

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6525

As of January 22, 2020

Title: An act relating to modifying six-month trial return home in child welfare dependency proceedings.

Brief Description: Modifying six-month trial return home in child welfare dependency proceedings.

Sponsors: Senators Carlyle, Darneille and Wilson, C.; by request of Department of Children, Youth and Families.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation: 1/23/20.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes that if a child is returned home pursuant to a dependency proceeding or permanency planning, casework supervision by the Department of Children, Youth and Families shall continue until the court determines there is no longer the need for continued intervention and casework shall not exceed six months unless authorized by the court.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, REENTRY & REHABILITATION

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7488)

Background: Permanency Plan. When a child is ordered removed from the home of a parent, the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) or supervising agency assumes responsibility for developing a permanency plan no later than 60 days after assuming responsibility. The permanency planning process must include reasonable efforts to return the child to the home of the parent. The supervising agency must submit a written permanency plan to all parties and the court at least 14 days before the scheduled hearing.

The permanency plan must identify the primary goal of the case and may identify alternative goals. These goals could include returning the child to the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian; adoption; guardianship; permanent legal custody; long-term relative or foster care; successful completion of a responsible living program; or independent living. Unless the

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court has ordered the filing of a petition to terminate parental rights, the plan must include what steps will be taken to return a child home. All aspects of the plan must include the goal of achieving permanence for the child.

The plan must specify what services the parents will be offered to allow them to resume custody, the requirements parents must meet to resume custody, and a time limit for each service and requirement.

Dependency Review Hearings. A court must review the status of all children found to be dependent at least every six months from the date a child was placed out of the child's parent's home or the date dependency is established, whichever is first. The purpose of these hearings is to review the progress of the parties and determine whether court supervision should continue.

The first review hearing must be an in-court review and be set six months from the beginning date of the child's placement out of home or no more than 90 days from the entry of the disposition order, whichever is first.

A child may not be returned home at a review hearing unless the court finds a reason for removal no longer exists. If a child is returned home, casework must continue for six months, when there must be a hearing on the need for continued intervention.

If a child is not returned home at a review hearing, the court must establish in writing various determinations. Some of these determinations include:

- whether the supervising agency is making reasonable efforts to provide services to the family and eliminate the need for out-of-home placement;
- whether the parties complied with the case plan; and
- whether progress was made in correcting the problems that led to out-of-home care.

Summary of Bill: If a child is returned home pursuant to a dependency proceeding or permanency planning, casework supervision by DCYF shall continue until the court determines there is no longer the need for continued intervention. Casework supervision by DCYF shall not exceed six months unless authorized by the court.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.