



HOUSE BILL 291: Continue SSWG and Extend Child Council.

This Bill Analysis reflects the contents of the bill as it was presented in committee.

2019-2020 General Assembly

Committee:	House Health. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	March 18, 2019
Introduced by:	Reps. Stevens, Lewis	Prepared by:	Theresa Matula
Analysis of:	PCS to First Edition H291-CSTV-7		Committee Staff

OVERVIEW: *The PCS for House Bill 291 amends S.L. 2017-41 to extend the date by which the Department of Health and Human Services must develop a plan for establishing regional offices, and continues the work of the Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group; it also amends S.L. 2018-5 to increase the membership of the Children's Council, allow removal of inactive members, and extend the reporting dates.*

BILL ANALYSIS: S.L. 2017-41, as amended by Section 40 of S.L. 2017-102, enacted child welfare system reform and improved accountability and oversight. Part I of S.L. 2017-41 created the Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group to develop recommendations for the regional supervision and collaboration plan. Section 1 of PCS for House Bill 291 amends Part I of S.L. 2017-41 as follows:

- Extends until March 1, 2022, currently March 1, 2020, the date by which the Department of Health and Human Services must submit a plan for establishing regional offices charged with supervision of administration of social services at the local level.
- Continues the Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group (Working Group) and provides that it will consist of the currently constituted members as of December 1, 2018.
- Removes the requirement that the members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate must be members of the Senate and that the members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives must be members of the House of Representatives.
- In the current law, the Working Group's work was divided into two stages, the PCS for HB 291 adds a new Stage Three. The Working Group must convene by October 4, 2019, and continue developing recommendations. Following the completion of Stages One and Two, the Working Group must:
 - Review the recommendations from the Center for the Support of Families and the Department and revise the Stage One recommendations regarding regional supervision.
 - Provide more detailed recommendations regarding the following:
 - (1) The role of local elected officials and social services governing boards in social services oversight.
 - (2) Legal representation of local social services agencies.
 - (3) Managing conflicts of interest.
 - (4) Determining residency for social services programs and services.
 - (5) Transferring and changing venue in adult guardianship cases.
 - (6) Notice requirements for adult guardianship cases.

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- (7) Confidentiality of social services records, as it relates to improving interagency collaboration and service delivery.
- Requires the Working Group to submit to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services, a preliminary report no later than October 15, 2020. After receiving the preliminary report, the Committee may terminate the Working Group if it concludes sufficient progress is not being made. The Working Group must submit a final report of its recommendations to the Committee no later than February 1, 2021, and will terminate upon the final report.

Section 2 of the PCS amends Section 24.1(c) of S.L. 2018-5 pertaining to the membership of the Children's Council to increase it by one at-large member appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Section 24.1(c1) is added to S.L. 2018-5, to allow cochairs of the Children's Council to remove a member who fails to attend at least 50% of the meetings. Section 24.1(i) of S.L. 2018-5 is amended to extend the interim reporting date from June 30, 2019, to December 30, 2019, and the final reporting date from June 30, 2020, to December 30, 2020.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The bill would become effective when it becomes law.

CURRENT LAW/BACKGROUND: Part I of S.L. 2017-41 created the Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group to develop recommendations for the regional supervision and collaboration plan. The Working Group consists of 18 members appointed as follows:

- Three members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, one serves as a cochair.
- Three members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, one serves as a cochair.
- Three representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services, appointed by the Secretary or Secretary's designee.
- One designee, appointed by Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court.
- Four county commissioners representing the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC), each of whom shall represent different regions of the State, appointed by the Director of the NCACC.
- Two county social services directors, one of whom shall be appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and one of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- One representative from the North Carolina Association of Social Services Attorneys (NCASSA), appointed by the President of the NCASSA.
- One representative from the Association of North Carolina County Social Services Directors, appointed by the President of the Association.

The UNC School of Government assists the Working Group by facilitating meetings, providing administrative and technical support, and preparing reports. The Working Group has issued [two reports](#).

Section 24.1 of S.L. 2018-5 established the **North Carolina Child Well-Being Transformation Council (Children's Council)** for the purpose of coordinating, collaborating, and communicating among agencies and organizations involved in providing public services to children. The goal was to address the failure of entities to collaborate, coordinate, and communicate about services and to foster a more systematic and coordinated approach to services to ensure that the State achieves the best possible outcomes for children. The Children's Council currently has 25 members, six members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, six members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and thirteen members appointed by the Governor.