

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1685

As Reported by House Committee On:
Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning

Title: An act relating to resource and assessment centers.

Brief Description: Concerning resource and assessment centers.

Sponsors: Representatives Rule, Dent, Eslick and Pollet.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning: 2/14/23, 2/15/23 [DPS], 1/19/24 [DP2S].

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Allows Resource and Assessment Centers (RACs) to provide emergency initial care for certain children as they enter care, and address placement disruptions for children birth through age 17 for up to three business days, or up to seven business days with Department of Children, Youth, and Families approval.
- Removes the requirement that the RACs demonstrate they are not dependent on reimbursement from the state to operate.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, YOUTH, & EARLY LEARNING

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Cortes, Vice Chair; Rule, Vice Chair; Couture, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Callan, Dent, Goodman, Ortiz-Self and Taylor.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Walsh.

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:*Resource and Assessment Centers.*

A Resource and Assessment Center (RAC) provides short-term emergency and crisis care for a period up to 72 hours, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, to children who have been removed from their parent's or guardian's care by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Child Protective Services and/or law enforcement. An RAC may provide care for children birth through age 12, or for children ages 13 through 17 who have a sibling or siblings under age 13 who are being admitted to the RAC. An RAC may operate up to 24 hours a day, and up to seven days per week. An RAC may not be used to address placement disruptions for children who have been removed from a foster home because of behavior or safety concerns.

The DCYF may provide a license to an RAC if:

- there is a demonstrated need in the community;
- the RAC will be primarily staffed by trained volunteers; and
- the RAC is not financially dependent on reimbursement from the state to operate.

The licensing rules for an RAC allow:

- a sufficient number of trained volunteers to meet the staffing requirements;
- flexibility in hours of operation that allow the RAC to close if there are no children in its care; and
- the ability to operate in a residential area.

Summary of Bill (Second Substitute):

The RACs are no longer required to demonstrate that they are not dependent on reimbursement from the state to operate.

The RACs may:

- provide care for children birth through age 17 at the discretion of the RAC (instead of birth through age 12, and children ages 13 through 17 who have a sibling at the RAC);
- provide care for children for up to three business days, or up to seven business days with the approval of the DCYF (instead of up to 72 hours, excluding weekends and holidays); and
- be used to provide emergency initial care for children as they enter care and respite care, and address placement disruptions for children who have not been removed from a foster home because of behavior or safety concerns.

Second Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill allows RACs to provide care for children for up to three business days or

up to seven business days with approval of the DCYF (current law allows care for up to 72 hours with no ability to extend).

The substitute bill removes the ability for RACs to provide respite care.

The substitute bill provides that RACs may be used to:

- provide emergency initial care for children as they enter foster care; and
- address placement disruptions for children who have not been removed from a foster home because of behavior or safety concerns.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Second Substitute Bill: The bill contains multiple effective dates. Please see the bill.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

See House Bill Report in the 2023 Legislative Session.

Persons Testifying: See House Bill Report in the 2023 Legislative Session.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: See House Bill Report in the 2023 Legislative Session.