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**HOUSE BILL 2008**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Kagi, Jinkins, and Senn

AN ACT Relating to the budgeting process for core state services for children; amending RCW 43.88C.010; adding a new section to chapter 74.13 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 43.88 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that effective planning for and implementation of core state services for children requires predictability and stability in the budgeting process for these services. For these reasons, the legislature intends that costs for child protective services and certain programs for foster children be included in the state budgeting process at maintenance level. By implementing consistent statewide assessments, forecasting program caseloads, and incorporating forecast-based program costs into the maintenance level budget, the state can ensure predictable funding levels for these programs.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW to read as follows:

The Washington state institute for public policy, in consultation with the department, must develop a single validated tool to assess the care needs of foster children. Once the validated tool is available for use on a statewide basis, the department must use the tool for assessing the care needs of foster children, including but not limited to whether the department should provide foster children with behavioral rehabilitation services. The department must notify the caseload forecast council, the office of financial management, and the appropriate fiscal committees of the legislature when it begins statewide use of the validated tool.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.88C.010 and 2015 c 128 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The caseload forecast council is hereby created. The council shall consist of two individuals appointed by the governor and four individuals, one of whom is appointed by the chairperson of each of the two largest political caucuses in the senate and house of representatives. The chair of the council shall be selected from among the four caucus appointees. The council may select such other officers as the members deem necessary.

(2) The council shall employ a caseload forecast supervisor to supervise the preparation of all caseload forecasts. As used in this chapter, "supervisor" means the caseload forecast supervisor.

(3) Approval by an affirmative vote of at least five members of the council is required for any decisions regarding employment of the supervisor. Employment of the supervisor shall terminate after each term of three years. At the end of the first year of each three-year term the council shall consider extension of the supervisor's term by one year. The council may fix the compensation of the supervisor. The supervisor shall employ staff sufficient to accomplish the purposes of this section.

(4) The caseload forecast council shall oversee the preparation of and approve, by an affirmative vote of at least four members, the official state caseload forecasts prepared under RCW 43.88C.020. If the council is unable to approve a forecast before a date required in RCW 43.88C.020, the supervisor shall submit the forecast without approval and the forecast shall have the same effect as if approved by the council.

(5) A councilmember who does not cast an affirmative vote for approval of the official caseload forecast may request, and the supervisor shall provide, an alternative forecast based on assumptions specified by the member.

(6) Members of the caseload forecast council shall serve without additional compensation but shall be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120 while attending sessions of the council or on official business authorized by the council. Nonlegislative members of the council shall be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

(7) "Caseload," as used in this chapter, means:

(a) The number of persons expected to meet entitlement requirements and require the services of public assistance programs, state correctional institutions, state correctional noninstitutional supervision, state institutions for juvenile offenders, the common school system, long-term care, medical assistance, foster care and related services as set forth in section 4 of this act, ((~~and~~)) adoption support, and screened-in reports of child abuse or neglect;

(b) The number of students who are eligible for the Washington college bound scholarship program and are expected to attend an institution of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.92.030;

(c) The number of children who are eligible, as defined in RCW 43.215.405, to participate in, and the number of children actually served by, the early childhood education and assistance program.

(8) The caseload forecast council shall forecast the temporary assistance for needy families and the working connections child care programs as a courtesy.

(9) The caseload forecast council shall forecast youth participating in the extended foster care program pursuant to RCW 74.13.031 separately from other children who are residing in foster care and who are under eighteen years of age.

(10) Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions provided in RCW 43.88.020 apply to this chapter.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.88 RCW to read as follows:

For the purposes of this chapter, the following foster care, adoption support and related services, and child protective services must be forecasted and budgeted as maintenance level costs:

(1) Behavioral rehabilitation services placements. The requirements of this subsection apply only once the department is using a single validated assessment tool on a statewide basis as required by section 2 of this act;

(2) Social worker and related staff to receive, refer, and respond to screened-in reports of child abuse or neglect;

(3) Court-ordered parent-child and sibling visitations; and

(4) Those activities currently being treated as maintenance level costs for budgeting or forecasting purposes on the effective date of this section, including, but not limited to: (a) Adoption support and other adoption-related expenses; (b) foster care maintenance payments; (c) child-placing agency management fees; (d) support goods such as clothing vouchers; (e) child aides; and (f) child care for children in foster or relative placements when the caregiver is in work or school.

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