

HB 1491

2006
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CHAMBER ACTION

1 The Future of Florida's Families Committee recommends the
2 following:

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4 **Council/Committee Substitute**

5 Remove the entire bill and insert:

6 A bill to be entitled

7 An act relating to children in foster care; providing for
8 the creation of the Community Advisory Panel on Foster
9 Care Pilot Program in Duval County; providing purposes and
10 goals; providing for cooperative participation by
11 specified entities and individuals; creating the Community
12 Advisory Panel on Foster Care; providing for panel
13 membership; providing for a chairperson; providing duties
14 of specified judges and panel members; providing for
15 administration by a community-based care lead agency;
16 providing for hiring specified personnel; requiring
17 development of an assessment tool to determine the
18 effectiveness of the program; requiring an annual report;
19 providing for future expiration of the pilot program;
20 providing an appropriation; requiring a contract with the
21 community-based care lead agency; providing an effective
22 date.
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24 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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26 Section 1. Community Advisory Panel on Foster Care Pilot
27 Program; creation; purpose; panel membership; court and panel
28 duties; administration; evaluation.--

29 (1) There is created the Community Advisory Panel on
30 Foster Care Pilot Program in Duval County. The purpose of the
31 program is to identify educational needs and follow-up
32 strategies for foster children who are 6 through 12 years of age
33 and are enrolled in the Duval County school system. The goal of
34 the program is to ensure that youth who are in foster care will
35 be tested appropriately and placed in an educational environment
36 that optimizes their opportunities for success.

37 (2) The pilot program shall consist of the cooperative
38 efforts of:

39 (a) The Community Advisory Panel on Foster Care, as
40 created under this section;

41 (b) The community-based care lead agency for foster care
42 and adoption in Duval County;

43 (c) The case managers assigned to children in foster care;

44 (d) The Duval County School Board;

45 (e) Nova Southeastern University;

46 (f) The foster care parents of children currently in the
47 foster care system;

48 (g) When possible, the natural parents of children
49 currently in the foster care system; and

50 (h) The circuit court judge hearing a foster care case.

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51 (3) (a) The Community Advisory Panel on Foster Care is
52 created in the Fourth Judicial Circuit and shall consist of the
53 chief judge for the circuit, or another judge from the circuit
54 designated by the chief judge who is the lead judge in the area
55 of dependency and adoption, and 15 community volunteers who are
56 community leaders with abilities and expertise in diverse areas.
57 The chief judge, or the judge designated by the chief judge,
58 shall serve as the chair of the panel. The 15 volunteers shall
59 be comprised of:

60 1. Four members appointed by the chief judge, or by the
61 judge designated by the chief judge;

62 2. Four members appointed by the Secretary of Children and
63 Family Services, or his or her designee;

64 3. Four members appointed by the Duval County School
65 Board; and

66 4. Three members appointed by the guardian ad litem for
67 Duval County.

68 (b) The chief judge, or the judge from the circuit
69 designated by the chief judge, may issue orders and obtain
70 educational information relating to the students who are 6 to 12
71 years of age and are in the foster care system in District IV of
72 the department. Pursuant to the order, the panel shall review
73 the academic progress, behavioral issues, and attendance of each
74 student and shall recommend referral of any student for whom the
75 review demonstrates a need for follow-up services. The panel may
76 prioritize referrals by assessing the severity of need and
77 recommending that the most critical needs be met first. A
78 student who is failing may be referred for educational testing,

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79 | for additional psychological and therapeutic counseling as
80 | recommended, or for both, to determine why he or she is failing
81 | and what accommodations and remediation are needed.

82 | (4) The community-based care lead agency shall provide
83 | administrative support for the Community Advisory Panel on
84 | Foster Care and for the operation of the pilot program. To help
85 | facilitate the duties of the panel, the agency shall employ:

86 | (a) A full-time project coordinator who shall assist the
87 | student's case manager in identifying resources for educational
88 | testing and psychological and therapeutic counseling. In
89 | addition, the project coordinator shall oversee the development
90 | of an assessment tool that is designed to determine the
91 | effectiveness of the pilot program.

92 | 1. The purpose of the assessment tool is to link systems
93 | among providers of educational services, psychological services,
94 | and case-management services and the court system.

95 | 2. The entity that designs the assessment tool must,
96 | during the first year of the pilot program, undertake the
97 | following tasks:

98 | a. Discovery. This phase includes meeting with information
99 | technology staff from the department, school board staff, and
100 | case managers.

101 | b. Development. This phase consists of determining the
102 | best method for data entry, the best database, and the best data
103 | format.

104 | c. Implementation. This phase comprises completing,
105 | testing, and delivering the assessment tool.

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106 d. Maintenance. This phase involves developing a
107 maintenance plan and schedule, after the initiation of the
108 assessment tool.

109 (b) A full-time psychologist who shall provide educational
110 testing and psychological and therapeutic counseling to foster
111 care children and provide advice, research, assessments, and
112 other services to the judges.

113 (5) The project coordinator shall submit an annual report
114 on the pilot program to the chief judge of the Fourth Judicial
115 Circuit, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House
116 of Representatives, the State Courts Administrator, and the
117 Secretary of Children and Family Services.

118 (6) The pilot program expires on July 1, 2009.

119 Section 2. The sum of \$300,000 is appropriated from the
120 General Revenue Fund to the Fourth Judicial Circuit Court in
121 Duval County for the 2006-2007 fiscal year, to be used in
122 implementing the Community Advisory Panel on Foster Care Pilot
123 Program created by this act. The chief judge of the Fourth
124 Judicial Circuit shall contract with the community-based care
125 lead agency for foster care and adoption in Duval County for
126 services associated with the administration of the pilot program
127 as provided in this act.

128 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2006.