

**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.)

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

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BILL: SB 1708

INTRODUCER: Senator Garcia

SUBJECT: Child Welfare

DATE: January 31, 2022

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Preston</u>	<u>Cox</u>	<u>CF</u>	<u>Pre-meeting</u>
2.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____

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**I. Summary:**

SB 1708 makes a number of changes to the law related to current and former foster children and young adults, certain children and young adults who are experiencing homelessness, including:

- Requiring the Department of Health to waive all fees for a certified copy of a birth certificate for certified unaccompanied homeless youth and young adults who were in foster care when reaching 18 years of age;
- Expanding the use of postsecondary education campus liaisons to include students who are experiencing homelessness in addition to serving current or former foster children and young adults to assist such students with achieving success in postsecondary education;
- Removing the provision that the DCF has the sole discretion to determine which state colleges and universities offer campus liaison positions;
- Including certified unaccompanied homeless youth who meet specified requirements in the Keys to Independence Program;
- Clarifying provisions related to unaccompanied homeless youth certified under s. 743.067, F.S., including updating the applicable definition, including such definition in the Florida Education Code, and clarifying the specific medical care and other care that such youth can consent to upon certification; and
- Requiring the district school boards to provide certified unaccompanied homeless youth with a card that contains specified information on the rights and benefits for these youth.

The bill also requires the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) to conduct a study to evaluate the effectiveness of campus liaisons provided under s. 409.1452, F.S. and of the local school districts' delivery of benefits and services required under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The bill provides for the scope of the study and requires a report to be provided to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 1, 2022.

The bill will have a fiscal impact on the Department of Children and Families. See Section V. Fiscal Impact Statement.

The bill has an effective date of July 1, 2022.

## II. Present Situation:

### Homeless Children and Youth

Although the causes for homelessness among children vary, the underlying themes among these causes reveal a strong link between homelessness and broader social issues including family conflict and breakdown and other contributing factors including economic circumstances such as poverty and housing insecurity, racial disparities, and mental health and substance use disorders. Additionally, young people who have had involvement with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems are more likely to become homeless.<sup>1</sup>

Familial conflict, abuse, and disruption, play a large role in children becoming homeless. Children typically enter a state of homelessness as a result of:

- Running away from home;
- Being locked out or abandoned by their parents or guardians; or
- Running from or being emancipated or discharged from institutional or other state care.<sup>2</sup>

Although family conflict also plays a part in adult homelessness, the nexus is more critical for youth since they are, by virtue of their developmental stage in life, still largely financially, emotionally, and, depending on their age, legally dependent upon their families.<sup>3</sup> Rational decision-making, inhibition, planning, and reasoning are still developing in youth and young adults, increasing the likelihood that young people may engage in high-risk behaviors, such as unsafe sexual activity and substance use. Without safe and permanent homes and caring adults, runaway and homeless youth are at even greater risk of engaging in high-risk behaviors or putting themselves in unsafe or risky situations.<sup>4</sup>

The consequences faced by youth experiencing homelessness are enormous and require coordination across the education, child welfare, juvenile justice, and health and human services systems. Runaway and homeless youth are vulnerable to, in part, not having their basic food and shelter needs met, untreated mental health disorders, substance use, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV infection, sexual exploitation and human trafficking, physical victimization, and suicide.<sup>5</sup> According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, one in three teens on the street will be lured into prostitution within 48 hours of leaving home.<sup>6</sup> Further, the American Academy of Pediatrics finds youth experiencing homelessness are twice as likely to attempt

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<sup>1</sup> National Network for Youth, *Youth Homelessness*, available at <https://nn4youth.org/learn/youth-homelessness/> (last visited January 28, 2022)(hereinafter cited as “National Network for Youth”).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), *Youth Homelessness Overview, Causes and Consequences of Youth Homelessness*, available at <https://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/homeless-and-runaway-youth.aspx> (last visited January 28, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> The National Sexual Violence Resource Center, *Homeless Youth and Sexual Violence*, available at [https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications/2019-02/HomelessYouth\\_Final%20508.pdf](https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications/2019-02/HomelessYouth_Final%20508.pdf) (last visited January 28, 2022).

suicide as their peers who are not homeless.<sup>7</sup> Also, youth who are homeless often experience a significant disruption in their education due to the transient nature of homelessness. Students experiencing homelessness in Florida have reportedly had increased rates of absenteeism and school discipline and are less likely to demonstrate proficiency in academic subjects.<sup>8</sup>

The Voices of Youth Count from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago found, in part, that:

- One in 10 young adults ages 18-25, and at least one in 30 adolescents ages 13-17, experience some form of homelessness unaccompanied by a parent or guardian over the course of a year.
- 29% of homeless youth report having substance abuse problems.
- 69% of homeless youth report mental health problems.
- 33% of homeless youth report having once been a part of the foster care system.
- 50% of homeless youth have been in the juvenile justice system, in jail, or detention.
- Black youth face an 83% increased risk, and Hispanic youth 33% increased risk, than their white peers.
- LGBTQ youth were more than twice as likely to have experienced homelessness.
- The lack of a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma is the number one correlate for elevated risk of youth homelessness.<sup>9</sup>

As of January 2020, Florida had an estimated 27,487 experiencing homelessness on any given day, as reported by Continuums of Care to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Of that total, 2,294 were family households, 2,436 were Veterans, 1,331 were unaccompanied young adults,<sup>10</sup> and 5,182 were individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.<sup>11</sup>

Public school data reported to the U.S. Department of Education during the 2019-2020 school year shows that an estimated 79,781 public school students experienced homelessness over the course of the year. Of that total, 6,926 students were unaccompanied homeless students.<sup>12</sup>

### **Definition of Homeless Children and Youth**

Federal law provides a definition for the term “homeless children and youths”, which means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes children and youths who are:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;

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<sup>7</sup> See American Academy of Pediatrics, *Studies: Homelessness, self-harm risk factors for suicide*, available at <https://publications.aap.org/aapnews/news/13664> (last visited January 28, 2022).

<sup>8</sup> See Shimberg Center for Housing Student, University of Florida and Miami Homes for All, *Homelessness and Education in Florida: Impact on Children and Youth*, pp. 2 and 5, available at [http://www.shimberg.ufl.edu/publications/homeless\\_education\\_fla171205RGB.pdf](http://www.shimberg.ufl.edu/publications/homeless_education_fla171205RGB.pdf) (last visited January 28, 2022).

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* See also National Network for Youth.

<sup>10</sup> This includes ages 18-24 years old.

<sup>11</sup> United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, *Florida Homelessness Statistics*, available at <https://www.usich.gov/homelessness-statistics/fl> (last visited January 28, 2022).

<sup>12</sup> The Florida Department of Education (FDOE), *District Homeless Record Counts*, Final Data as of 11/18/2020, p. 2, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/19996/urlt/2019-2020-Homeless-Student-Counts-ADA-COMPLIANT.pdf> (last visited January 28, 2022).

- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters or are abandoned in hospitals;
- Utilizing for a primary nighttime residence a place that is a public or private but not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children living in circumstances described above.<sup>13</sup>

The term “unaccompanied youth” includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.<sup>14</sup>

Florida law defines the term “children and youths who are experiencing homelessness” to have the same meaning as “homeless children and youths” under federal law and described above.<sup>15</sup>

### **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Act) was the first significant federal legislative response to homelessness, and was passed and signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1987.<sup>16</sup> The Act originally consisted of 15 programs providing a range of services to the homeless, including emergency shelter, transitional housing, job training, primary health care, education, and some permanent housing. The Act contains nine titles and Title VII authorizes four programs, including, in part, the Adult Education for the Homeless and the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education.<sup>17</sup>

The Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program is designed to address the problems that homeless children and youth have faced in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. Under this program, state educational agencies must ensure that each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public K-12 education as other children and youth. In addition, homeless students may not be separated from the mainstream school environment.<sup>18</sup>

Under the Act, children have the right to:

- Continue to attend the school they last attended before they lost their housing (school of origin), if that is the parent or guardian’s choice and is in the child’s best interest, or the school which is zoned for their temporary residence.

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<sup>13</sup> 42 U.S.C. s. 11434a. See also NCSL, *Homeless Youth Policy Scan*, November 21, 2019, available at <https://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/homeless-youth-policy-scan.aspx> (last visited January 28, 2022).

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> Section 1003.01(12), F.S.

<sup>16</sup> Pub. L. 100-77, Jul. 22, 1987, 101 Stat. 482; 42 U.S.C. s. 11301 et seq. See also U.S. Department of Education, *Supporting the Success of Homeless Children and Youths*, available at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/160315ehcyfactsheet072716.pdf>; National Center for Homeless Education, *The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act*, available at <https://nche.ed.gov/legislation/mckinney-vento/> (all sites last visited January 28, 2022).

<sup>17</sup> *Id.*

<sup>18</sup> See Florida Department of Education (DOE), *Title IX, Part A: Florida McKinney-Vento Program*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/policy/federal-edu-programs/title-x-homeless-edu-program-hep.stml> (last visited January 28, 2022),

- Enroll and attend classes immediately while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records and other required enrollment documents.
- If necessary, enroll and attend classes in the school of origin or zoned school selected by the parent or guardian, while the school and the parent or guardian seek to resolve a dispute over which school is in the best interest of the child.<sup>19</sup>
- Receive transportation to the school of origin, if requested.
- Participate in any school programs and receive any school services for which the student qualifies.<sup>20</sup>

### ***School District Homeless Liaison***

The reauthorization of the Act requires school districts to designate a liaison for homeless children and youth. The Florida Department of Education (DOE) has established at least one school district homeless liaison for each of the 67 counties.<sup>21</sup> The liaison must ensure:

- Homeless children and youth, including unaccompanied youth, are identified by school personnel and through coordinated activities with other entities and agencies;
- Homeless children and youth enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, schools of that local education agency (LEA);
- Homeless families, children, and youth receive educational services for which such families, children, and youth are eligible, including Head Start, Even Start, and other preschool programs administered by the LEA, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services;
- The parents or guardians of homeless students are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
- Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth is disseminated where such children and youth receive services under this Act, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens;
- Enrollment disputes are mediated;
- The parents or guardians of homeless students, or any unaccompanied youth, are fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin, and are assisted in accessing transportation to the school of origin or the school which serves the location where the students currently reside.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> This does not mean any school in the district, only the school of origin or zoned school. See St. Johns County School District, Homeless Students Policy, Dispute Process, available at <https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/homeless/> (last visited January 28, 2022).

<sup>20</sup> Schoolhouse Connection, *The McKinney-Vento Act Quick Reference*, available at <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/The-McKinney-Vento-Act-Quick-Reference.pdf> (last visited January 8, 2022).

<sup>21</sup> The FDOE, *District Liaison List*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/19996/urlt/Title-IX-District-Contact-List-11-05-21-ADA-COMPLIANT.pdf> (last visited January 29, 2022)

<sup>22</sup> See the FDOE, *Florida State Plan for Funding under the American Rescue Plan Act Education for Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY)*, pp. 9 and 11; available at <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/12/Florida-ARP-HCY-State-Plan-Final.pdf>; see also the FDOE, *Technical Assistance Paper 2007-2008 Title X, Part C Education for Homeless Children and Youth*, available at <https://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-4702/TAP-2007-150.pdf> (all sites last visited January 29, 2022).

The local homeless liaison is also required to coordinate and collaborate with the state Homeless Education Coordinator and community and school personnel responsible for providing education and related services to homeless students.

### **Certified Unaccompanied Homeless Youth**

#### ***Certification***

Section 743.067, F.S., provides that a youth who is an unaccompanied homeless youth may become certified as such if he or she is an individual who is 16 years of age or older and is:

- Found by a school district's liaison for homeless children and youths to be an unaccompanied homeless youth eligible for services pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act; or
- Believed to qualify as an unaccompanied homeless youth, as that term is defined in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, by:
  - The director of an emergency shelter program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development;
  - The director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program funded by the United States Department of Health and Human Services; or
  - A continuum of care lead agency.<sup>23</sup>

The State Office on Homelessness in the DCF has developed a standardized form that must be used by these entities to certify qualifying unaccompanied homeless youth. The front of the form includes the circumstances that qualify the youth; the date the youth was certified; and the name, title, and signature of the certifying individual. The contents of s. 743.067, F.S., is required to be reproduced in its entirety on the back of the form.<sup>24</sup>

#### ***Benefits Upon Certification***

A certified unaccompanied homeless youth may use the certification to access various benefits, including to:

- Apply at no charge for an identification card issued by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles under s. 322.051, F.S.;<sup>25</sup>
- Consent to medical, dental, psychological, substance abuse, and surgical diagnosis and treatment, including preventative care and care by a facility licensed under ch. 394, F.S., ch. 395, F.S., or ch. 397, F.S.,<sup>26</sup> and certain forensic medical examination,<sup>27</sup> for:
  - Himself or herself; or

<sup>23</sup> Section 743.067(1), F.S. The certification can be conducted by each of these entities designee.

<sup>24</sup> Section 743.067(2)(a), F.S.

<sup>25</sup> Section 743.067(2)(b), F.S.

<sup>26</sup> Chapter 394, F.S., governs the provision of substance abuse and mental health services; ch. 395, F.S., provides for the licensing and regulation of hospitals; and ch. 397, F.S., provides specifically for substance abuse services.

<sup>27</sup> This provision is applicable to the purpose of investigating any felony offense under ch. 784, F.S. (relating to assault, battery, culpable negligence), ch. 787, F.S. (relating to kidnapping, custody offenses, human trafficking, and smuggling) ch. 794, F.S., (relating to sexual battery), ch. 800, F.S., (relating to lewdness and indecent exposure) or ch. 827, F.S., (relating to child abuse).

- His or her child, if the certified unaccompanied homeless youth is unmarried, is the parent of the child, and has actual custody of the child;<sup>28</sup> and
- Petition the court to have the disabilities of nonage removed and become an emancipated minor who has the legal capacity to act as an adult, be in control of his or her affairs, and be free of the legal control and custody of his or her parents.<sup>29</sup>

A health care provider may accept a copy of the written certificate as proof of the minor's status as a certified unaccompanied homeless youth and may keep a copy of the certificate in the youth's medical file to assist with medical treatment.<sup>30</sup>

### **Birth Certificates**

The Florida Department of Health (DOH), Office of Vital Statistics, maintains all vital records for Florida. Under current law, homeless children are not specifically given the ability to obtain their birth certificates. Florida law provides that certified copies of the original birth certificate or a new or amended certificate, or affidavits thereof, are confidential and exempt from the provisions of s. 119.07(1), F.S.,<sup>31</sup> and, upon receipt of a request and payment of the fee prescribed in s. 382.0255, F.S., shall be issued only as authorized by the DOH and in the form prescribed by the DOH, and only, in relevant part, to the registrant, if of legal age, is a certified homeless youth, or is a minor who has had the disabilities of nonage removed under s. 743.01, F.S., or s. 743.015, F.S..<sup>32</sup>

The Florida DOH is entitled to fees for providing copies of certain vital records. The fees assessed must be the minimum fees cited. The fees established by rule must be sufficient to meet the cost of providing the service. All fees are required to be paid by the person requesting the record, are due and payable at the time services are requested, and are nonrefundable, except that, when a search is conducted and no vital record is found, any fees paid for additional certified copies shall be refunded.

The DOH is authorized to waive all or part of the fees required for any government entity. Further, the DOH is required to waive all fees for a certified copy of a birth certificate issued for purposes of an inmate acquiring a state identification card before release pursuant to s. 944.605(7), F.S., and for a juvenile offender who is in the custody or under the supervision of the Department of Juvenile Justice and receiving services under s. 985.461, F.S..<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Section 743.067(3)b), F.S. However, this provision is notwithstanding s. 394.4625(1), F.S., relating to voluntary admissions under the Baker Act.

<sup>29</sup> Section 743.067(3)(a), F.S. A certified unaccompanied homeless youth that petitions the circuit court to have the disabilities of nonage removed is not required to prepay costs and fees as provided in s. 57.081, F.S., and the court must advance the cause on the calendar. *See* ch. 743, F.S., for when a minor may petition a court to have the disabilities of nonage removed.

<sup>30</sup> Section 743.067(2)(c), F.S.

<sup>31</sup> Section 382.025(1), F.S.

<sup>32</sup> Section 382.025, F.S.

<sup>33</sup> Section 382.0255(3), F.S.

### **Keys to Independence Program**

In 2014, the Legislature required the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to establish a program to pay the cost of driver education, licensure and other costs incidental to licensure, and motor vehicle insurance for children in out-of-home care who have successfully completed a driver education program.<sup>34</sup> The program is now known as the Keys to Independence Program.

This program was established in direct response to recognizing the barriers that are created for a child in out-of-home care as a result of not obtaining a driver license and the cost prohibition that many such children faced to obtain motor vehicle insurance and licensure.

In 2021, the Legislature expanded the Keys to Independence program to include children who were in licensed care when reaching 18 years of age and are currently receiving postsecondary education services and support under s. 409.1451(2), F.S.<sup>35</sup>

As of December 31, 2021 for the life of the program there have been:

- 6,845 enrolled applicants;
- 1902 learner's permits issued; and
- 1020 driver's licenses issued.<sup>36</sup>

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

The bill makes a number of changes to the laws related to current and former foster children and young adults, children and young adults who are experiencing homelessness, and certified unaccompanied homeless youth.

#### **Birth Certificate Fees**

The bill amends s. 382.055, F.S., expanding the persons who must have the fees for a certified copy of a birth certificate waived by the DOH to include unaccompanied homeless youth certified under s. 743.067, F.S., and young adults who are, or were at the time of turning 18 years of age, in the custody of the DCF.

#### **Unaccompanied Homeless Youth**

The bill amends s. 743.067, F.S., clarifying provisions related to the term "unaccompanied homeless youth". The bill updates the definition to specify that the youth is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, which includes a youth who has run away from home, who has been forced to leave his or her home, or whose parents have left the area and left the youth behind.

The bill provides that a certified unaccompanied homeless youth may receive a certified copy of his or her birth certificate at no charge under s. 382.055, F.S., and clarifies that the medical

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<sup>34</sup> Section 409.1454, F.S. Chapter 2014-166, L.O.F.

<sup>35</sup> Chapter 2021-169, L.O.F.

<sup>36</sup> Maria Solon, *Keys to Independence Program Monthly Report*, All Youth Life of Program Tab, December 2021 (on file with the Senate Committee on Children, Families and Elder Affairs).



provider may accept the written certificate or the below described school district issued card as proof of the youth's ability to consent to his or her medical care.

The bill also clarifies the specific categories of medical and other care for which the youth may consent to include behavioral health care services that include both psychological counseling and treatment, psychiatric treatment, and substance abuse prevention and treatment services. In addition, the bill amends s. 1003.01, F.S., creating a definition of the term "unaccompanied homeless youth" in the Florida Education Code to provide consistency for the school liaisons that certify such youth.

### ***Keys to Independence Program***

The bill amends s. 409.1454, F.S., expanding the eligibility for the Keys to Independence program to include an unaccompanied homeless youth certified under s. 743.067, F.S., who is a citizen of the United States or legal resident of Florida and who is:

- Completing secondary education;
- Employed at least part time;
- Attending a postsecondary education program at least part time; or
- Precluded from full-time work or education due to a disability.

### ***District School Board Issued Card***

The bill amends s. 1001.42, F.S., requiring the district school boards to provide unaccompanied homeless youth certified pursuant to s. 743.067, F.S., a card that is similar in size to the student identification card issued to students in the district that contains specified information on the rights and benefits for these youth. Specifically,

- The front of the card must include the circumstances that qualify the youth, the date the youth was certified and the name, title and signature of the certifying individual. This information is obtained from the standardized form developed by the DCF.
- The back of the card must include the provisions of s. 743.067, F.S., that provide authority to the certified unaccompanied homeless youth to consent to medical and other care for himself or herself or for his or her child if the certified youth is unmarried, is the parent of the child, and has custody of the child.

### ***Postsecondary Education Liaisons***

The bill amends s. 409.1452, F.S., expanding the use of postsecondary education campus liaisons to include students who are experiencing homelessness in addition to serving current or former foster children and young adults to assist such students with achieving success in postsecondary education. The bill also revises the term for the position from "campus coaches" to "campus liaisons" and removes a provision that the DCF has the sole discretion to determine which state colleges and universities offer campus liaison positions.

### OPPAGA Study

The bill also requires the OPPAGA to conduct a study to evaluate the effectiveness of campus liaisons provided under s. 409.1452, F.S., and of the local school districts' delivery of benefits and services required under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Specifically, the study must include:

- Current use of liaisons by all colleges and universities, the number of children and young adults served by such liaisons, the type and prevalence of the services requested by such children and young adults, and the experiences of the students served by the liaisons.
- Local school districts' delivery of benefits and services to unaccompanied homeless youth eligible for services under s. 743.067, F.S., and the Act and school districts' adherence to provisions of the Act, such as the:
  - Ability for an unaccompanied homeless youth to remain in his or her school of origin for the duration of the period the youth is experiencing homelessness and until the end of an academic year in which the youth obtains permanent housing, if remaining in the school of origin is determined to be in the youth's best interest.
  - Extent to which school district liaisons make best interest determinations by considering specific student-centered factors when determining the best school for an unaccompanied homeless youth.
  - Ability of unaccompanied homeless youth to receive transportation to the school of origin from the applicable school district.
  - Prompt enrollment of an unaccompanied homeless youth in a school or classes while the school of origin arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records and other required enrollment documents to ensure compliance with s. 1003.21(1)(f), F.S.
  - Ability of an unaccompanied homeless youth to participate in all available education programs and extracurricular activities and receive any school services for which the youth meets all relevant eligibility criteria.

Further, the study must include recommendations for any changes needed to ensure all eligible children and young adults who seek such support receive services, improve the outcomes of children and young adults who receive services and benefits from campus liaisons or under the Act and ensure campus liaisons in local school districts and postsecondary institutions are qualified to provide adequate information and support and are knowledgeable about the relevant programs and benefits that may be accessed by the children and young adults they serve.

The bill requires the OPPAGA to consult with the DCF, the Board of Governors of the State University System, the Florida College System, the FDOE, local school districts, and any other relevant stakeholders including, but not limited to, students eligible for the assistance of a liaison in conducting the study. The bill requires a report to be provided to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 1, 2022.

## **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

### **A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

The bill does not appear to require cities and counties to expend funds or limit their authority to raise revenue or receive state-shared revenues as specified by Article VII,

Section 18 of the Florida Constitution.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The DCF reported that according to the Keys to Independence staff, the total cost for each individual is \$3,500.88 per youth in care. According to Economic Self-Sufficiency, as of January 12, 2022, there were 678 unaccompanied homeless youth in Florida and therefore the DCF estimates that \$2,373,596.64 is needed for this expansion.<sup>37</sup>

However, Embrace Families, who operates the Keys to Independence program, estimates that the yearly cost to operate the expansion of the program under the bill to be \$437,545 per year. This calculation is based on data Keys to Independence obtained from an organization serving unaccompanied homeless youth in Miami that states approximately 2.5 percent of the total population of eligible youth ages 15-23 actually access services. Therefore, the Keys to Independence program estimates that the bill will result in approximately 2,500 referrals per year (2.5 percent of a total of approximately 100,000 total youth considered to be homeless in Florida). The Keys to Independence program currently serves 2,878 youth and spends \$800,000.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> The DCF, *SB 1708 Agency Bill Analysis*, p. 4-5, January 20, 2022 (on file with the Senate Committee on Children, Families and Elder Affairs).

<sup>38</sup> Electronic mail from Sarah Nemes, Director of Public Policy, Embrace Families, *Child Welfare SB 1708, Fiscal for Keys to Independence*, January 26, 2022 (on file with Senate Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs).

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

The bill amends ss. 382.0255, 409.1452, 409.1454, 743.067, 1001.42, and 1003.01 of the Florida Statutes.

**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.