The Florida Senate

COMMITTEE MEETING EXPANDED AGENDA

CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND ELDER AFFAIRS
Senator Sobel, Chair
Senator Hays, Vice Chair

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, December 10, 2013
TIME: 8:30 —10:30 a.m.
PLACE: *Mallory Horne Committee Room,* 37 Senate Office Building

MEMBERS: Senator Sobel, Chair; Senator Hays, Vice Chair; Senators Altman, Braynon, Clemens, Dean, Detert, Diaz de la Portilla, Grimsley, and Thompson

TAB	BILL NO. and INTRODUCER	BILL DESCRIPTION and SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTION
1	Presentation on Improvements to Child Abuse Investigations - Stephen Pennypacker, Assistant Secretary for Programs, Department of Children and Families		Discussed
2	Presentation on Other State's Child Welfare Systems - Jennifer Johnson, Staff Director, OPPAGA - Mary Alice Nye, Chief Legislative Analyst, OPPAGA		Discussed
	Consideration of proposed committee bill:		
3	**SPB 7002**	Adoptions; Requiring that the court provide a petitioner with certain information related to postadoption services and informal change of custody; providing that a violation of the section need not be willful and with criminal intent in order for such violation to result in criminal liability; requiring a licensed child-placing agency or an entity that conducts intercountry adoptions to meet certain requirements, etc.	Submitted as Committee Bill Yeas 9 Nays 0
4	Other Related Meeting Documents		

Exhibit 1
State Child Welfare Systems – Organizational Placement, Per Capita Funding, Full-Time Equivalents, and Minimum Credentials for Employment

State/Organizational Placement	Per Capita Funding[1]	Child Welfare Worker FTEs		Minimum Credentials by Position
STATE ADMINISTERED CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS				
Arizona Department of Economic Security, Division of Children, Youth, and Families	$322.40	Child Protective Services Specialist I	168	**Child Protective Services Specialist I** ▪ Bachelor's or master's degree in related field; or ▪ Bachelor's degree and two years of social work experience; or ▪ Social services experience; or ▪ Two years as a Service Specialist I in Child Protective Services
		Child Protective Services Specialist II	232	
		Child Protective Services Specialist III	576	
		Child Protective Services Supervisor	158	
		Total	**1,134**	
Florida Department of Children and Families, Child Welfare Program Office	$292.06	Department Child Protective Investigator	898.5	**Department Child Protective Investigator** ▪ Bachelor's degree and passing the Introduction to Child Protection Written Assessment
		Department Child Protective Investigator Supervisor	196	
		Sheriff Child Protective Investigator	341	
		Sheriff Child Protective Investigator Supervisor	66	
		Child Welfare Case Manager	1,927	
		Child Welfare Case Manager Supervisor	398	
		Total	**3,826.5**	
Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services	$215.81	Social Services Associate	29	**Social Services Associate** ▪ Bachelor's degree **Social Services Case Manager** ▪ Bachelor's degree and one year of social services experience or a division internship that involved a caseload
		Social Services Case Manager	994	
		Social Services Case Manager Advanced	410	
		Social Services Specialist	302	
		Social Services Supervisor	362	
		Total	**2,097**	
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services	$389.11	Protective Services	1,426.7	**Child Welfare Specialist** ▪ Bachelor's degree in social work with one year of directly related professional experience; or ▪ Bachelor's degree in a related human service field with two years of directly related professional experience **Child Protection Specialist** ▪ Bachelor's degree in social work or related human service field and four years of directly related professional experience
		Family Reunification and Substitute Care	684.4	
		Family Maintenance	214.4	
		Total	**2,325.5**	
Indiana Department of Child Services, Child Protective Services	$353.01	Family Case Manager	1,445	**Family Case Manager** ▪ Bachelor's degree, requires related course work
		Family Case Manager Supervisor	243	
		Total	**1,688**	
Michigan Department of Human Services, Children Services Administration	$299.41	Child Protective Service Specialist	1,384	**Child Protective Service Specialist** ▪ Bachelor's degree in human services; no specific type or amount of experience is required.
		Direct Care Workers	977	
		Total	**2,361**	
Missouri Department of Social Services Children's Division	$305.47	Not available		**Children's Services Worker I** ▪ Bachelor's or higher level degree in human services-related fields

State/Organizational Placement	Per Capita Funding[1]	Child Welfare Worker FTEs		Minimum Credentials by Position
STATE ADMINISTERED CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS (continued)				
New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency	$394.40	Family Services Specialist	2,530	**Family Service Specialist** ▪ Bachelor's degree
Tennessee Department of Children's Services, Division of Child Safety	$259.66	Department Case Manager	3,159	**Case Manager 1** ▪ Bachelor's degree
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Child Protective Services	$198.12	Child Protective Services Staff	8,064.5	**Child Protective Services Specialist I** ▪ Bachelor's degree
Washington Department of Social and Health Services, Children's Administration	$353.88	Child Protective Services Workers Child and Family Welfare Workers **Total**	313 625 **938**	**Social Service Specialist 1** ▪ Bachelor's degree in related field and one year of social service experience; or ▪ Master's degree in related field
COUNTY ADMINISTERED CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS				
California Department of Social Services, Children Family Services Division	$467.84	Case-Carrying Social Worker Non-Case Carrying Social Worker Supervisor **Total** *FTEs represent county-level workers only.	7,225 1,569 1,691 **10,485**	Bachelor's degree in social work or its equivalent in education and/or experience as certified by the State Personnel Board or a county civil service board.
New York Office of Children and Family Services, Division of Child Welfare and Community Services	$842.80	Not available		**Child Protective Service Workers** ▪ Bachelor's degree and/or relevant human services experience.
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services	$217.92	Not available		**Child Welfare Social Worker** ▪ Bachelor's degree in social work and completion of the Child Welfare Collaborative; or ▪ Bachelor's degree in social work and one year directly related experience; or ▪ Bachelor's degree in a human services field and two years of directly related experience; or ▪ Bachelor's degree and three years of directly related experience; or ▪ Master's degree in social work; or ▪ Master's degree in counseling in a human services field and one year of social work or counseling.

State/Organizational Placement	Per Capita Funding[1]	Child Welfare Worker FTEs		Minimum Credentials by Position
COUNTY ADMINISTERED CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS (continued)				
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Office of Families and Children	$297.08	Caseworker Supervisor Director **Total**	3,814 760 109 **4,683**	**Caseworker** ▪ Associate's degree in human services-related studies; or ▪ Bachelor's degree in human services-related studies; or ▪ Bachelor's degree in any field and has been employed for at least two years in a human services-related occupation; or ▪ A person who has been employed for at least five years in a human services-related occupation
Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Office of Children, Youth, and Families	$681.43	Not available		**County Caseworker I** ▪ Bachelor's degree; or ▪ Two years of experience as a County Social Services Aide 3 and two years of relevant college coursework; or ▪ An equivalent combination of experience and training, with relevant coursework and one year of experience as County Social Services Aide 3 or similar position performing paraprofessional case management functions.
Virginia Department of Social Services, Division of Family Services	$308.45	Approximately 800 FTEs are involved in child protective services investigations and on-going services.		Local level is responsible for hiring; the state does not establish education, qualification, and training requirements.

[1] Per capita funding does not include Medicaid funding for child welfare related services, which could be a significant source of funding in some states.

Exhibit 2
State Child Welfare Systems–Training, Turnover, Caseload, and Annual Salary

State	Training Administered by State or University/Institute	Turnover		Caseloads (Staff:Cases)		Entry-Level Salary Information (unless otherwise noted)	
STATE ADMINISTERED CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS							
Arizona	State	Child Protective Services Specialists	27.9%	Investigations	1:15	Child Protective Services Specialist	$33,312
		Child Protective Services Specialist Supervisors	10.9%	In-Home	1:34		
Florida	State	Department Child Protective Investigators	19.5%	**Standard**		Department Child Protective Investigator	$39,656 – $40,082
		Department Child Protective Investigators Supervisors	3.6%	Child Protective Service Worker	1:15.5		
		Sheriff Child Protective Investigators	19.9%	Case Manager	1:20	Sheriff Child Protective Investigator	$26,000 – $48,461
		Sheriff Child Protective Investigators Supervisors	6.1%				
		Child Welfare Case Managers	30.4%	As of October 2013, the actual caseload for Child Protective Service Workers was 1:14.		Child Welfare Case Managers	$30,000 – $46,186
		Child Welfare Case Managers Supervisors	15.3%				
Georgia	State	All social services positions	19%	Initial Assessment/Investigation	1:19.5	Social Service Specialist	$28,005
				Ongoing Cases	1:14.8	(Higher starting salary with social work degree – see profile for detail.)	
Illinois	State	Child Welfare Specialist	24.3%	Child Welfare Specialist	1:15	Child Welfare Specialist	$51,492
		Child Protection Specialist	21.7%	Child Protection Specialist	1:12	Child Protection Specialist	$51,492
Indiana	State	Family case manager	21.6%	**Standards**		Family Case Manager	$35,776
				Initial assessments/investigations	1:12		
				Ongoing services	1:17		
				As of May 2012, 17 of 18 regions were in compliance with the caseload averages of 12 and 17.			
Michigan	State	Child Protective Service Specialist	7.2%	**Standards**		Child Protective Service Specialist	$39,938
				Assigned Investigation (55.7% met the standard)	1:12		
				Ongoing Cases (54.2% met the standard)	1:17		
Missouri	State	Children's Services Worker	20%	**Standards**		Children's Service Worker I	$27,768
				Investigation	1:15		
				Open cases	1:15 to 1:30		
New Jersey	University Partnership	Caseworker	7.6%	**Standards**		Family Service Specialist	$48,416
				Open Cases	1:12		
				New Referrals	1:8		
Tennessee	State	Case Managers	12%	Not available		Case Manager 1	$31,812

State	Training Administered by State or University/Institute	Turnover		Caseloads (Staff:Cases)		Entry-Level Salary Information (unless otherwise noted)	
STATE ADMINISTERED CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS (continued)							
Texas	State	Child Protective Services Caseworker	26.1%	Child Protective Services Investigation	1:24	Child Protective Services Investigator	$36,789
Washington	University	Not available		Child Protective Services Workers	1:20	Social Service Specialist 1	$32,688
COUNTY ADMINISTERED CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS							
California	University	Not available		Not available		Depending on location: (See California's profile for detail.)	$40,428 – $48,732
New York	State	Not available		Not available		Child Protective Services Specialist for New York City (Statewide information not available.)	$42,797
North Carolina	State	Not available		Children Protective Service Workers	1:9	Child Welfare Social Worker I	$29,856
Ohio	State	Not available		New Intakes Open Cases	1:10 1:12	Minimum County Social Services Worker salaries ranged from $20,862 – $33,030 (Wages vary by county.)	
Pennsylvania	University	County Caseworker I County Caseworker II	18.39% 8.74%	Average caseload	1:11	Average Annual Salary County Caseworker I	$29,316
Virginia	University	Not available		Not available		Child Protective Services Personnel (This figure represents the average annual salary.)	$45,402

OPPAGA RESEARCH of

STATE LEVEL
CHILD WELFARE INFORMATION

Arizona ■ California ■ Florida ■ Georgia ■ Illinois ■ Indiana ■ Michigan ■ Missouri ■ New Jersey
New York ■ North Carolina ■ Ohio ■ Pennsylvania ■ Tennessee ■ Texas ■ Virginia ■ Washington

December 2013

ARIZONA

2010 CHILD POPULATION (UNDER AGE 18): 1,629,014 (25.5%)

STATE AGENCY	Department of Economic Security, Division of Children, Youth, and Families
TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION	▪ State-administered child welfare system ▪ Director appointed by the governor
DESCRIPTION	The Department of Economic Security is organized into nine divisions. The Division of Children, Youth, and Families provides child protective services; services within the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program; family support, preservation, and reunification services; family foster care and kinship care services; services to promote the safety, permanence, and well-being of children with foster and adoptive families; adoption promotion and support services; and health care services for children in out-of-home care. The department oversees the administration of child welfare services through regional operations in five areas of the state. The Office of Child Welfare Investigations is housed within the director's office. This office was established in December 2012, and its duties include investigating criminal conduct allegations and coordinating with child protective services and law enforcement.
PER CAPITA FUNDING	$322.40
FTEs	**2011** Child Protective Services Specialist I 168 Child Protective Services Specialist II 232 Child Protective Services Specialist III 576 Child Protective Services Supervisor 158
JOB CREDENTIALS	**Child Protective Services Specialist I** ▪ Bachelor's or master's degree in sociology, psychology, or related field; or ▪ Bachelor's degree and two years of social work experience; or ▪ Social services experience; or ▪ Two years as a Human Service Specialist I in Child Protective Services **Child Protective Services Specialist II** ▪ Bachelor's or master's degree in social work; or ▪ Bachelor's or master's degree in sociology, psychology, or a related field and one year of Child Protective Services experience; or ▪ Master's degree in a related field and two years of social work or social services experience; or ▪ Bachelor's degree and three years of social work or social services experience; or one year's experience as a Child Protective Services Specialist I in Arizona state service **Child Protective Services Specialist III** ▪ Master's degree in social work or related field and two years of Child Protective Services experience; or ▪ Bachelor's degree in social work or a related field and three years of Child Protective Services experience; or ▪ One year's experience as a CPS Specialist II in Arizona state service **Child Protective Services Unit Supervisor** ▪ Two years of experience as a Child Protective Service Specialist III in Arizona State Service; or ▪ Master's degree in social work or a related field and four years of Child Protective Services experience; or ▪ Bachelor's degree in social work or a related field and five years of Child Protective Services experience

When an employee meets the work standards and knowledge, skills and ability of the Child Protective Services Specialist II, Child Protective Services Specialist III, or Child Protective Services Unit Supervisor level, management has the discretion to promote the employee.

TRAINING

The Division's Child Welfare Training Institute offers a comprehensive child welfare training program to support and provide quality services. Initial and ongoing training for child welfare staff are provided through various methods and opportunities, including

- pre-core/new employee orientation training;
- CPS Specialist core training;
- on-the-job/field training and support;
- supervisor core training and advanced courses for supervisors and managers;
- parent aide and case aide core training;
- training on Children's Information Library and Data Source (CHILDS);
- specialized one-on-one training refreshers on CHILDS and the Child Safety Assessment-Strength and Risk Assessment case planning process;
- specialized and advanced training, including workshops and conferences on topics such as gangs, mental health issues, and methamphetamine abuse;
- policy training;
- region offered training;
- out-service training (conferences and seminars in the community);
- the Arizona State University School of Social Work Master of Social Work stipend and BSW scholarship programs;
- the part-time Master of Social Work program for permanent status agency employees residing in Maricopa or Pinal County; and
- training to other child welfare community partners, including the Foster Care Review Board, Juvenile Court, contracted service providers, and Native American tribes.

TURNOVER

2013

Child Protective Services Specialists	27.9%
Child Protective Services Specialist Supervisors	10.9%

CASELOAD

2011

Type of Case	Average Monthly Caseload
Investigations	1:15
In-Home	1:34
Out-of-Home	1:29
Supervisor to CPS Positions	1:5.3

SALARY INFORMATION

	Salary
Child Protective Services Specialist I	$33,312
Child Protective Services Specialist II	$35,730
Child Protective Services Specialist III	$38,855 – $70,195

CALIFORNIA

2010 CHILD POPULATION (UNDER AGE 18): 9,295,040 (25%)

STATE AGENCY	California Department of Social Services, Children and Family Services Division
TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION	▪ County-administered child welfare system ▪ Director appointed by the governor
DESCRIPTION	The Department of Social Services includes the following divisions: adult programs, children and family services, community and family licensing, disability determination, human rights and community services, state hearings, and welfare-to-work. California's child welfare services are primarily delivered through the 58 counties, with county boards of supervisors overseeing provision of services. The counties organize and operate their own programs based on local needs while complying with state and federal regulations. Under the supervision of the department, county welfare agencies provide front-line services, including investigating reports of maltreatment, removing children from unsafe homes, finding foster home placements, providing reunification services to families, and finding permanent adoptive parents.
PER CAPITA FUNDING	$480.14
FTEs	**2011** Case-Carrying Social Worker 7,225 Non-Case Carrying Social Worker 1,569 Supervisor 1,691 FTEs represent county-level workers only.
JOB CREDENTIALS	County staff who provide emergency response and family maintenance services must meet the following qualifications. ▪ At least 50% of the professional staff providing emergency response services, and at least 50% of the professional staff providing family maintenance services, shall possess a master of social work, or its equivalent in education and/or experience as certified by the state personnel Board or a county civil service board. ▪ 100% of the supervisors of staff providing emergency response and family maintenance services shall possess a master's degree in social work or its equivalent in education and/or experience as certified by the state personnel board or a county civil service board. ▪ Remaining emergency response and family maintenance services professional staff shall possess a bachelor's degree in social work or its equivalent in education and/or experience as certified by the State Personnel Board or a county civil service board.
TRAINING	The Regional Training Academy Coordination Project is a statewide collaborative for in-service training and continuing professional education of public child welfare staff. Six coordinating partners—the four regional training academies, the Inter-University Consortium/Los Angeles County Training Division, and the Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice with University of California Davis—provide a continuum of training and professional education to county staff across the state. This coordinated delivery model reduces duplication of training, increases consistency, promotes professionalism and competency, and supports child welfare staff retention in California's 58 counties. Regional training academies contract with the department and administer the California Common Core Curricula, a comprehensive, competency-based program that addresses the training needs of new and experienced social workers, supervisors, and management staff. New social workers

	receive statewide standardized training. The curricula are mandated and are in regulation per the manual of policies and procedures. All newly hired social workers and supervisors are required to complete the core training program with standardized information within 12 months of hire. Other core training with standardized competencies and learning objectives must be completed within 24 months of hire. The regional academies deliver services through a variety of modalities, including classroom-based training, training events for a multidisciplinary audience of child welfare community professionals, field-based training, mentoring, coaching, the use of webinars, and e-learning. The academies address issues of staff retention and collaborate with counties to strategize on how training can be used as a strategy toward the retention of quality staff. The training is provided by regional training academies as well as individual counties.
TURNOVER	Not Available
CASELOAD	Not Available

SALARY INFORMATION

Entry Level Social Worker	Monthly Salary	Annualized (12 months)
Interagency Merit Systems counties[1]	$3,693	$40,428
Approved Local Merit Systems counties[2]	$4,061	$48,732
Los Angeles County	$4,027	$48,324

Advanced Level Social Worker	Monthly Salary	Annualized (12 months)
Interagency Merit Systems counties[1]	$4,086	$49,032
Approved Local Merit Systems counties[2]	$4,610	$55,320
Los Angeles County	$4,400	$52,800

[1] California has 30 Interagency Merit Systems (IMS) counties. The Merit Services System, a centralized system for assisting people with finding positions in the Departments of Social Services and Child Support Services, works with these counties on a daily basis to interpret and apply standards to ensure compliance with state and federal requirements.

[2] California has 28 Approved Local Merit Systems (ALMS) counties. ALMS counties meet the requirements in Local Agency Personnel Standards (LAPS) and the Merit Services System periodically reviews ALMS counties to ensure compliance with LAPS.

FLORIDA

2010 CHILD POPULATION (UNDER AGE 18): 4,002,091 (21.3%)

STATE AGENCY	Department of Children and Families, Child Welfare Program Office
TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION	▪ State-administered child welfare system ▪ Secretary appointed by the governor
DESCRIPTION	The Department of Children and Families administers and oversees eligibility determination for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Medicaid, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; family and community services, which include services for adult protection, child care regulation, domestic violence family safety, the Florida Abuse Hotline, and homelessness; and mental health and substance abuse services. The Child Welfare Program Office works in partnership with six regions, 20 community-based care lead agencies, and six sheriff's offices to develop and oversee policy and practice requirements for child protective investigations and case management services. The office is responsible for complying with state and federal reporting requirements linked to financial awards and performance expectations. Department staff and six sheriff's offices are responsible for child protective investigations and lead agencies are responsible for all child welfare services except for child protective investigations.
PER CAPITA FUNDING	$292.37
FTEs	**2012**

Department Child Protective Investigator	898.5
Department Child Protective Investigator Supervisor	196
Sheriff Child Protective Investigator	341
Sheriff Child Protective Investigator Supervisor	66
Child Welfare Case Manager	1,927
Child Welfare Case Manager Supervisor	398

JOB CREDENTIALS

Abuse Registry Counselor
Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university

Child Protective Investigator
Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and passing the Introduction to Child Protection Written Assessment. Applicants who have not passed the assessment will be considered trainee status.

Child Protective Investigator Supervisor
No minimum qualifications specified. Attainment of a passing score on the basic skills Introduction to Child Protection Written Assessment is required; applicants who have not completed the training and passed the written assessment will be considered trainee status.

Community-based care lead agencies and sheriffs' offices may have their own minimum criteria. However, as part of the state's Child Professional Certification Program, every child protection professional is required to have a bachelor's degree in social work or a related area of study, pass the Level 2 background screening, and become certified within one year of the date of hire or within one year of having successfully completed either the post-test or the waiver test for his or her position classification, whichever is easier.

TRAINING

Training funds are provided to each of the department's six regions and contracted sheriffs' offices for the purchase and/or delivery of pre-service and in-service training for child protective investigators. Training funds also are allocated to the lead community-based care agencies for

the delivery of training for case managers. There are approximately 150 trainers statewide. Contracted agencies (and the regions) must use these funds for child welfare education and training services only.

In addition, all direct service child welfare employees working for the department, sheriffs' offices, and provider agencies that contract with the community-based care lead agencies are required to obtain and maintain certification in the Child Professional Certification Program. The program, provided by the Florida Certification Board, is the only entity approved to provide certification and requires approximately one year of training, supervision, and on-the-job experience.

TURNOVER

Fiscal Year 2012-13

Department Child Protective Investigators	19.5%
Department Child Protective Investigators Supervisors	3.6%
Sheriff Child Protective Investigators	19.9%
Sheriff Child Protective Investigators Supervisors	6.1%
Child Welfare Case Managers	30.4%
Child Welfare Case Managers Supervisors	15.3%

CASELOAD

October 2011 – September 2012 Standards

Intake Counselor per Intake Supervisor	1:9
Child Protective Service Worker	1:15.5
Supervisor to Child Protective Service Worker	1:5.6
Case Manager (non-CPI)	1:20

As of October 2013, the actual caseload for Child Protective Service Workers was 1:14.

SALARY INFORMATION

2012

	Range of Average Salaries[1]
Department Child Protective Investigator	$39,656 – $40,082
Department Child Protective Supervisor	$49,568 – $51,039
Sheriff Child Protective Investigator	$26,000 – $48,461
Sheriff Child Protective Supervisor	$50,000 – $77,436
Child Welfare Case Managers	$30,000 – $46,186
Child Welfare Case Managers Supervisors	$35,353 – $61,000

[1] The range of average salaries is based on average salaries by region for Department Child Protective Investigators, by county for Sheriff Child Protective Investigators, and by community-based care lead agencies for Case Managers.

GEORGIA

2010 CHILD POPULATION (UNDER AGE 18): 2,491,552 (25.7%)

STATE AGENCY	Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services
TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION	▪ State-administered child welfare system ▪ Commissioner appointed by State Board of Human Services
DESCRIPTION	The Department of Human Services is headed by a commissioner appointed by, and accountable to, the state's Board of Human Services. The Department of Human Services is responsible for the delivery of social services and is composed of three program divisions: Aging Services, Family and Children Services, and Child Support Services. The Division of Family and Children Services includes the Social Services Program, which administers child welfare programs including adoptions, child abuse prevention and treatment, child protective services, foster care, independent living services, and promoting safe and stable families. The department administers services through 15 child welfare regions; services are provided in department offices located in each county.
PER CAPITA FUNDING	$219.30
FTEs	**January 2013** Social Services Protect and Placement Associate 29 Social Services Protect and Placement Case Manager 994 Social Services Protect and Placement Case Manager Advanced 410 Social Services Protect and Placement Specialist 302 Social Services Protect and Placement Supervisor 362
JOB CREDENTIALS	**Social Services Protect and Placement Associate** Undergraduate degree **Social Services Protect and Placement Case Manager** Behavioral science degree and one year of social services experience or a division internship that involved a caseload **Social Services Protect and Placement Case Manager Advanced** Bachelor's degree in social work **Social Services Protect and Placement Specialist** Master's degree in social work **Social Services Protect and Placement Supervisor** Bachelor's degree and 24 months of case management experience in a social services program of the Division of Family and Children Services
TRAINING	Case managers begin their training by attending the Keys to Child Welfare sequence. This is a basic overview of best practice social work skills and an introduction to the computer data entry system. Case managers then must complete the track sequence for their specific area of work. This might be child protective services, foster care, or adoption. Each sequence is composed of online, classroom, and transfer of learning activities. Upon completion of the coursework, each case manager must also complete a case record review and a field observation by their direct supervisor. Once all objectives have been met, the case manager is certified and all information is

entered into an online transcript system. Once initial certification is complete, case managers must complete 20 hours of additional training per year to continue their certification.

Supervisors take a similar course of study, but it is designed around information that supervisors must know to complete their job. Supervisors also are certified once they complete a record review and observation. They must complete 20 hours of additional training per year to continue their certification standing. A leadership track is offered to those persons holding positions higher than supervisor. This is designed to increase leadership performance and success.

TURNOVER

2013

The overall turnover rate for social services positions was 19%.

CASELOAD

March 31, 2012

Initial Assessment/Investigation	1:19.5
Ongoing Cases	1:14.8
Family Support (formerly diversion staff)	1:24.2
Foster Family Care	1:17

SALARY INFORMATION

	Salary
Social Service Protect and Placement Specialist (Bachelor's degree)	$28,005
Social Service Protect and Placement Specialist (Behavioral Science degree and one year's experience)	$30,869
Social Service Protect and Placement Specialist (Bachelor's degree in social work)	$32,412
Social Service Protect and Placement Specialist (Master's degree in social work)	$34,039
Social Service Case Manager (in Fulton County)	$31,000
Social Service Protect and Placement Specialist Supervisor	$37,080

ILLINOIS

2010 CHILD POPULATION (UNDER AGE 18): 3,129,179 (24.4%)

STATE AGENCY	Department of Children and Family Services
TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION	▪ State-administered child welfare system ▪ Director appointed by the governor
DESCRIPTION	The department administers child protection services, adoption services, child care licensure and inspection, TANF, housing advocacy services, and cash assistance. The department reorganized in 2012 by privatizing many community-based services. The department's Bureau of Operations houses child protective investigations, intact family services, and permanency and adoption services.
PER CAPITA FUNDING	$393.39
FTEs	**Fiscal Year 2012** Protective Services 1,426.7 Family Reunification and Substitute Care 684.4 Family Maintenance 214.4
JOB CREDENTIALS	**Child Welfare Specialist** ▪ Bachelor's degree in social work with one year of directly related professional experience; or ▪ Bachelor's degree in a related human service field with two years of directly related professional experience **Child Protection Specialist** Bachelor's degree in social work or related human service field and four years of directly related professional experience **Child Protection Advanced Specialist** Master's degree in social work plus two years of directly related professional experience as a Child Welfare Specialist or Child Protection Specialist in the Department of Children and Family Services **Child Protection Investigations Supervisor** Master's degree in social work from a recognized college or university and three years of administrative child welfare experience or a master's degree in an acceptable human services field from a recognized college or university and four years of administrative child welfare experience
TRAINING	Illinois law requires the department to have a training program for child protective investigators and supervisor and child welfare specialists and supervisors. The department's training must include (1) training in the detection of symptoms of child neglect and drug abuse; (2) specialized training for dealing with families and children of drug abusers; and (3) specific training in child development, family dynamics, and interview techniques. Illinois requires child protective and child welfare staff to be certified pursuant to the Child Protective Investigator and Child Welfare Specialist Certification Act of 1987. In addition, state law requires the department to develop a continuous in-service staff development program and evaluation system. Each child protective investigator and supervisor and child welfare specialist and supervisor must participate and complete a minimum of 20 hours of in-service education and training every two years in order to maintain certification.

TURNOVER	**2011-2013**		
	Child Welfare Specialist	24.3%	
	Child Protection Specialist	21.7%	
	Child Protection Advanced Specialist	10.1%	
CASELOAD	**Fiscal Year 2011**		
	Child Welfare Specialist	1:15	
	Child Protection Specialist (Investigator)	1:12	
SALARY INFORMATION		Monthly Salary Range	Annualized (12 months)
	Child Welfare Specialist	$4,291 – $6,452	$51,492 – $77,424
	Child Protection Specialist	$4,291 – $6,452	$51,492 – $77,424

Indiana

2010 CHILD POPULATION (UNDER AGE 18): 1,608,298 (24.8%)

STATE AGENCY	Department of Child Services, Child Protective Services
TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION	▪ State-administered child welfare system ▪ Director appointed by the governor
DESCRIPTION	The department was established in 2005 as a separate cabinet-level agency. The department administers child support, child protection, adoption, and foster care. Along with a reorganization of the central office structure, Indiana's 92 counties were organized into 18 regions with local offices serving as divisions within those regions.
PER CAPITA FUNDING	$353.19
FTEs	**June 2012** Family Case Manager 1,445 Family Case Manager Supervisor 243
JOB CREDENTIALS	**Family Case Manager** Bachelor's degree from an accredited college/university with at least 15 semester hours or 21 quarter hours in child development, criminology, criminal justice, education, healthcare, home economics, psychology, guidance and counseling, social work, or sociology **Family Case Manager Supervisor** ▪ Bachelor's degree from an accredited college/university required with at least 15 semester hours or 21 quarter hours in child development, criminal justice, criminology, education, guidance and counseling, healthcare, home economics, psychology, social work, or sociology; and two years of full-time professional experience in the provision of education or social services to children and/or families. At least one year of the required experience must be in an administrative, managerial, or supervisory; or ▪ Master of social work from an accredited university/college. This can be substituted by accredited graduate training in any one of the following areas: child development, criminal justice, criminology, education, guidance and counseling, healthcare, home economics, psychology, social work, or sociology
TRAINING	The department's new family case manager training program, effective January 2013, includes four modules covering 12 weeks (29 in-classroom days, 21 county-based transfer of learning days, and 10 county-based on the job reinforcement days).
TURNOVER	**June 2011 – May 2012** Family Case Manager 21.6%
CASELOAD	**May 2012** Indiana Caseload Standards: Active cases relating to initial assessments, including investigations of an allegation of child abuse or neglect 1:12 Children monitored and supervised in active cases relating to ongoing services 1:17 As of May 2012, 17 of 18 regions were in compliance with the caseload averages of 12 and 17.
SALARY INFORMATION	Salary Family Case Manager $35,776

Michigan

2010 CHILD POPULATION (UNDER AGE 18): 2,344,068 (23.7%)

STATE AGENCY	Department of Human Services, Children's Services Administration
TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION	▪ State-administered child welfare system ▪ Director appointed by the governor
DESCRIPTION	The Department of Human Services administers several programs for the purpose of helping individuals and families meet financial, medical, and social needs; assisting self-sufficiency; and helping protect children and adults from abuse and exploitation. The department's Children's Services Administration is responsible for planning, directing, and coordinating child welfare programs. The department operates 108 offices in 83 counties and coordinates the implementation of child welfare goals through field offices. Michigan's urban and most populated counties are divided into districts, with a Department of Human Services office in each district.
PER CAPITA FUNDING	$302.18
FTEs	**Fiscal Year 2012** Child Protective Service Specialist 1,384 Direct Care Workers 977
JOB CREDENTIALS	**Child Protective Service Specialist** A bachelor's degree in one of the following areas of human services: consumer/community services, counseling psychology, criminal justice, family and/or child development, family ecology, family studies, guidance/school counseling, social work, sociology, or psychology. For entry level positions, no specific type or amount of experience is required.
TRAINING	Child protective services training is administered through the department's Child Welfare Training Institute. The institute develops, implements, trains, evaluates, tracks, and monitors training for child welfare staff. Child Protective Service Specialists (this includes caseworkers) hired in a child protective services position must successfully complete an eight-week pre-service training program that includes 270 hours of competency-based classroom and field training. Caseworkers learn to conduct interviews, engage and assess families, develop investigation reports and service plans, prepare for and testify in court, and practice personal safety techniques. Training centers are located throughout Michigan. Employees also must complete a minimum number of hours of in-service training on an annual basis.
TURNOVER	**2011** Child Protective Services Specialist 7.2%
CASELOAD	**January 2012** <u>Michigan Caseload Standards:</u> Ongoing Cases 1:17 (54.2% met the standard) Assigned Investigation 1:12 (55.7% met the standard)

SALARY INFORMATION

Salaries are based on level of qualifications and experience:

Type of Degree/Experience	Hourly Wage Range	Annualized (based on 2,080 hours of work per year)
Bachelor's degree and no prior experience	$18.72 – $25.79	$38,938 – $53,643
Master's degree and no prior experience	$19.35 – $27.71	$40,248 – $57,637

Missouri

2010 CHILD POPULATION (UNDER AGE 18): 1,425,436 (23.8%)

STATE AGENCY	Department of Social Services, Children's Division
TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION	▪ State-administered child welfare system ▪ Director appointed by the governor
DESCRIPTION	The Department of Social Services is organized into four program divisions: the Children's Division, the Family Support Division, the MO Healthnet Division, and the Division of Youth Services. The Children's Division provides programs and services for child safety and permanency, subsidized child care, early childhood development and education, and child abuse prevention. Child safety and permanency programs administer abuse and neglect investigations and foster care and adoption services. The director appoints directors for each division. County Children's Division offices throughout the state administer child welfare services.
PER CAPITA FUNDING	$326.41
FTEs	FTEs for child welfare-related positions are not available.
JOB CREDENTIALS	**Children's Services Worker I** A bachelor's or higher level degree from an accredited college or university in counseling, criminal justice, education, family and child development, juvenile justice, marriage and family therapy, psychiatric nursing, psychology, social work/human services, sociology, or human services-related fields (e.g., child welfare, developmental disabilities, mental health, and substance abuse). **Children's Services Worker II** ▪ One or more years of experience as a Children's Service Worker I with the Missouri Uniform Classification and Pay System; or ▪ A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in counseling, criminal justice, education, family and child development, juvenile justice, marriage and family therapy, psychiatric nursing, psychology, social work/human services, sociology, or human services-related fields (e.g., child welfare, developmental disabilities, mental health, and substance abuse) and one or more years of experience in the delivery of protective children's services (adoptions, child foster care, family-centered services, intensive in-home services, and investigation of abuse or neglect of children) in a public or private agency; or ▪ A master's degree from an accredited college or university in counseling, criminal justice, education, family and child development, juvenile justice, marriage and family therapy, psychiatric nursing, psychology, social work/human services, sociology, or human services-related fields (e.g., child welfare, developmental disabilities, mental health, and substance abuse).
TRAINING	The initial in-service curriculum used to train children's services workers is the Child Welfare Practice Basic Orientation Training that includes 126 hours (over five weeks) of classroom training provided by the Children's Division (trainers), combined with on the job training skills practice exercises. Topics included in Child Welfare Practice Basic Orientation Training include referral services, development of the case plan, case reviews, case management supervision, and preparation for and participation in judicial determinations. New children's services workers are on probationary status for the first 12 months of employment and receive on-going classroom and on the job training relating to their area of job assignment. These courses include: child abuse/neglect investigations/family assessments/application of family centered philosophy and skills for intact families, children's division computer system training, expedited permanency and family-centered out-of-home care process, family-centered philosophy and skills training, and reinforcement and evaluation.

TURNOVER	**Fiscal Year 2011**	
	Children's Services Worker	20%
	Supervisor	10%
CASELOAD	**2012**	
	Missouri Caseload Standards:	
	Investigation	1:15
	Open cases	1:15 to 1:30
	For probationary staff (first 12 months), caseloads are reduced. Caseloads increase as caseworker skills are developed.	
SALARY INFORMATION		Salary Range
	Children's Service Worker I	$27,768 – $42,936
	Children's Service Worker II	$30,264 – $42,926

New Jersey

2010 CHILD POPULATION (UNDER AGE 18): 2,065,214 (23.5%)

STATE AGENCY	Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency
TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION	▪ State-administered child welfare system ▪ Commissioner appointed by the governor
DESCRIPTION	Created in 2006, the Department of Children and Families is a cabinet-level department. The Division of Child Protection and Permanency is New Jersey's child protection and child welfare agency. The division contracts with community-based agencies throughout the state to provide services to children and families.
PER CAPITA FUNDING	$442.83
FTEs	**June 2013** Family Service Specialist 2,530
JOB CREDENTIALS	**Family Service Specialist** A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university; a bachelor of social work or master of social work preferred.
TRAINING	The New Jersey Child Welfare Training Partnership delivers more than 100 different courses including mandatory classes in the department's case practice model and the four tiers of child abuse investigative findings as well as a large menu of elective course offerings. Working with the department's Office of Training and Professional Development, Rutgers University serves as the lead partner responsible for creating, coordinating, and delivering training courses that prepare child welfare workers within the division. The partnership has evolved into a large-scale professional development approach taking place in all 21 counties of the state to ▪ develop curriculum and delivery of education to enhance case practice and planning with youth, children and their families; ▪ create classroom and on-line training to meet the changing needs of the workforce; ▪ provide specialized training on critical issues influencing child welfare, especially domestic violence and substance abuse; ▪ infuse culturally relevant coursework that raises cultural competence of staff; and ▪ conduct ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of training.
TURNOVER	**2012** Caseworker 7.6%
CASELOAD	**June 2013** New Jersey caseload standards: Intake Worker Open Cases 1:12 (100% of local offices met the standard) Intake Worker New Referrals 1:8 (100% of local offices met the standard)
SALARY INFORMATION	Salary Family Service Specialist $48,416

New York

2010 CHILD POPULATION (UNDER AGE 18): 4,324,929 (22.3%)

STATE AGENCY	Office of Children and Family Services, Division of Child Welfare and Community Services
TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION	▪ County-administered child welfare system ▪ Commissioner appointed by the governor
DESCRIPTION	The Executive Office of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, encompassing the Office of the Commissioner, the Office of the Executive Deputy Commissioner, the NYC Executive Office, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Development, and Executive Services, provides overall leadership, management, coordination, and administration of agency operation and mission-driven priorities. The Office of Children and Family Services program divisions/offices include the Division of Child Care Services, the Division of Child Welfare and Community Services, the Division of Juvenile Justice and Opportunities for Youth, and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped. The Division of Child Welfare and Community Services monitors the provision of services at the local level to ensure compliance with program statutes, regulations, and practice standards. The division maintains regional offices in Albany, Buffalo, Long Island, New York City, Rochester, Syracuse, and Spring Valley, to support agency programs and partnerships with stakeholders and providers. The regional offices assist localities in tailoring local service delivery systems to community needs and conduct reviews of local child protective services. Local departments of social services are responsible for providing child welfare services.
PER CAPITA FUNDING	$850.64
FTEs	FTEs for child welfare-related positions are not available.
JOB CREDENTIALS	**Child Protective Service Workers**: Bachelor's or equivalent college degree and/or relevant human services experience. Counties are responsible for hiring caseworkers.
TRAINING	**Child Protective Services Worker** Required to complete a basic training program in child protective services within the first three months of employment that focuses on the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are essential to working in the field. This includes, but is not limited to, basic training in the principles and technique of child protective service investigation case management and planning and legal issues in child protective services matters. All persons employed by child protective services must complete six hours of in-service training per year starting in the second year of employment. **State Central Register** New employees are required to participate in an intensive five-week training program that includes three weeks of instructor led training which includes, but is not limited to, state social services law, child abuse and maltreatment definitions, evaluating information and decision making based on reports and relevant law, and assigning reports to local protective services units for investigation. New employees also receive two weeks of on-the-job training.
TURNOVER	Not Available
CASELOAD	New York does not have statutory or regulatory caseload requirements for child protective service workers. Based on a 2006 child welfare workload study, the Office of Children and Family Services recommends a caseload goal of 1:12.

SALARY INFORMATION

	Salary
Child Protective Services Specialist (State Central Register Worker)	$41,170
New York City Child Protective Services Specialist Starting Salary	$42,797
New York City Child Protective Services Specialist after six months of service	$46,479
New York City Child Protective Services Specialist after 18 months of service	$49,561

New York City also provides compensation for overtime and certain night time assignments.

North Carolina

2010 CHILD POPULATION (UNDER AGE 18): 2,281,635 (23.9%)

STATE AGENCY	Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services
TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION	▪ County-administered child welfare system ▪ Secretary appointed by the governor
DESCRIPTION	The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is the umbrella agency in state government responsible for ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of all North Carolinians. The department is divided into 30 divisions and offices and includes the Division of Social Services. North Carolina also has a Social Services Commission, composed of one member from each congressional district, appointed by the Governor. The commission develops operating rules for the Division of Social Services. The division works in cooperation with the commission and 100 local departments of social services that provide child protective services.
PER CAPITA FUNDING	$217.92
FTEs	FTEs for child welfare-related positions are not available.
JOB CREDENTIALS	**Child Welfare Social Worker** ▪ Bachelor's degree in social work from an accredited school of social work and completion of the Child Welfare Collaborative; or ▪ Bachelor's degree in social work from an accredited school of social work and one year directly related experience; or ▪ Bachelor's degree in a human services field from an accredited college or university and two years of directly related experience; or ▪ Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and three years of directly related experience; or ▪ Master's degree in social work from an accredited school of social work; or ▪ Master's degree in counseling in a human services field and one year of social work or counseling. Direct related experience is defined as human services experience in the areas of assessment and referral supportive counseling, case management, intervention, and psycho-social therapy and treatment planning. Degrees must be received from appropriately accredited institutions. Note: About half of North Carolina's child welfare workforce does not have social work degrees and require a high degree of general and specialized social work training before working with families.

TRAINING	**North Carolina Statewide Training Partnership**. North Carolina General Statute establishes minimum training standards for child welfare workers and supervisors. **Child Welfare Social Workers** Must complete 72 hours pre-service training before assuming direct contact responsibilities and 24 hours of continuing education annually **Child Protective Service Workers** Must complete a minimum of 18 hours of additional training as determined by the department while foster care and adoption workers must complete a minimum of 39 additional hours as determined by the department **Child Welfare Supervisors** Must complete a minimum of 72 hours of pre-service training and a minimum of 54 hours of additional training as determined by the department In addition, master of social work students enrolled in approved programs can satisfy the Pre-Service Training (Child Welfare in North Carolina course) requirement by successfully completing 1. a customized version of pre-service training; 2. a practicum in a public child welfare setting; and 3. the coursework that the program has identified to address the competencies. Bachelor of social work students at authorized programs usually complete the Pre-Service Training requirement (Child Welfare in North Carolina course) by completing a specific child welfare course and completing a placement in a public child welfare setting. Students are provisionally certified until they graduate with a bachelor's or master's degree in social work. Full certification requires that the student complete the degree and complete the activities the program designates as those necessary for pre-service training.
TURNOVER	Not Available
CASELOAD	**2013** Children Protective Service Workers Average Caseload 1:9
SALARY INFORMATION	

	Salary Range
Child Welfare Social Worker I	$29,856 – $45,878
Child Welfare Social Worker II	$34,474 – $54,460
Child Welfare Social Worker III	$37,632 – $62,372

Ohio

2010 CHILD POPULATION (UNDER AGE 18): 2,730,751 (23.7%)

STATE AGENCY	Department of Job and Family Services, Office of Families and Children
TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION	▪ County-administered child welfare system ▪ Director appointed by the governor
DESCRIPTION	The department develops and supervises the state's public assistance, workforce development, unemployment compensation, child and adult protective services, adoption, child care, and child support programs. The Office of Families and Children is responsible for state level administration and oversight of programs that prevent child abuse and neglect, provide services to abused/neglected children and their families (birth, foster and adoptive), license foster homes and residential facilities, and investigate allegations of adult abuse, neglect and exploitation. The office develops policies and procedures to guide county agencies in program and service delivery, oversees implementation of programs, provides technical assistance to county agencies, and monitors agency compliance with federal and state laws, rules, and policies. Child welfare services are provided at the county level by 88 public children's services agencies. Although these agencies were created by Ohio statute, the structure of each agency is determined at the local level. Sixty-four of the agencies are located within county department of job and family services' offices; 24 are separate children's service boards.
PER CAPITA FUNDING	$297.60
FTEs	**January 2013** Caseworker 3,814 Supervisor 760 Director 109
JOB CREDENTIALS	A county public children services agency may hire caseworkers that meet one of the following minimum requirements. ▪ An associate's degree in human services-related studies; or ▪ A bachelor's degree in human services-related studies; or ▪ A bachelor's degree in any field and has been employed for at least two years in a human services-related occupation; or ▪ A person who has been employed for at least five years in a human services-related occupation For employment to continue for employees that do not possess a bachelor's degree in a human services-related field, the employee must obtain a job-related bachelor's degree not later than five years after the date employment with the agency commences.

TRAINING

Ohio has a statewide training program, the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program. The training program is administered through eight regional training centers throughout the state. New caseworkers are required to complete 102 hours of core training. Caseworker Core Training, the program for new caseworkers, is an intensive, competency based program that provides training in the knowledge and skills necessary to casework practice. The following courses are included in the caseworker core training.

1. Family-Centered Approach to Child Protective Services
2. Engaging Families in Family-Centered Child Protective Services
3. Legal Aspects of Family-Centered Child Protective Services
4. Assessment in Family-Centered Child Protective Services
5. Investigative Processes in Family-Centered Casework
6. Case Planning and Family-Centered Casework
7. Child Development: Implications for Family-Centered Protective Services
8. Separation, Placement, and Reunification in Family-Centered Child Protective services

Specialized courses and related topic areas also are offered. In addition to core training, caseworkers are required to complete 36 hours of in-service training annually after their first year. Coaching is available for new caseworkers in areas such as family assessment, case documentation, assessing safety throughout the life of a case, and engaging families.

TURNOVER

Not Available

CASELOAD

2012

New Intakes	1:10
Open Cases	1:12

SALARY INFORMATION

	Minimum Hourly Wage[1]	Annualized (based on 2,080 hours of work per year)
County Social Services Worker Minimum	$10.03 – $15.88	$20,862 – $33,030
County Social Services Worker Maximum	$12.04 – $21.38	$25,043 – $44,470

[1] Hourly wages vary by county.

PENNSYLVANIA

2010 CHILD POPULATION (UNDER AGE 18): 2,792,155 (22%)

STATE AGENCY	Department of Public Welfare, Office of Children, Youth, and Families
TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION	▪ County-administered child welfare system ▪ Secretary appointed by the governor
DESCRIPTION	The Department of Public Welfare administers seven program offices including the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, the Office of Children, Youth, and Families, the Office of Developmental Programs, the Office of Income Maintenance, the Office of Long-Term Living, the Office of Medical Assistance Programs, and the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. The department's Office of Children, Youth, and Families is responsible for assuring the availability and provision of public child welfare services, providing oversight and technical assistance to each county agency, and establishing and enforcing policies and regulations that support achievement of child welfare goals and outcomes. County child and youth social service agencies are responsible for administering children and youth social service programs to prevent child abuse and neglect, prevent dependency and delinquency, and provide permanency and stability for children.
PER CAPITA FUNDING	$682.00
FTEs	FTEs for child welfare-related positions are not available.
JOB CREDENTIALS	**County Caseworker I** ▪ Bachelor's degree, which includes or is supplemented by successful completion of 12 college credits in criminal justice, gerontology, psychology, social welfare, sociology, or other related social sciences; or ▪ Two years of experience as a County Social Services Aide 3 and two years of college coursework, which includes 12 college credits in criminal justice, gerontology, psychology, social welfare, sociology, or other related social sciences; or ▪ An equivalent combination of experience and training, which includes 12 college credits in criminal justice, gerontology, psychology, social welfare, sociology, or other related social sciences and one year of experience as County Social Services Aide 3 or similar position performing paraprofessional case management functions. **County Caseworker II** ▪ Six months of experience as a County Caseworker 1; or ▪ Successful completion of the County Social Casework Intern Program; or ▪ Bachelor's degree with a social welfare or social work major; or ▪ Bachelor's degree, which includes or is supplemented by 12 college credits in criminal justice, gerontology, psychology, social welfare, sociology, or other related social sciences, and one year of professional social casework experience in a public or private social services agency; or ▪ An equivalent combination of experience and training, which includes 12 college credits in criminal justice, gerontology, psychology, social welfare, sociology, or other related social sciences.

TRAINING

The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center at the University of Pittsburgh provides staff at county Children and Youth Social Service agencies with individualized training and technical assistance services. The services are provided through ongoing collaborative partnerships with County Children and Youth Social Service agencies, the Department of Public Welfare, private provider agencies, families, community members, and other system partners.

Regional teams are assigned to work with county children and youth social service agencies to assess the training and technical assistance needs and to coordinate a seamless delivery of the Resource Center's products and services.

Regional teams include the following personnel.

- Practice Improvement Specialist
- Curriculum and Instructional Specialist
- Training Specialist
- Transfer of Learning Specialist
- Administrative Assistant

The Resource Center facilitates county specific assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation, and monitoring that leads to improved knowledge, skills, and practices.

TURNOVER

Fiscal Year 2010-11

County Caseworker I	18.39%
County Caseworker II	8.74%
County Casework Supervisor	5.26%

CASELOAD

June 2012

Average caseload	1:11
Minimum caseload	1:3
Maximum caseload	1:41

SALARY INFORMATION

	Average Annual Salary
County Caseworker I	$29,316
County Caseworker II	$35,139

Tennessee

2010 CHILD POPULATION (UNDER AGE 18): 1,496,001 (23.6%)

STATE AGENCY	Department of Children's Services, Division of Child Safety
TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION	▪ State-administered child welfare system ▪ Commissioner appointed by the governor
DESCRIPTION	The department underwent reorganization in 2013. Under the new structure, child protective services are administered in the Division of Child Safety and a deputy commissioner position was created to oversee the programs. While regional staff will continue to conduct assessments, investigators will begin reporting directly to the central office. The division also will restructure recruitment, training, and assessment processes for investigators. A new Division of Child Health is being created to oversee the child fatality review process, safety analysis, nursing, psychology, and education. A deputy commissioner position has been created to manage these programs. This will be the first time the department has united these programs.
PER CAPITA FUNDING	$332.18
FTEs	**Fiscal Year 2013-14** Department Case Manager 3,159
JOB CREDENTIALS	**Case Manager 1** Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university **Case Manager 2** Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and experience equivalent to one year of full-time professional work providing child welfare services **Case Manager 3** ▪ Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and two years of professional experience providing child welfare services; or ▪ A graduate degree in social work or a related behavioral science field may be substituted for the required experience on a year-for-year basis, to a maximum of one year (e.g., 36 graduate quarter hours may be substituted for one year of required experience). **Case Manager 4** ▪ Master's degree from an accredited college or university in social work or a related behavioral science field with a child or family focus and experience equivalent to three years of full-time professional child welfare case work; or ▪ Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and experience equivalent to five years of full-time professional child welfare case work.

TRAINING

The Tennessee Child Protective Services Investigator Training Academy was designed for Child Protection Service Investigators. The academy is a non-consecutive three week program focusing on how to conduct thorough investigations. All child protective services investigators will graduate from this academy.

To ensure the Academy meets the needs of the Investigators, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation spent time shadowing the Department of Children's Services' investigators in both urban and rural regions across Tennessee.

The Child Protective Services Investigator Post-Training Academy is designed to supplement and build upon the skills learned during the three week Child Protective Services Investigator Training Academy. The academy is a non-consecutive four-day training program provided to community partners and Investigations staff.

TURNOVER

2011-12

Case Managers	12%

CASELOAD

Not available

SALARY INFORMATION

	Monthly Salary Range	Annualized (12 months)
Case Manager 1	$2,651 – $3,573	$31,812 – $42,876
Case Manager 2	$2,905 – $4,051	$34,860 – $48,612
Case Manager 3	$3,023 – $4,217	$36,276 – $50,604
Case Manager 4	$3,291 – $4,592	$39,492 – $55,104
Team Coordinator	$3,904 – $5,447	$46,848 – $65,364

Texas

2010 CHILD POPULATION (UNDER AGE 18): 6,865,824 (27.3%)

STATE AGENCY	Department of Family and Protective Services, Child Protective Services
TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION	▪ State-administered child welfare system ▪ Commissioner appointed by the Health and Human Services Commission Executive Commissioner
DESCRIPTION	The department has four major programs: Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, Child Care Licensing, and Prevention and Early Intervention. The department's assistant commissioner for child protective services oversees service delivery provided by local staff in eleven geographic regions under the direction of regional directors for child protective services. Direct delivery staff are organized into functional units that are specialized by stage of service: investigation, family based safety services, and conservatorship.
PER CAPITA FUNDING	$198.66
FTEs	**2012** Child Protective Services Staff 8,064.5 This includes 1,737.2 Child Protective Services Investigators.
JOB CREDENTIALS	**Child Protective Services Specialist I** Degree from an accredited four-year college or university **Child Protective Services Specialist II** ▪ Employed as a Child Protective Services Specialist I for nine months and have received Child Protective Services Specialist Certification; or ▪ Previously employed as a Child Protective Services Specialist II in the Department of Family and Protective Services.
TRAINING	The department has an employment development unit that leads all training for new and tenured staff. Workers who investigate reports of child abuse or conduct interviews during investigations of child abuse must receive at least 20 hours of professional training every year. The curriculum must include information about physical abuse and neglect; abuse involving mental or emotional injury; the types and incidence of each type of abuse and neglect reported to the department; the receipt of false reports; law-enforcement style training, including forensic interviewing, investigatory techniques, and the collection of physical evidence; federal child welfare laws; and available treatment resources.
TURNOVER	**2012** Child Protective Services Caseworker 26.1%
CASELOAD	**2012** Child Protective Services Caseworkers (Investigation) 1:24

SALARY INFORMATION

2012

	Salary
Child Protective Services Investigator (entry-level)	$36,789
Non-investigator (entry-level)	$31,729
Supervisor (entry-level)	$38,146

Virginia

2010 CHILD POPULATION (UNDER AGE 18): 1,853,677 (23.2%)

STATE AGENCY	Department of Social Services, Division of Family Services
TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION	▪ County-administered child welfare system ▪ Commissioner appointed by the governor
DESCRIPTION	Virginia's Secretary of Health and Human Resources oversees 12 agencies, including the Virginia Department of Social Services. The roles of the central office include developing regulations, policies, procedures and guidelines; implementing a statewide public awareness program; explaining programs and policies to mandated reporters and the general public; coordinating and delivering training; funding special grant programs; and maintaining and disseminating data from the automated information system. For child protective services, the department directly administers two services—the 24-hour hotline and the central registry of victims and caretakers involved in child abuse and neglect. The department maintains regional offices that provide technical assistance, case consultation, and training and monitoring of 120 local departments of social services that respond to reports of suspected child abuse and neglect, and provide services.
PER CAPITA FUNDING	$335.83
FTEs	**July 2013** Approximately 800 FTEs are involved in child protective services investigations and on-going services.
JOB CREDENTIALS	Because localities are responsible for hiring child protective services workers, there are no education, qualification, and training requirements established by the state. The state's human resources department has occupational title descriptions for social work professionals that can be modified by local departments. The education and experience section of the title description requires a minimum of a bachelor's degree in a human services field or minimum of a bachelor's degree in any field with a minimum of two years of appropriate and related experience in a human services area.
TRAINING	The Virginia Institute for Social Services Training Activities at Virginia Commonwealth University has been the primary provider of skills training for public child welfare staff since 1991, providing training through five area training centers. Policy and skills training has been offered by the institute in nine program areas, including child welfare, over the past several years. Review of the courses offered through the institute occurs on an ongoing basis and new courses are generally added in conjunction with the annual work plan and budget renewal process. Institute courses are primarily delivered at the five regional training centers. Other venues may be used as needed based on demand and the ability to fund additional course offerings. Courses are approved by the federal Region III child welfare liaison.
TURNOVER	Not Available
CASELOAD	Not Available
SALARY INFORMATION	Child Protective Services Personnel — Average Annual Salary: $45,402

Washington

2010 CHILD POPULATION (UNDER AGE 18): 1,581,354 (23.5%)

STATE AGENCY	Department of Social and Health Services, Children's Administration
TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION	▪ State-administered child welfare system ▪ Secretary appointed by the governor
DESCRIPTION	The Department of Social and Health Services is part of the governor's executive cabinet. The Children's Administration (one of five administrations within the department) serves children and families through four primary program areas: child protective services, family voluntary services, child and family welfare services, and family reconciliation services. The Children's Administration has staff in 46 field offices.
PER CAPITA FUNDING	$368
FTEs	**March 2012** Child Protective Services Workers 313 Child and Family Welfare Services Workers 625
JOB CREDENTIALS	**Social Service Specialist 1** ▪ A bachelor's degree in social services, behavioral sciences, or an allied field and one year of social service experience; or ▪ A master's degree in social services, behavioral sciences, or an allied field. **Social Service Specialist 2** ▪ Eighteen months as a Social Service Specialist 1; or ▪ A bachelor's degree in social services, human services, behavior sciences, or an allied field, and two years of paid social service experience performing functions equivalent to a Social Service Specialist 1; or ▪ A master's degree in social services, human services, behavioral sciences, or an allied field, and one year as a Social Service Specialist 1 or equivalent paid social service experience. **Social Service Specialist 3** ▪ One year as a Social Service Specialist 2; or ▪ A bachelor's degree in social services, human services, behavioral sciences, or an allied field, and three years of paid social service experience performing functions equivalent to a Social Service Specialist 2; or ▪ A master's degree in social services, human services, behavioral sciences, or an allied field and two years of paid social service experience equivalent to a Social Service Specialist 2. **Social Service Specialist 4** ▪ Two years of experience as a Social Service Specialist 3; or ▪ Four years of experience as a Social Service Specialist 2; or ▪ A bachelor's degree in social services, human services, behavioral sciences, or an allied field, and six years of paid social service experience performing functions equivalent to a Social Service Specialist 2; or ▪ A master's degree in social services, human services, behavioral sciences, or an allied field and four years of paid social service experience equivalent to a Social Service Specialist 2. Employees must successfully complete the formal training course sponsored by their division within one year of their appointment.

TRAINING	The Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence is the Children's Administration's comprehensive statewide training partnership dedicated to developing professional expertise for social workers and enhancing the skills of foster parents and caregivers working with vulnerable children and families. The alliance combines the resources of the University of Washington (UW) School of Social Work, UW Tacoma's Social Work Program, and Eastern Washington University's School of Social Work with the expertise of the Children's Administration and Partners for Our Children (a university-based research organization), which is charged with rigorously evaluating training effectiveness over time. By sharing curriculum, delivery methods and evaluation tools, the department expects this public-private partnership to strengthen the professional expertise of social workers, tribal child welfare workers, and community providers; and enhance the care-giving skills of foster, adoptive, and relative caregivers.
TURNOVER	Not Available
CASELOAD	**Fiscal Year 2012** Child Protective Services Workers 1:20
SALARY INFORMATION	

	Salary Range
Social Service Specialist 1	$32,688 – $43,572
Social Service Specialist 2	$39,516 – $53,148
Social Service Specialist 3	$41,508 – $55,836
Social Service Specialist 4	$47,016 – $63,192

THE FLORIDA SENATE

APPEARANCE RECORD

(Deliver BOTH copies of this form to the Senator or Senate Professional Staff conducting the meeting)

12/10/13
Meeting Date

Topic: Child Protection Teams

Bill Number: _____ *(if applicable)*

Name: Doug Bell

Amendment Barcode: _____ *(if applicable)*

Job Title: _____

Address: 215 S. Monroe St
Street

Tall. FL
City *State* *Zip*

Phone: 850 222 3533

E-mail: _____

Speaking: ☐ For ☐ Against ☒ Information

Representing: FLA Chapter - American Academy of Pediatrics

Appearing at request of Chair: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Lobbyist registered with Legislature: ☒ Yes ☐ No

While it is a Senate tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this meeting. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard.

This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

S-001 (10/20/11)

The Florida Senate

BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

BILL: SPB 7002

INTRODUCER: For consideration by the Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee

SUBJECT: Adoptions

DATE: December 10, 2013 REVISED: 12/10/13

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Sanford	Hendon		**Submitted as Committee Bill**

I. Summary:

SPB 7002 requires the court in adoption proceedings to inform the adoptive parents that post-adoption services are available if the family experiences difficulty in caring for the child and that it is unlawful for the family to make a change of custody without court approval. The bill increases the criminal penalty for advertising or offering to the public that a child is available for adoption from a second degree misdemeanor to a third degree felony. The bill removes the necessity for proving willful and criminal intent in any prosecution for an offense under this section. The bill requires all adoption entities that conduct inter-country adoptions to be certified, approved, supervised, or temporarily accredited by one of the accrediting agencies designated by the US State Department. Finally, the bill defines "intercountry adoption" and requires agencies or entities providing intercountry adoption to maintain a record with specified information. The bill is expected to have an insignificant fiscal impact and is effective July 1, 2014.

II. Present Situation:

Investigative Series

Beginning on September 9, 2013, Reuters published a five-part series, titled "The Child Exchange," which exposed how American parents were using Internet message boards to find new families for children they regretted adopting – a practice that has been called "private re-homing." Reuters spent 18 months investigating eight message boards where participants advertised unwanted children and examined two dozen cases in which adopted children were re-homed.[1] The investigative series found:

- On average, a child was advertised for re-homing at least once a week.
- The average age range for children being advertised for re-homing is 6 to 14.

[1] Megan Twohey, *The Child Exchange*, REUTERS, Sept. 9, 2013, *available at* http://www.reuters.com/investigates/adoption/#article/part1 (last visited Nov. 20, 2013).

- Re-homing is accomplished through basic power of attorney documents which allow the new guardians of the child to enroll the child in school or secure government benefits.
- At least 70 percent of the children offered for re-homing on one Yahoo message board were international adoptees.
- Only 29 states have laws that govern how children can be advertised for adoption.[2]
- The Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children, which is meant to be a safeguard against the improper placement of children across state lines, is often not enforced by law enforcement.[3]

On October 29, 2013, Reuters updated its story by reporting that a bipartisan group of 18 federal lawmakers had submitted a letter to the United States House of Representatives subcommittee overseeing adoption requesting a study by the Government Accountability Office. The study would identify gaps in state and federal laws "related to the oversight and prosecution of wrong-doers in the re-homing of children" and would also identify ways to better support struggling adoptive families.[4]

Potential Safeguards

The Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC or compact) provides a uniform set of regulations meant to ensure that children placed across state lines for purposes of adoption (public or private) or foster care are placed with individuals who are safe, suitable, and able to provide proper care.[5] The ICPC establishes the legal, financial, and supervisory responsibilities of all parties involved in the placement.[6] Like other interstate compacts, the ICPC is a formal, binding agreement among the states that has characteristics of both statutory and contract law. According to the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), interstate compacts "are enacted by state legislatures that adopt reciprocal laws that substantively mirror one another," and they are binding on all member states.[7] Florida has codified the ICPC at s. 409.401, F.S.

The ICPC requires an in-depth home study to be conducted by the receiving state.[8] This home study must include the assessment of the financial, criminal, social, and medical histories of the

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[2] Florida is one of the 29 states that have addressed this issue. See s. 63.212(1)(g), F.S.
[3] *Id*.
[4] Megan Twohey, *U.S. lawmakers call for action to curb Internet child trading*, REUTERS, *available at* http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/29/us-adoption-react-idUSBRE99S1A320131029
[5] Florida's Ctr. for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice, *History of the ICPC*, *available at* http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/icpc/Forms/AllItems.aspx (follow "History of ICPC" link under the "Additional Resources" heading) (last visited Mar. 28, 2009).
[6] *Id.*
[7] American Public Human Servs. Ass'n, Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children, *Understanding Interstate Compacts*, *available at* http://www.aphsa.org/Policy/icpc2006rewrite.htm (follow "Understanding Interstate Compacts" link under the "Understanding Interstate Commission" heading) (last visited Mar. 28, 2009).
[8] The current ICPC defines "receiving state" as "the state to which a child is sent, brought, or caused to be sent or brought, whether by public authorities or private persons or agencies, and whether for placement with state or local public authorities or for placement with private agencies or persons." The compact defines a "sending agency" as "a party state, officer or employee thereof; a subdivision of a party state, or officer or employee thereof; a court of a party state; a person, corporation, association, charitable agency or other entity which sends, brings, or causes to be sent or brought any child to another party state." See s. 409.401, F.S.

prospective family, as well as a physical evaluation of their home.[9] The ICPC establishes that once a placement is determined to be suitable, the receiving state is responsible for ongoing supervision and for providing support services to the family, as well as for providing regular reports to the sending state agency and court.[10] The ICPC also contemplates an agreement between the sending and receiving states on how services and supports will be financed.[11]

Although the compact has been adopted in every state, it is seldom enforced and each state is able to determine the penalties for a violation of the compact. Many states provide for criminal penalties; however, these penalties are generally misdemeanors. Other states do not explicitly provide sanctions for violations of the compact.[12] Florida law provides that a willful and criminal violation of the interstate compact is a third degree felony, s. 63.212, F.S.

An updated ICPC was proposed in 2005, which would standardize the process for placing children across state lines, provide a forum for review and reconsideration of decisions by states, and provide a mechanism for enforcement of ICPC provisions.[13] Currently, only 12 states have enacted the new ICPC.[14]

In addition to the ICPC, Florida also prohibits any individual or entity except an adoption entity from advertising or offering to the public that a minor is sought for adoption. Additionally, Florida law provides that it is "unlawful for any person to publish or broadcast any such advertisement or assist an unlicensed person or entity in publishing or broadcasting any such advertisement."[15] If a person willfully and with criminal intent violates this law, the person commits a second degree misdemeanor.[16]

The Hague Convention

The Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-Country Adoption (Hague Convention or convention), is an international agreement that establishes international standards of practice for intercountry adoptions.[17] There are currently 90 countries, including the United States, that are parties to the Hague Convention.[18] The Hague

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[9] *History of the ICPC*, *supra* note 1.
[10] *Id*.
[11] *Id*.
[12] *See* The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, *ICPC State Pages*, http://icpcstatepages.org/ (last visited Nov. 20, 2013).
[13] Comm. on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs, The Florida Senate, *Bill Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement CS/SB 2240* (Mar. 25, 2009), *available at* http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/session/2009/Senate/bills/analysis/pdf/2009s2240.cf.pdf (last visited Nov. 20, 2013).
[14] The Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children, *The New ICPC* (Sept. 20, 2013) (on file with the Senate Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs). Florida is one of the 12 states that has adopted the new ICPC, but the new compact will not be effective until enacted by 35 states. See ch. 2009-148.
[15] Section 63.212(1)(g), F.S.
[16] Section 63.212(8), F.S.
[17] Intercountry Adoptions, Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Dep't of State, *Understanding the Hague Convention*, http://adoption.state.gov/hague_convention/overview.php (last visited Nov. 21, 2013). The Hague Adoption Convention defines "intercountry adoption" as the process by which you adopt a child from a country other than your own through permanent legal means and bring that child to your country of residence to live with you permanently. *Id*. at *What is Intercountry Adoption*, http://adoption.state.gov/adoption_process/what.php (last visited Nov. 21, 2013).
[18] *Id*. at *Convention Countries*, http://adoption.state.gov/hague_convention/countries.php (last visited Nov. 21, 2013).

Convention applies to all adoptions between countries that have joined it and provide adoptees and their adoptive parents greater safeguards than if the parents adopt from a non-Convention country. For example, the Convention requires that countries establish a Central Authority to be the authoritative source of information and point of contact in that country. Additionally, the Convention aims to prevent the abduction of, sale of, or trafficking of children, and works to ensure that intercountry adoptions are in the best interests of children.[19]

One key component of the Hague Convention is that certain intercountry adoption services can only be effected by entities that have been accredited by the federal government. Two accrediting entities have been designated by the Department of State to handle accreditation of adoption service providers.[20] The accrediting entities evaluate adoption service providers using a set of uniform standards to ensure professionalism and ethical practices.[21] Only non-profit agencies can be accredited. For-profit agencies and individuals are approved rather than accredited.[22] However, an entity engaged in intercountry adoptions does not have to be accredited under certain circumstances, such as if the entity is working under the supervision of an accredited provider, performing limited services, or providing services in non-convention countries.[23] Temporary accreditation is also available under specified circumstances.[24]

Other Federal Laws

In 2000, Congress enacted the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 (IAA), implementing the provisions of the Convention. This federal law provides for civil and criminal penalties for violation of the Convention. The criminal penalties for a knowing and willful violation are a fine of not more than $250,000, imprisonment for not more than 5 years, or both.[25] Most recently, on January 14, 2013, the President signed into law the Intercountry Adoption Universal Accreditation Act of 2012 (UAA). This federal law, effective July 14, 2014, extends the protections and standards of the Convention to all countries, not just other Convention countries, as was previously the case.[26]

Florida Law

Florida law does not currently require adoption service providers to be accredited by the Hague Convention. Consequently, any enforcement of the provisions of the convention is left to federal authorities.

Florida law does not require the court in an adoption to inform adopting parents that post-adoption services are available or that making a change of custody to a person other than a relative without appropriate court action may constitute a criminal act.

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[19] *Understanding the Hague Convention*, *supra* note 15.
[20] These two entities are The Council on Accreditation and The Colorado Department of Human Services. Intercountry Adoptions, Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Dep't of State, *Agency Accreditation*, http://adoption.state.gov/hague_convention/accreditation.php (last visited Nov. 21, 2013).
[21] *Understanding the Hague Convention*, *supra* note 15.
[22] *See* 22 CFR ch. 1 part 96.
[23] *Agency Accreditation*, *supra* note 18.
[24] *See* 22 CFR 96.95.
[25] 42 U.S.C. s. 14944.
[26] Pub. Law No. 112-276 S. 3331, 112th Cong. (Jan. 14, 2013).

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 of SPB 7002 provides that in the adoption hearing, the court must inform the petitioner that postadoption services are available if the family experiences difficulty caring for the child. The court must also inform the petitioner that making an informal change of custody to a person other than a relative without court action may be a violation of s. 63.212, F.S. and constitute a criminal act.

Section 2 of the bill amends s. 63.212, F.S., making it a third degree felony, rather than a second degree misdemeanor, for a person to advertise or offer to the public, or to publish or broadcast any such advertisement, that a child is available for adoption. The bill also removes the requirement that any of the prohibited acts listed in s. 63.212, F.S., be done willfully and with criminal intent.

Finally, **Section 3** of the bill amends s. 409.175, F.S., to add requirements on an adoption entity conducting intercountry adoptions. Specifically, the bill requires that an adoption entity that conducts intercountry adoptions be accredited, approved, supervised, or temporarily accredited by one of the U.S. Department of State's designated accrediting entities. The bill also requires the adoption entity to meet federal law and regulations pertaining to intercountry adoptions. Additionally, the adoption entity must maintain the following records pertaining to intercountry adoptions:

- All available family and medical history of the birth family.
- All legal documents translated into English.
- All documents required for the child to attain U.S. citizenship.
- All supervisory reports before and after the adoption.

The bill defines an "intercountry adoption" as the process by which a person adopts a child from a country other than his or her own country through permanent legal means, and then brings that child to his or her country of residence to live permanently.

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2014.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

There may be a fiscal impact on some adoption entities who wish to make intercountry adoptions in non-Convention countries and who are not currently accredited or approved.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The increase in criminal penalties is unlikely to have a significant fiscal impact on the criminal justice system due to the low frequency of such crimes. The bill has, however, been referred to the Criminal Justice Impact Conference to assess any fiscal impact on the state's correctional system.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 63.142, 63.212, and 409.175.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

826184

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: FAV	.	
12/10/2013	.	
	.	
	.	
	.	

The Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs (Hays) recommended the following:

1 **Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**
2
3
4 Delete lines 76 - 86
5 and insert:
6 (b) Any adoption entity, as defined in s. 63.032, F.S.,
7 that conducts intercountry adoptions in this state must be
8 accredited, approved, supervised, or temporarily accredited by a
9 United States Department of State designated accrediting entity
10 for intercountry adoption services.

826184

11 (c) Any adoption entity, as defined in s. 63.032, F.S.,
12 that provides adoption services in this state for intercountry
13 adoption, in either incoming or outgoing cases, must comply with
14 all federal statutes and regulations pertaining to intercountry
15 adoptions.
16 (d) Any adoption entity, as defined in s. 63.032, F.S., in
17 this
18
19 ========== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T ==========
20 And the title is amended as follows:
21 Delete lines 13 - 16
22 and insert:
23 defining the term “intercountry adoption”; requiring
24 any adoption entity that conducts intercountry
25 adoptions to meet certain requirements; requiring such
26 entity to

FOR CONSIDERATION By the Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

586-00693A-14 20147002__

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to adoptions; amending s. 63.142, F.S.; requiring that the court provide a petitioner with certain information related to postadoption services and informal change of custody; amending s. 63.212, F.S.; providing that a violation of the section need not be willful and with criminal intent in order for such violation to result in criminal liability; providing that a person other than an adoption entity who advertises or offers to the public that a child is available for adoption commits a felony of the third degree; amending s. 409.175, F.S.; defining the term "intercountry adoption"; requiring a licensed child-placing agency or an entity that conducts intercountry adoptions to meet certain requirements; requiring such agency or entity to maintain certain records; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Subsection (4) of section 63.142, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

63.142 Hearing; judgment of adoption.—

(4) JUDGMENT.—At the conclusion of the hearing:~~,~~

(a) After the court determines that the date for a parent to file an appeal of a valid judgment terminating that parent's parental rights has passed and, pursuant to the Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure, no appeal~~, pursuant to the Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure,~~ is pending and that the adoption is in the

586-00693A-14 20147002__

best interest of the person to be adopted, a judgment of adoption shall be entered. A judgment terminating parental rights pending adoption is voidable and any later judgment of adoption of that minor is voidable if, upon a parent's motion for relief from judgment, the court finds that the adoption substantially fails to meet the requirements of this chapter. The motion must be filed within a reasonable time, but not later than 1 year after the date the judgment terminating parental rights was entered.

(b) The court shall inform the petitioner that:

1. Postadoption services are available if the petitioner experiences difficulty in caring for the child; and

2. Making an informal change of custody to a person other than a relative without appropriate court action may be a violation of s. 63.212 and constitute a criminal act.

Section 2. Subsection (8) of section 63.212, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

63.212 Prohibited acts; penalties for violation.—

(8) Unless otherwise indicated, a person who ~~willfully and with criminal intent~~ violates ~~any provision of~~ this section~~, excluding paragraph (1)(g),~~ commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084. In addition to the penalties specified in this section, ~~A person who willfully and with criminal intent violates paragraph (1)(g) commits a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.083; and~~ each day of continuing violation of paragraph (1)(g) is ~~shall be~~ considered a separate offense, punishable by a fine of up to $150 per day. ~~In addition, any person who knowingly publishes or assists with the~~

59 ~~publication of any advertisement or other publication which~~
60 ~~violates the requirements of paragraph (1)(g) commits a~~
61 ~~misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s.~~
62 ~~775.083, and may be required to pay a fine of up to $150 per day~~
63 ~~for each day of continuing violation.~~
64 Section 3. Present subsection (17) of section 409.175,
65 Florida Statutes, is renumbered as subsection (18), and a new
66 subsection (17) is added to that section, to read:
67 409.175 Licensure of family foster homes, residential
68 child-caring agencies, and child-placing agencies; public
69 records exemption.—
70 (17)(a) As used in this subsection, the term "intercountry
71 adoption" means the process by which a person:
72 1. Adopts a child from a country other than his or her own
73 country through permanent legal means; and
74 2. Brings that child to his or her country of residence to
75 live permanently.
76 (b) A licensed child-placing agency or an entity that
77 conducts intercountry adoptions in this state must be accredited
78 by one of the United States Department of State's designated
79 accrediting entities for intercountry adoption services.
80 (c) A licensed child-placing agency or an entity that
81 provides adoption services in this state for intercountry
82 adoption in countries that are parties to the Hague Convention,
83 in either incoming or outgoing cases, must meet the federal
84 regulations pertaining to intercountry adoptions in convention
85 countries.
86 (d) A licensed child-placing agency or an entity in this
87 state that provides intercountry adoption services for families

CODING: Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.

88 residing in this state shall maintain a record that contains, at
89 a minimum, the following:
90 1. All available family and medical history of the birth
91 family;
92 2. All legal documents translated into English;
93 3. All documents required for the child to attain United
94 States citizenship; and
95 4. All supervisory reports before and after the adoption.
96 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2014.

CODING: Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.

THE FLORIDA SENATE

APPEARANCE RECORD

(Deliver BOTH copies of this form to the Senator or Senate Professional Staff conducting the meeting)

DECEMBER 10, 2013
Meeting Date

Topic: ADOPTIONS

Bill Number: 7002 *(if applicable)*

Name: STEPHEN BENNYPACKER

Amendment Barcode: *(if applicable)*

Job Title: ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PROGRAMS

Address: 1317 WINEWOOD BOULEVARD
Street

TALLAHASSEE, FL 32399
City, State, Zip

Phone: 850 284 0611

E-mail: stephen_pennypa

Speaking: ☐ For ☐ Against ☑ Information

Representing: DCF

Appearing at request of Chair: ☑ Yes ☐ No

Lobbyist registered with Legislature: ☐ Yes ☐ No

While it is a Senate tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this meeting. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard.

This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

S-001 (10/20/11)

THE FLORIDA SENATE

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

SENATOR GERALDINE F. THOMPSON
12th District

COMMITTEES:
Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government, *Vice Chair*
Community Affairs, *Vice Chair*
Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development
Children, Families, and Elder Affairs
Commerce and Tourism
Transportation

JOINT COMMITTEE:
Joint Administrative Procedures Committee

December 4, 2013

RECEIVED
DEC 04 2013
Senate Committee
Children and Families

The Honorable Eleanor Sobel
410 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Chair Sobel:

I respectfully request an excused absence from the December 10th meeting of the Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs.

I will be attending the National Conference of Black State Legislators in Memphis, and unable to make it to Tallahassee.

Sincerely,

Geraldine F. Thompson

Senator Geraldine F. Thompson, D-12

cc: Claude Hendon

GT:dr

X Eleanor Sobel

REPLY TO:
☐ 511 W. South Street, Suite 204, Orlando, Florida 32805
☐ 224 Senate Office Building, 404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100 (850) 487-5012

Senate's Website: *www.flsenate.gov*

DON GAETZ
President of the Senate

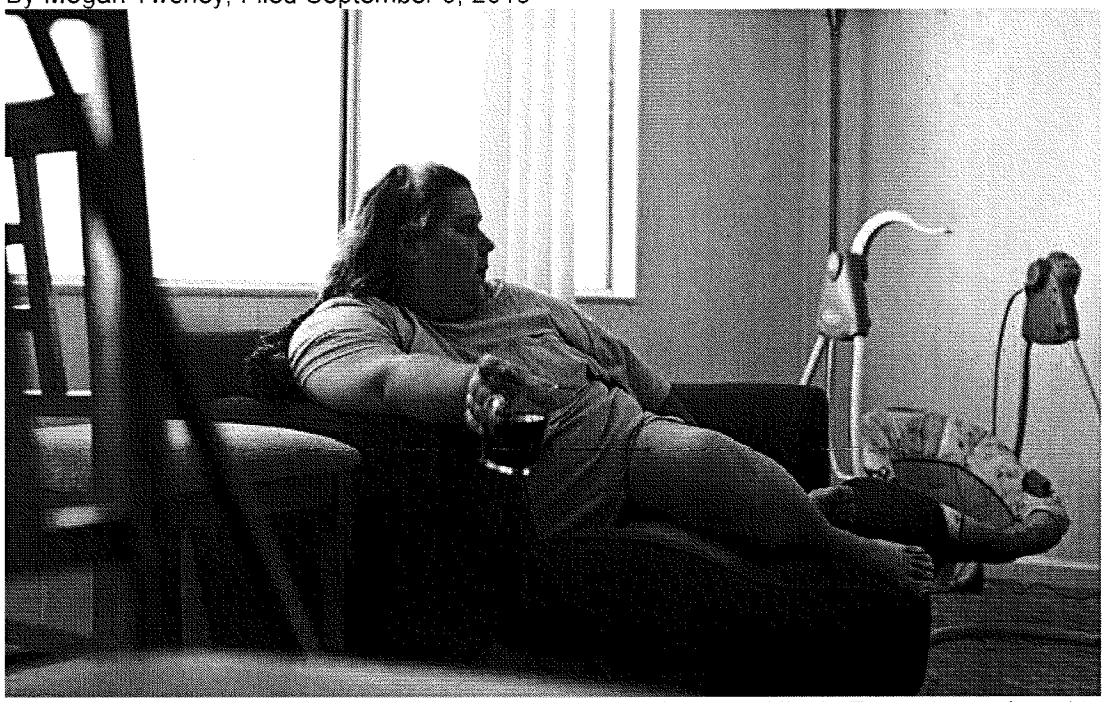
GARRETT RICHTER
President Pro Tempore

The Child Exchange

Inside America's underground market for adopted children

Americans use the Internet to abandon children adopted from overseas

By Megan Twohey, Filed September 9, 2013



MOTIVATED MOM: In her time seeking children on the Internet, Nicole Eason has referred to herself as Big Momma and Momma Bear. Her term for informal custody transfers is "non-legalized adoption," and she defines the phrase to mean: "Hey, can I have your baby?"
REUTERS/Samantha Sais

Part 1: When a Liberian girl proves too much for her parents, they advertise her online and give her to a couple they've never met. Days later, she goes missing.

KIEL, Wisconsin – Todd and Melissa Puchalla struggled for more than two years to raise Quita, the troubled teenager they'd adopted from Liberia. When they decided to give her up, they found new parents to take her in less than two days – by posting an ad on the Internet.

Nicole and Calvin Eason, an Illinois couple in their 30s, saw the ad and a picture of the smiling 16-year-old. They were eager to take Quita, even though the ad warned that she had been diagnosed with severe health and behavioral problems. In emails, Nicole Eason assured Melissa Puchalla that she could handle the girl.

"People that are around me think I am awesome with kids," Eason wrote.

A few weeks later, on Oct. 4, 2008, the Puchallas drove six hours from their Wisconsin home to Westville, Illinois. The handoff took place at the Country Aire Mobile Home Park, where the Easons lived in a trailer.

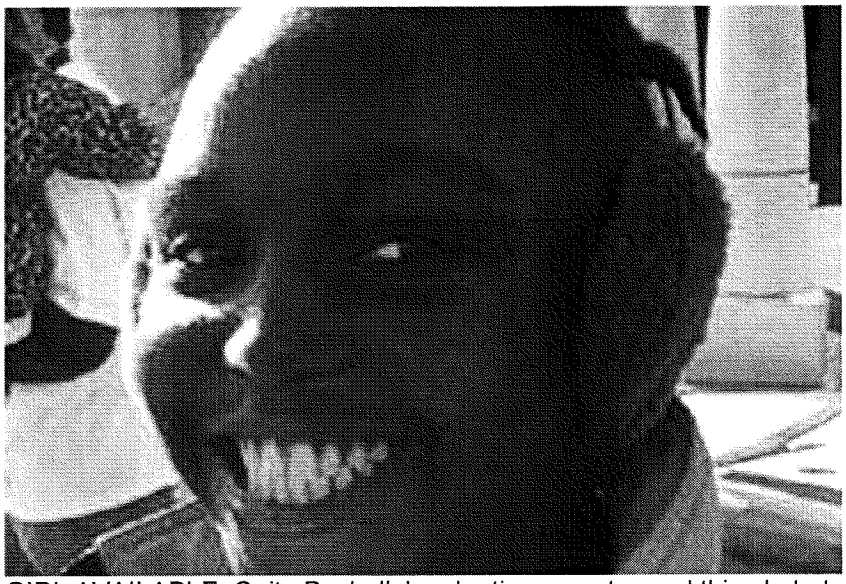
No attorneys or child welfare officials came with them. The Puchallas simply signed a notarized statement declaring these virtual strangers to be Quita's guardians. The visit lasted just a few hours. It was the first and the last time the couples would meet.

To Melissa Puchalla, the Easons "seemed wonderful." Had she vetted them more closely, she might have discovered what Reuters would learn:

- Child welfare authorities had taken away both of Nicole Eason's biological children years earlier. After a sheriff's deputy helped remove the Easons' second child, a newborn baby boy, the deputy wrote in his report that the "parents have severe psychiatric problems as well with violent tendencies."
- The Easons each had been accused by children they were babysitting of sexual abuse, police reports show. They say they did nothing wrong, and neither was charged.
- The only official document attesting to their parenting skills – one purportedly drafted by a social worker who had inspected the Easons' home – was fake, created by the Easons themselves.

On Quita's first night with the Easons, her new guardians told her to join them in their bed, Quita says today. Nicole slept naked, she says.

Within a few days, the Easons stopped responding to Melissa Puchalla's attempts to check on Quita, Puchalla says. When she called the school that Quita was supposed to attend, an administrator told Puchalla that the teenager had never shown up.



GIRL AVAILABLE: Quita Puchalla's adoptive parents used this photo to advertise her online.
REUTERS/Handout

Quita wasn't at the trailer park, either. The Easons had packed up their purple Chevy truck and driven off with her, leaving behind a pile of trash, a pair of blue mattresses and two puppies chained in their yard, authorities later found.

The Puchallas had rescued Quita from an orphanage in Liberia, brought her to America and then signed her over to a couple they barely knew. Days later, they had no idea what had become of her.

When she arrived in the United States, Quita says, she "was happy ... coming to a nicer place, a safer place. It didn't turn out that way," she says today. "It turned into a nightmare."

The teenager had been tossed into America's underground market for adopted children, a loose Internet network where desperate parents seek new homes for kids they regret adopting. Like Quita, now 21, these children are often the casualties of international adoptions gone sour.

Through Yahoo and Facebook groups, parents and others advertise the unwanted children and then pass them to strangers with little or no government scrutiny, sometimes illegally, a Reuters investigation has found. It is a largely lawless marketplace. Often, the children are treated as chattel, and the needs of parents are put ahead of the welfare of the orphans they brought to America.

The practice is called "private re-homing," a term typically used by owners seeking new homes for their pets. Based on solicitations posted on one of eight similar online bulletin boards, the parallels are striking.

"Born in October of 2000 – this handsome boy, 'Rick' was placed from India a year ago and is obedient and eager to please," one ad for a child read.

A woman who said she is from Nebraska offered an 11-year-old boy she had adopted from Guatemala. "I am totally ashamed to say it but we do truly hate this boy!" she wrote in a July 2012 post.

Another parent advertised a child days after bringing her to America. "We adopted an 8-year-old girl from China... Unfortunately, We are now struggling having been home for 5 days." The parent asked that others share the ad "with anyone you think may be interested."

Reuters analyzed 5,029 posts from a five-year period on one Internet message board, a Yahoo group. On average, a child was advertised for re-homing there once a week. Most of the children ranged in age from 6 to 14 and had been adopted from abroad – from countries such as Russia and China, Ethiopia and Ukraine. The youngest was 10 months old.

After learning what Reuters found, Yahoo acted swiftly. Within hours, it began shutting down Adopting-from-Disruption, the six-year-old bulletin board. A spokeswoman said the activity in the group violated the company's terms-of-service agreement. The company subsequently took down five other groups that Reuters brought to its attention.

A similar forum on Facebook, Way Stations of Love, remains active. A Facebook spokeswoman says the page shows "that the Internet is a reflection of society, and people are using it for all kinds of communications and to tackle all sorts of problems, including very complicated issues such as this one."

The Reuters investigation found that some children who were adopted and later re-homed have endured severe abuse. Speaking publicly about her experience for the first time, one girl adopted from China and later sent to a second home said she was made to dig her own grave. Another re-homed child, a Russian girl, recounted how a boy in one house urinated on her after the two had sex; she was 13 at the time and was re-homed three times in six months.

"This is a group of children who are not being raised by biological parents, who have been relocated from a foreign country" and who sometimes don't even speak English, says Michael Seto, an expert on the sexual abuse of children at the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group in Canada. "You're talking about a population that appears to be especially vulnerable to exploitation."

Giving away a child in America can be surprisingly easy. Legal adoptions must be handled through the courts, and prospective parents must be vetted. But there are ways around such oversight. Children can be sent to new families quickly through a basic "power of attorney" document – a notarized statement declaring the child to be in the care of another adult.

In many cases, this flexibility is good for the child. It allows parents experiencing hard times to send their kids to stay with a trusted relative, for instance. But with the rise of the Internet, parents are increasingly able to find complete strangers willing to take in unwanted children. By obtaining a power of attorney, the new guardians are able to enroll a child in school or secure government benefits – actions that can effectively mask changes of custody that take place illegally outside the purview of child welfare authorities.

There is one potential safeguard: an agreement among the 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands called the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, or ICPC. The agreement requires that if a child is to be transferred outside of the family to a new home in a different state, parents notify authorities in both states. That way, prospective parents can be vetted.

The compact has been adopted by every state and is codified in various statutes that give it the force of law. Even so, these laws are seldom enforced, in part because the compact remains largely unknown to law enforcement authorities. Each state is also left to decide how to punish those who give or take children in violations of the compact's provisions. Some states attach criminal sanctions – generally, misdemeanors. Other states aren't explicit about how violations should be handled.

A child might be removed from the new home if an illegal re-homing is discovered. But seldom is either set of parents punished. No state, federal or international laws even acknowledge the existence of re-homing.

International adoptees are especially susceptible to being re-homed. At least 70 percent of the children offered on the Yahoo bulletin board, Adopting-from-Disruption, were advertised as foreign-born.

Americans have adopted about 243,000 children from other countries since the late 1990s. But unlike parents who take in American-born children through the U.S. foster-care system, many adults adopting from overseas receive little or no training. It isn't unusual for the children they bring home to have undisclosed physical, emotional or behavioral problems.

No authority tracks what happens after a child is brought to America, so no one knows how often international adoptions fail. The U.S. government estimates that domestic adoptions fail at a rate ranging from "about 10 to 25 percent." If international adoptions fail with about the same frequency, then more than 24,000 foreign adoptees are no longer with the parents who brought them to the United States. Some experts say the percentage could be higher given the lack of support for those parents.

A U.S. federal law, passed in 2000, requires states to document cases in which they take custody of children from failed international adoptions. The State Department then collects that information. In addition, adoption agencies are supposed to report to the department certain types of failed international adoptions that come to their attention.

But many states say they are unable to keep track of the cases because their computer systems are antiquated. And the State Department won't disclose the number of failed international adoptions that are reported by adoption agencies.

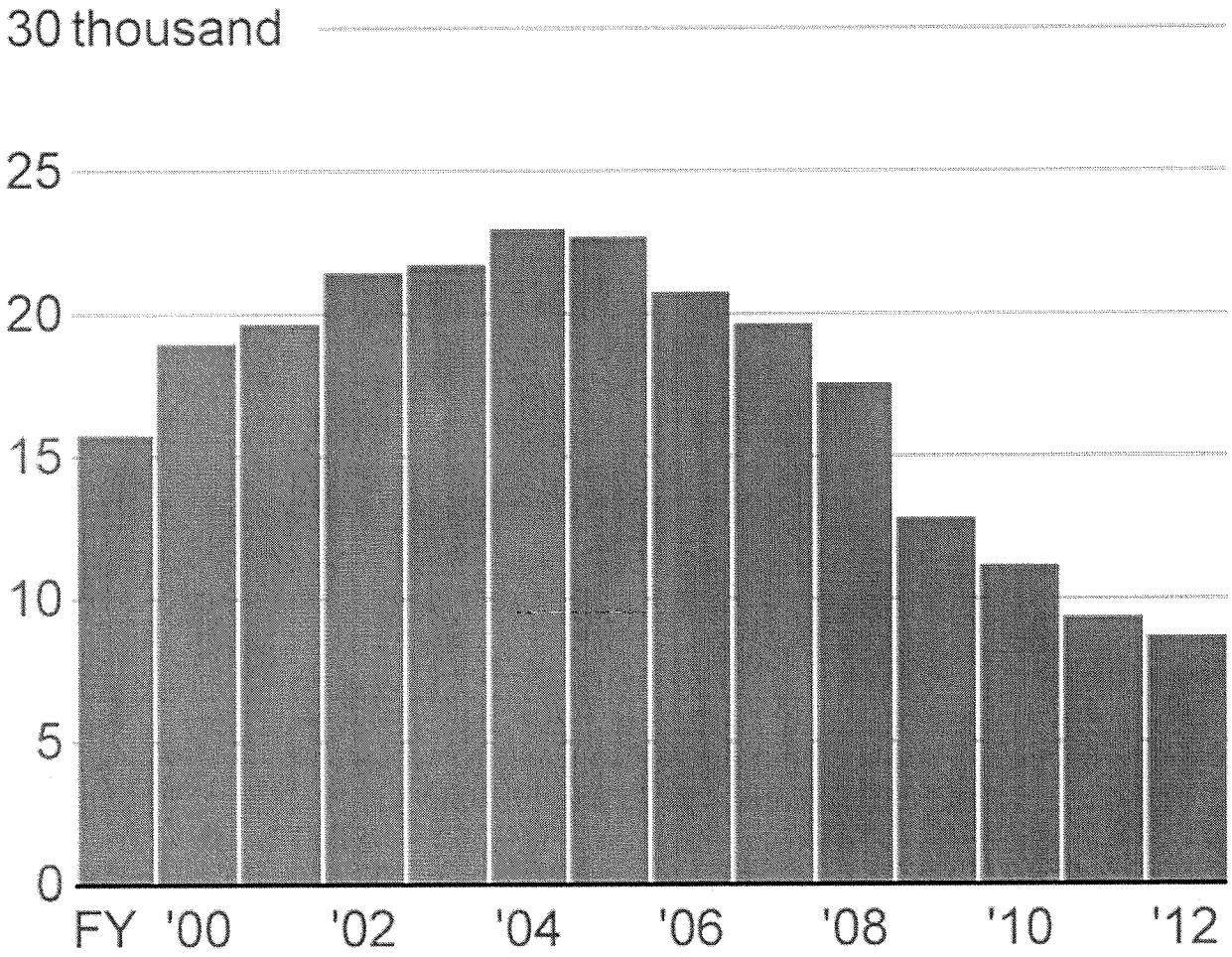
"Because the State Department is not the authoritative source of information regarding dissolutions and is not always notified when adoptions are dissolved, we do not provide statistics," a State Department official said.

The failure to keep track of what happens after children are brought to America troubles some foreign governments. So do instances of neglect or abuse that become known. Often cited is the case of the Tennessee woman who returned a 7-year-old boy she adopted from a Russian orphanage. The woman had cared for him only six months when she put the boy on a flight to Moscow in April 2010. He was accompanied by a typed letter that read in part, "I no longer wish to parent this child."

Late last year, Russia banned adoptions by Americans amid a broader diplomatic dispute. Other nations, including Guatemala and China, have also made the process more difficult. As a result, the number of foreign-born children adopted into the United States has declined from a peak of almost 23,000 in 2004 to fewer than 10,000 a year today.

A major import

Foreign children adopted annually into the U.S.:



Note: For fiscal years ending Sept 30.

Source: U.S. State Department

The recent obstacles to bringing new kids to America could make the Internet child exchange even more appealing. A participant in one online bulletin board characterized the re-homing groups as "the 'latest country' to adopt from."

Other participants wrote about openly defying government efforts, foreign and domestic, to keep track of children from failed adoptions (also sometimes called "disrupted" adoptions).

"We adopted two children from Russia. We have disrupted our daughter. What business of the Russian government?" one parent wrote in July 2012. "We never let anyone know about the disruption." (Russia is among the nations that seek periodic updates on children adopted from there.)

Parents who offer their children on the Internet say they have limited options. Residential treatment centers can be expensive, and some parents say social services won't help them; if they do contact authorities, they fear being investigated for abuse or neglect.

The problems – and the isolation parents feel – can prove overwhelming. On the bulletin boards, parents talk of children becoming abusive and violent, terrorizing them and other kids in the household.

"People get in over their heads," says Tim Stowell, an adoptive parent who created the Facebook group last year. "The main thing is to offer hope for families that have no hope... I also knew there were people looking to adopt kids from those situations, so I wanted to get those people together, kind of like a clearinghouse."

Not until January 2011 did any official responsible for overseeing the U.S. child-protection compact call attention to the dangers of the online network. In a nationwide alert to state child welfare authorities, an administrator for the ICPC warned that adoptive parents were sending children to live with people they met on the Internet. The practice, the official wrote, is "placing children in grave danger."

NEW PARENTS: On the day her adoptive parents dropped her at the Eason trailer in Illinois, they snapped this picture inside the couple's kitchen. From left to right, Calvin Eason, Quita Puchalla and Nicole Eason.
REUTERS/Handout

The official who sent the memo, Stephen Pennypacker, says he issued the warning after a child welfare worker in one state noticed cases of kids being sent to new parents without the approval of authorities.

In the alert, Pennypacker asked that such cases be documented and reported to the national non-profit organization that oversees the ICPC. He says he also told child protection officials in each state to alert their attorneys general, local police and social workers "so that people could be on the lookout."

Despite the urgency of the request, Pennypacker says there has been no response.

As part of its investigation, Reuters reviewed thousands of pages of records – many of them confidential – from court cases, police reports and child welfare agencies. Reporters examined ads for children and emails between parents, and also identified eight Internet groups in which members discussed, facilitated or engaged in re-homing. Reporters then analyzed thousands of posts from the group that Yahoo subsequently shut down, Adopting-from-Disruption.

Some participants in that group both offered and sought children for re-homing, sometimes simultaneously. Others looked to offload more than one child at a time. Some sought new parents for children who already had been re-homed. A 10-year-old boy from the Philippines and a 13-year-old boy from Brazil each were advertised three times. So was a girl from Haiti. She was offered for re-homing when she was 14, 15 and 16 years old.

In an interview earlier this year, Nicole Eason - the woman who disappeared with Quita - referred to private re-homing as "non-legalized adoption."

"The meaning of non-legalized is, 'Hey, can I have your baby?'" Eason said.

She discussed why she was so motivated to be a mother. "It makes me feel important," she said.

And she described her parenting style this way: "Dude, just be a little mean, OK? ... I'll threaten to throw a knife at your ass, I will. I'll chase you with a hose.

'RED LIGHT': Melissa Puchalla says she sobbed after leaving Quita with the Easons, the couple she met on the Internet. "Maybe a red light should've went off – too good to be true," she says now.
REUTERS/Sara Stathas

"I won't leave burns on you. I won't leave marks on you. I'm not going to send you with bruises to school," she said. "Make sure you got three meals a day, make sure you have a place to live, OK? If you need medication for your psychological problems, I've got you there. You need therapy? You need a hug? You need a kiss? Somebody to tickle with you? I got you. OK? But this world is not meant to be perfect. And I just don't understand why people think it is."

The story of the Easons and the girls and boys they have taken through re-homing illustrates the many ways in which the U.S. government fails to protect children of adoptions gone awry. It shows how virtually anyone determined to get a child can do so with ease, and how children brought to America can be abruptly discarded and recycled.

A CHILD FOR FREE

The night before leaving Quita with the Easons, Melissa Puchalla showed her daughter a picture of the couple. Like Quita, Calvin Eason is black. Nicole is white, and Puchalla thought Quita might thrive in a mixed-race household.

The Puchallas also say they were giving up the teenager to protect their other children. Quita was unpredictable and violent, Melissa says, and her siblings had grown frightened of her. "There was no other option," Melissa says today.

Puchalla assured her daughter that the Easons were "very good people," Quita remembers. "But I was like judging in my mind: 'How do you know?'" Quita says today. She says she spent the night crying.

The Easons were elated. They were about to get a child, for free.

Part of the allure of re-homing is that the process is far cheaper than formal adoptions. Adopting from a foreign country can cost tens of thousands of dollars. Taking custody through re-homing often costs nothing. In fact, taking a child may enable the new family to claim a tax deduction and draw government benefits. The Easons view re-homing as a way around a prying government, and a way to take a child inexpensively.

"If you don't want to pay $35,000 for a kid," Nicole Eason says today, "you take your chances."

For Quita, the drive to the Eason place was a blur. But she remembers vividly when her adoptive father, Todd Puchalla, stopped in front of a mobile home with an overgrown lawn. Some of the trailers were well-maintained. This one, Quita thought, looked like a junkyard.

From the picture her mother had shown her, Quita recognized the Easons immediately. Both were large, well over 200 pounds, and Calvin was tall – about 6-foot-2. But what first caught the Puchallas' attention was the tube coming out of Calvin's neck a few inches beneath his chin. It was from a tracheostomy, a surgical procedure to alleviate a sleep disorder.

"We were a little standoffish about him because he has a trach," Melissa Puchalla recalls. "But they were warm, and they were caring. They seemed kind."

Today, Melissa Puchalla says, "Maybe a red light should've went off – too good to be true. But at that point, I was walking in such a fog."

Not only were the Easons willing to take Quita, but they would gladly do so through the simple device of a power of attorney document, about 400 words long. The paper is signed by the old parents and the new guardians, and witnessed by a notary. As happened in Quita's case, no lawyers or government authorities are involved. The

document is filed nowhere; it functions, in essence, as a receipt. Such agreements fail to satisfy the ICPC when custody of the child is exchanged across state lines and authorities in both states aren't involved. But that hasn't stopped some parents from handling transfers this way.

Not long after the Puchallas arrived with Quita, the Easons presented a cake. "Welcome home Quita" was written in orange frosting.

Nicole also had a card for Melissa. Inside were printed these words: "I have faith that you're going to come out of this experience with more wisdom and resilience than you ever thought possible."

Melissa helped Quita unpack and hugged her goodbye. Everything would be fine, Melissa assured her. Melissa also devised a code: Quita would say "I love asparagus" over the phone if she felt in danger. (Quita didn't use the code, Melissa says.)

As the Puchallas drove away, Melissa sobbed. She calls the decision "the hardest thing we've ever done in our lives." Quita still can't reconcile it. "How would you give me up when you brought me to be yours?" she asks.

In the days that followed, two puppies scampered through the trailer, gifts from the Easons to Quita. The dogs lifted the teenager's spirits, but they weren't housebroken and no one cleaned up after them. No one did the dishes, either, or the laundry.

More troubling, Quita says, was that the Easons took her into their bed: "They call me in there to sleep ... to lay in the bed with them." In bed, "Nicole used to be naked and stuff. It was not right to me."

The sleeping arrangements Quita describes are consistent with the experience of another child the Easons took in. Nicole and Calvin both say that no child they took in ever slept in their bed.

A MISSING CHILD

Within days, the Easons had stopped answering Melissa Puchalla's calls or returning her emails, Puchalla says. They attached a makeshift camper to the truck bed of their purple Chevy S-10, packed most of their belongings and left the state. Riding along was a friend of the Easons, a man on parole in Illinois for armed robbery.

When Melissa Puchalla called the school Quita was supposed to attend, she talked with an administrator who then contacted state child protection officials. Although Puchalla had signed over custody of Quita, she says she felt obligated to ensure Quita was safe.

Authorities, including police, subsequently went to the mobile home park in Westville. A neighbor told a child welfare official that before the Easons left, Quita had told the

neighbor's daughter that the Easons would be heading to upstate New York to visit Nicole's mother.

LIBERIAN ORPHAN: In this picture, Quita went by the name Quita Davis and lived in a Liberian orphanage. Life in America, she says, "turned into a nightmare."
REUTERS/Handout

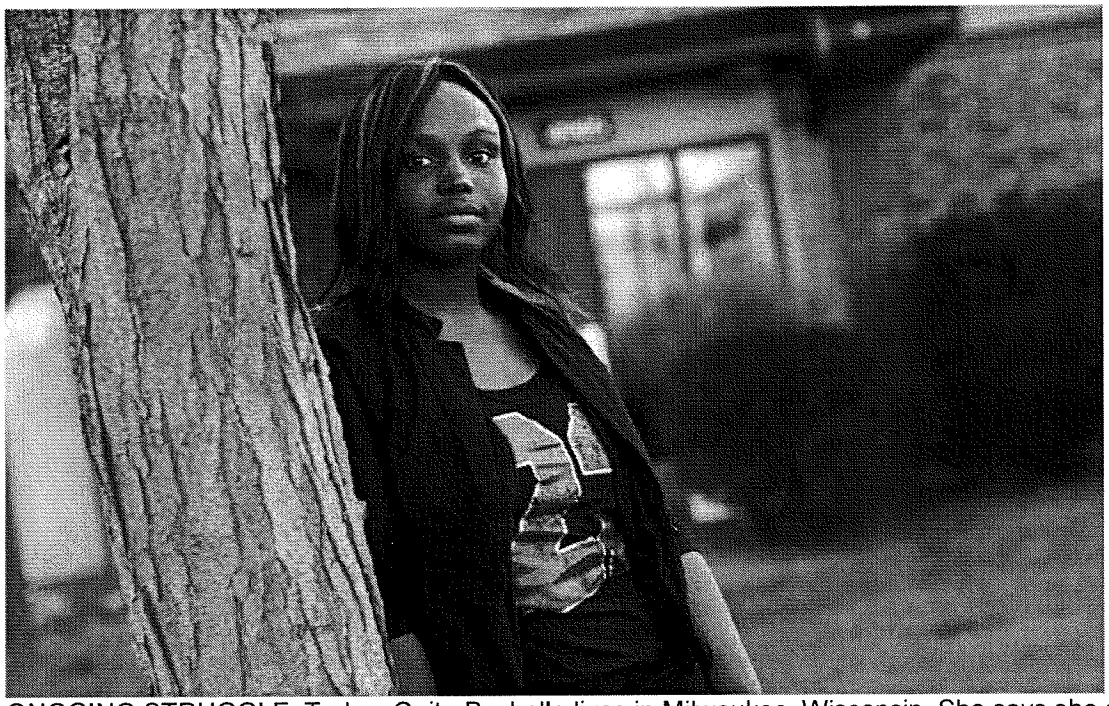
The puppies, left chained in the yard, were retrieved by animal protection officers.

As authorities searched for Quita, they discovered information that could have precluded the Easons from taking custody of the teenager, if the proper officials had been involved, adoption experts say.

Illinois authorities determined that the Easons had fabricated a document they provided to the Puchallas called a "home study." It purported to be from a social worker who had visited their home and done background checks of the couple. Actually, Nicole had found a sample document on the Internet and filled it out herself. Some of the information was true; the rest was fiction.

"Quita Puchalla is missing as is the Eason family," reads a confidential report by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. The internal report was dated Oct. 20, 2008, 16 days after the Puchallas had dropped Quita at the Easons.

"The Easons faked their home study," the report says. "The Easons are suspected of using the disrupted adoptions of out of country children... Because there are other states involved, licensing issues and possible public aid fraud as well as a missing child, this matter may involve the FBI at some point."



ONGOING STRUGGLE: Today, Quita Puchalla lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She says she still cannot reconcile why the parents who adopted her from Liberia gave her away. "How would you give me up when you brought me to be yours?" she asks.
REUTERS/Jeffrey Phelps

Illinois officials did share their findings with the local sheriff's office and with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Authorities then contacted the New York State Police, who located the Easons' truck in Stephentown, New York. It was parked outside a house where Nicole's mother lived.

When police went to the home on Oct. 21, they found Nicole, Calvin and Quita. The man convicted of armed robbery who had traveled with the Easons to New York wasn't there.

Later that day, investigators separately interviewed the Easons and Quita. Reports show that the teenager said the Easons had pornography in their house. Police took Quita to a homeless shelter; the next day, she was put on a bus. She was heading back to Wisconsin, by herself, to the parents who had given her up not three weeks before.

Taking Quita from the Easons and returning her to the Puchallas was the extent of the response by authorities.

New York State Police concluded that the Easons had committed no crimes in their jurisdiction. Illinois authorities took no legal action, and neither did officials in Wisconsin. No one did anything to prevent the Easons from taking a child again.

Hundreds of other adoptive parents were seeking new homes for their unwanted children through Internet message boards like those that had featured Quita. Nicole

Eason knew how the child exchange worked. She would tap it again after losing Quita, much as she had used it before.

One of the first times, Eason had gone by the screen name Big Momma. The custody transfer took place in a hotel parking lot just off the highway, and the man who went with her to get the 10-year-old boy would later be sentenced to federal prison. His crime: trading child pornography.

(Additional reporting by Ryan McNeill, Robin Respaut, Zachary Goelman and Elizabeth Dilts in New York)

Source: Reuters

CourtSmart Tag Report

Room: LL 37 **Case:** **Type:**
Caption: Senate Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee **Judge:**

Started: 12/10/2013 8:35:21 AM
Ends: 12/10/2013 10:03:12 AM Length: 01:27:52

8:35:43 AM	Meeting called to order.
8:35:52 AM	Roll call.
8:36:06 AM	Quorum present.
8:36:24 AM	Senator Thompson is excused from today's meeting.
8:36:39 AM	Welcome new staff: Peggy Sanford and Barbara Crosier.
8:37:21 AM	Tab 1 - Presentation on Improvements to Child Abuse Investigations
8:38:16 AM	Stephen Pennypacker, Assistant Secretary for Programs, Department of Children and Families
8:39:31 AM	Senate President Don Gaetz joins the committee.
8:42:09 AM	Chair Sobel question.
8:42:18 AM	Stephen Pennypacker comment.
8:45:47 AM	Senator Hays question.
8:46:36 AM	Senator Dean question.
8:48:04 AM	Senator Detert comment/question.
8:48:42 AM	Chair Sobel question.
8:51:33 AM	Chair Sobel follow-up.
8:54:12 AM	Senator Dean question.
8:56:57 AM	Senator Dean follow-up.
8:58:42 AM	Chair Sobel question.
9:00:04 AM	Chair Sobel follow-up.
9:00:43 AM	Senator Altman question.
9:01:50 AM	Senator Altman follow-up.
9:03:17 AM	Chair Sobel question.
9:04:06 AM	Chair Sobel follow-up.
9:04:39 AM	Senator Detert question.
9:06:20 AM	Chair Sobel comment.
9:07:15 AM	Senator Diaz de la Portilla question.
9:08:20 AM	Senator Diaz de la Portilla follow-up.
9:10:20 AM	Senator Diaz de la Portilla follow-up.
9:13:02 AM	Chair Sobel question.
9:14:07 AM	Senator Dean comment.
9:19:12 AM	Chair Sobel question.
9:22:08 AM	Senator Clemens question.
9:24:10 AM	Senator Clemens follow-up.
9:27:07 AM	Tab 2 - Presentation on Other State's Child Welfare Systems
9:28:21 AM	Jennifer Johnson, Health and Human Services Staff Director, OPPAGA
9:28:50 AM	Mary Alice Nye, Chief Legislative Analyst, OPPAGA
9:31:59 AM	Chair Sobel question.
9:34:26 AM	Chair Sobel question.
9:38:01 AM	Chair Sobel question.
9:43:46 AM	Chair Sobel question.
9:45:25 AM	Senator Diaz de la Portilla comment.
9:45:51 AM	Chair Sobel question.
9:48:17 AM	Ms. Nye concludes.
9:48:38 AM	Chair Sobel comment.
9:49:11 AM	Doug Bell, FL Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics
9:51:03 AM	Tab 3 - SPB 7002 - Adoptions
9:53:03 AM	Chair Sobel comments.
9:53:51 AM	Claude Hendon presents SPB 7002.
9:55:12 AM	Chair Sobel calls Mr. Pennypacker to comment.
9:58:10 AM	Chair Sobel question.
9:58:41 AM	Senator Clemens question.
9:59:07 AM	Amendment Barcode 826184 by Senator Hays.

9:59:37 AM	Amendment adopted.
9:59:47 AM	Questions on SPB 7002.
9:59:56 AM	Debate on SPB 7002.
10:00:02 AM	Senator Hays moves SPB 7002.
10:00:11 AM	Roll call vote.
10:00:29 AM	SPB 7002 passes.
10:00:47 AM	Chair Sobel comments.
10:01:29 AM	Senator Detert recognition of Carol Preston, Chief Legislative Analyst
10:03:00 AM	Adjourned.