



HOUSE BILL 935: Social Services Reform/DHHS Recommendations.

2019-2020 General Assembly

Committee:	House Health. If favorable, re-refer to Appropriations, Health and Human Services. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	May 5, 2019
Introduced by:	Reps. Blackwell, Stevens, White, Dobson	Prepared by:	Jessica Boney Theresa Matula Jason Moran-Bates Committee Staff
Analysis of:	First Edition		

OVERVIEW: *House Bill 935 would make changes related to social services reform. It would implement new supervisory requirements recommended by the Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group. It would require criminal history and sex offender registry checks for certain job applicants. It would allow DHHS to use funds to pay for education of youth who have moved from foster care to permanent homes. It would require certain members of county departments of social services to attend education classes and work to resolve conflicts of interest. Finally it would require the Administrative Office of the Courts to study the creation of a tribunal to focus on child support matters.*

BILL ANALYSIS:

Section 1 would require the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), in accordance with a plan created by the Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group, to establish seven regions for supervision of child welfare and social services beginning March 22, 2022. \$914,790 would be appropriated each year from 2019-2021 to support 11 new staff positions required by the plan.

Section 2 would make any offer of employment to an applicant seeking work at a child care institution as defined by Title IV E of the Social Security Act contingent on that applicant consenting to a criminal background check. Applicants who had resided in North Carolina for less than five years would be required to consent to a state and national background check. Applicants who had resided in the state for more than five years would only be required to consent to a state check. Within five days of making an offer of employment, the child care institution would be required to submit a request to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to conduct a criminal background check. DPS would be required to return the results of the check to the Criminal Records Check Unit of DHHS. Conviction of a relevant offense would not be a bar to employment. Relevant offenses would include the offenses listed in G.S. 131D-40(d). The section would also authorize the Department of Public Safety to conduct the necessary criminal history checks.

Section 3 would allow DHHS to allocate funds to pay for the educational needs of youth who exit foster care to a permanent home.

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Section 4 would require new members of county boards of social services to attend education training sessions twice during their first year of service and require DHHS, in collaboration with stakeholders, to create a training program for county boards of social services.

Section 5 would require the Administrative Office of the Courts to study the feasibility of creating a tribunal dedicated to hearing child support matters.

Section 6 would require county departments of social services to work expeditiously to resolve conflicts of interest. The county departments would have to notify DHHS about any conflict of interest, and DHHS would have the final authority to resolve the issue. The Social Services Commission would have to adopt rules to implement this policy and report on those rules to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services.

Section 7 would continue the work of the Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group (Group). The Group would be required to:

- Review and revise recommendations regarding regional supervision of child welfare and social services.
- Provide detailed recommendations on the role of elected officials and governing boards in social services oversight, local representation of social services agencies, residency determination for social services programs, venue and notice requirements for adult guardianship cases, and confidentiality of social services records.
- Conduct a study regarding appointments of and funding for publicly-funded guardians. The study must include a description of the current types of appointments of publicly-funded guardians, an evaluation of the effectiveness of the various types of publicly-funded guardians, and recommendations for management of publicly-funded guardians.

The Group must submit a preliminary report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services no later than October 15, 2020, and a final report no later than February 1, 2021. The Group would terminate on the earlier of February 1, 2021, or the date the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services determines the Group is not making sufficient progress.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The appropriation in Section 1 of this act would become effective July 1, 2019. The remainder of the act would be effective when it becomes law. Section 4(a) would apply to any current county board of social service members that have not met the training requirements for new board members in G.S. 108A-9(4a).

BACKGROUND: A copy of the Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group's report can be found at:

<https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/www.sog.unc.edu/files/SSWG%20Stage%20Two%20FINAL%20Report%2012.20.2018.pdf>