

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

586-01913A-11

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to child protection; requiring the
3 Secretary of Children and Family Services to establish
4 the Child Protection Response Workgroup for the
5 purpose of developing an implementation plan for a
6 differential response system to be used in responding
7 to reports of child abuse or neglect; specifying the
8 duties of the workgroup; requiring a report to the
9 Legislature; requiring the Secretary of Children and
10 Family Services to establish the Child Welfare
11 Professional Advisory Council; specifying the scope of
12 work of the council; providing for the secretary to
13 appoint members to the council; requiring the
14 Department of Children and Family services to provide
15 administrative support; providing for members to be
16 reimbursed for per diem and travel expenses to the
17 extent resources are available; requiring an annual
18 report to the Legislature; providing an effective
19 date.

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

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23 Section 1. Child Protection Response Workgroup.—The
24 Secretary of Children and Family Services shall establish the
25 Child Protection Response Workgroup for the purpose of
26 developing a plan that will allow the department to fully
27 implement a differential response system for purposes of
28 responding to reports of child abuse or neglect.

29 (1) The workgroup shall, at a minimum, examine best

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30 practices developed by other states that have successfully
31 implemented a similar response system and update and finalize
32 the work plan that was designed for the department by the Child
33 Welfare Institute in 2006, taking into consideration the
34 outcomes of the 2008 differential response pilot programs.

35 (2) The workgroup shall report its findings and
36 recommendations for implementing a differential response system
37 to the appropriate substantive committees of the Senate and the
38 House of Representatives by December 31, 2011. The report to the
39 Legislature shall include a detailed list of tasks and a
40 timeline for future implementation of a differential response
41 system, the requirements and expectations for participation by
42 community-based care lead agencies, a plan to integrate the use
43 of the sheriff's offices to conduct child protective
44 investigations within the differential response system, and a
45 statewide survey of services available to families.

46 Section 2. Child Welfare Professional Advisory Council.—The
47 Secretary of Children and Family Services shall establish the
48 Child Welfare Professional Advisory Council for the purpose of
49 reviewing and making recommendations relating to the education
50 and qualifications of the child welfare staff employed within
51 the department, the sheriff's offices contracted to conduct
52 child protective investigations, and the community-based care
53 lead agencies and their subcontractors. The advisory council
54 shall continue to function as specified in this section until
55 the Legislature determines that the advisory council no longer
56 provides a valuable contribution to efforts to reprofessionalize
57 the duties carried out by staff who provide child welfare
58 services.

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59 (1) Specifically, the scope of work of the advisory council
60 shall include, at a minimum:

61 (a) An examination of hiring practices in other states that
62 require all child welfare staff to hold degrees in social work,
63 particularly those states that have privatized the provision of
64 child welfare services, such as Kansas;

65 (b) Incentives necessary to hire and retain employees who
66 have bachelor's or master's degrees in social work;

67 (c) Incentives necessary to enable current staff to obtain
68 a bachelor's or master's degree while continuing employment;

69 (d) An examination of child welfare certifications issued
70 by schools of social work, the department, or third-party
71 credentialing entities;

72 (e) An analysis of the benefits, including cost benefits,
73 of requiring that all child welfare staff hold a bachelor's or
74 master's degree in social work from a degree program certified
75 by the Council on Social Work Education or hold a degree from an
76 accredited human services degree program; and

77 (f) An examination of ways to increase the amount of
78 federal funding under the Title IV-E Child Welfare Program which
79 is available to this state.

80 (2) Members of the advisory council shall be appointed by
81 the secretary of the department. The membership of the advisory
82 council may not exceed 15 members and must include, at a
83 minimum, representatives from the headquarters and circuit
84 offices of the Department of Children and Family Services,
85 community-based care lead agencies, the sheriff's offices
86 contracted to conduct child protective investigations, third-
87 party credentialing entities, state schools that are members of

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88 the National Association of Deans and Directors Schools of
89 Social Work, and school faculty who work with students receiving
90 funding under the Title IV-E Child Welfare Program and who teach
91 specialized courses in child welfare. The secretary shall
92 determine the length of the term to be served by each member
93 appointed to the advisory council, which may not exceed 4 years.
94 Members may be reappointed for additional terms.

95 (3) The department shall provide administrative support to
96 the Child Welfare Professional Advisory Council to accomplish
97 its assigned tasks. The advisory council shall be afforded
98 access to all appropriate data from the department, each
99 community-based care lead agency, and other relevant agencies in
100 order to accomplish the tasks set forth in this section. The
101 data collected may not include any information that would
102 identify a specific child or young adult.

103 (4) Members of the council shall serve without
104 compensation, but are entitled to reimbursement for per diem and
105 travel expenses as provided in s. 112.061, Florida Statutes, to
106 the extent resources are available.

107 (5) The advisory council shall report its recommendations
108 and a plan, including a timeline for the statewide
109 reprofessionalization of all duties performed by child welfare
110 staff, to the appropriate substantive committees of the Senate
111 and the House of Representatives by December 31 of each year,
112 with the first report being due by December 31, 2011.

113 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2011.