
**Early Learning & Children's
Services Committee**

SB 6891

Brief Description: Requiring certain hiring and training practices for children's administration social workers.

Sponsors: Senators Stevens, Hargrove, Carrell, Brandland and Roach.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prescribes a percentage of entry level social worker classifications that must be achieved when the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is hiring social workers.
- Directs the DSHS to establish a training process and pathway to promotion for entry level social workers hired.

Hearing Date: 2/26/08

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

Background:

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) utilizes four job classifications of social worker. According to a recent study published by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC), while the DSHS uses all four classifications, Social Worker 1 and 2 classifications are seldom used because the DSHS has established the Social Worker 3 classification (SW3C) as the "goal class" for caseworkers. As of July 2003, about 76 percent of Children's Administration (CA) caseworkers were SW3Cs.

According to the job description published by the Department of Personnel, Social Worker 1s (SW1Cs) receive training for the first six months of employment and then are assigned cases. As a component of their training program, the SW1Cs are to assist professional level staff with cases that will enable them to experience a full range of division-specific service functions. Social Worker 2s (SW2Cs) can provide risk assessment intake, perform routine licensing functions and

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other indirect services to clients such as service eligibility determinations for out-of-home placements and case plan monitoring.

Summary of Bill:

When hiring social workers, the DSHS must ensure that 15 percent of those hired at any given time are SW1Cs and SW2Cs. The DSHS is to establish a training process for SW1Cs and SW2Cs to become SW3Cs.

The training must include assigning tasks and duties that are required preparation for the duties of SW3Cs; include data processing responsibilities; and require attendance at meetings on behalf of case carrying social workers. The training process is to be designed to remediate the current workload of SW3Cs. The CA may assign SW1Cs and SW2Cs other tasks within their classification that relieve case carrying social workers of their workload.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.