvement, and recommendations for either maintaining or removing the child welfare functions from the department of children, youth, and families based on whether the establishment of the department of children, youth, and families has:

(1) Resulted in improved outcomes for children, youth, and families receiving child welfare services according to the outcome measures established for the department of children, youth, and families included in RCW 43.216.015; or

(2) Resulted in systemic efficiencies or improvements that improve the delivery of services to children, youth, and families receiving child welfare services.

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