

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5916

C 340 L 91

SYNOPSIS AS ENACTED

Brief Description: Changing foster care provisions and providing a grievance process.

SPONSORS: Senate Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Senators Roach, Talmadge, L. Smith and Stratton).

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

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 to access nor is there a neutral forum to hear and make decisions on such grievances.

When a foster child has been in a foster family home for 90 consecutive days or more, the department or child-placing agency is required to give five days notice before moving the child to another home. However, the five-day notice is not required to be given when the child has been living in the home for 90 days but it is a group home or receiving home. The five-day notice is also not required when a decision is made to return the child to the home of the natural parent.

Foster-adopt parents are required to be licensed as foster parents and have a home study performed as a preliminary step towards clearance to be adoptive parents. There is no separate foster-adopt license nor is there any training for caseworkers specific to placement procedures in foster-adopt homes. There is no document which is provided to foster-adopt parents that delineates the risks and potential benefits of being foster-adopt parents. Misunderstandings and emotionally painful consequences have arisen.

SUMMARY:

The Department of Social and Health Services is directed to develop and implement a complaint resolution process to review grievances pertaining to a division policy or procedure or the application of a division policy or procedure.

When a child resides in the home of a foster parent or relative pursuant to a disposition order, the court may allow the foster parent or relative to attend dependency review

proceedings pertaining to that child for the purpose of providing information to the court about the child.

VOTES ON FINAL PASSAGE:

Senate	46	1	
House	98	0	(House amended)
Senate	38	0	(Senate concurred)

EFFECTIVE: May 21, 1991