

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5664

AS OF FEBRUARY 13, 1991

Brief Description: Providing a complaint process for certain clients of the department of social and health services.

SPONSORS: Senators L. Smith and Stratton.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Staff: Lidia Mori (786-7755)

Hearing Dates: February 14, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Foster parents and other individuals are concerned that when they have a complaint concerning a policy or action of the Department of Social and Health Services, there is no standard, formal grievance process for them to utilize. There is also concern that if their grievance does receive some sort of scrutiny, the damage has already been done and it is very difficult to correct the situation.

When a foster child has resided in a foster home, group home, or receiving home for 90 consecutive days or more and a decision is made to return the child home, the foster family or pertinent caretaker is not entitled to the standard five-day notice of the decision.

When a decision is made to move a foster child to another placement, the foster parents or relative care providers have no right to a review of the removal decision in court.

SUMMARY:

A standard procedure is created to review grievances pertaining to a division policy or procedure or the application of a division policy or procedure. The procedure may be utilized by clients of the Department of Social and Health Services, individual complainants, and foster parents. If the grievance being reviewed involves a decision by the department to move a foster child from a foster family home or a relative's home, the child will remain in the foster or relative's home unless the regional administrator determines that the child's safety is in jeopardy or that other compelling reasons exist necessitating the removal.

When a foster child has been residing in a foster home, group home or receiving home for 90 days or more and a decision is made to return the child home, the foster parent or pertinent caretaker is entitled to five days written notice.

When a decision is made to move a foster child to another placement, the foster parent may seek a review of the removal decision in juvenile court after the foster parent has utilized the Division of Children and Family Services citizen complaint review process.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested