



HOUSE BILL 212: Social Services Reform.

2021-2022 General Assembly

Committee:	House Judiciary 2. If favorable, re-refer to Families, Children, and Aging Policy. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	March 24, 2021
Introduced by:	Reps. Stevens, Blackwell, White	Prepared by:	Susan Sitze and Hillary Woodard*
Analysis of:	PCS to First Edition H212-CSCH-7		Staff Attorneys

OVERVIEW: *The Proposed Committee Substitute (PCS) to House Bill 212 would make the following changes related to social services reform and adoption laws:*

- *Implement new supervisory requirements recommended by the Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group (Working Group) and appropriate funds for new staff positions.*
- *Require members of the county board of social services to attend education and training sessions.*
- *Require agencies to conduct feasibility and cost studies.*
- *Require the Social Services Commission to adopt rules and procedures regarding conflicts of interest.*
- *Extend deadlines for the reporting plans developed by the Working Group and address membership and vacancies in the Working Group.*
- *Repeal certain provisions relating to the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children.*

BILL ANALYSIS:

Section 1 of the PCS to House Bill 212 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 (Working Group), to establish seven regions for supervision of child welfare and social services beginning March 1, 2022 and appropriates funds to accomplish this plan. This section becomes effective July 1, 2021.

Section 2 would amend G.S. 108A-9 to require members of the county board of social services to attend education and training sessions. This section becomes effective October 1, 2021 and members must participate in the training by October 1, 2023. Section 2(b) would also require agencies to collaborate and develop the education and training program for the new county boards. The education and training must be made available statewide by March 1, 2022. Section 2(b) is effective when it becomes law.

Section 3 would require the Administrative Office of the Courts to conduct a feasibility and cost study for a proposed child support tribunal and report its findings to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee (the Committee) by March 1, 2022.

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Section 4 creates a new provision in G.S. 108A-15 to define conflicts of interest and sets out procedures the county departments of social services must follow to resolve a conflict of interest. The Social Services Commission is required to adopt rules regarding conflicts of interest and must report to the Committee upon adopting the rules.

Section 5 amends S.L. 2017-41, which created the Working Group, to continue the Working Group and to extend the deadline by which the Working Group must provide its plan regarding the regional supervision and collaboration plan to the Committee to March 1, 2024. It also removes the requirement that members of the Working Group appointed by the General Assembly be a member of the Senate or House of Representatives. It creates a new provision to address vacancies in the Working Group to allow a vacancy to be filled in the same manner as original appointment. It requires the Working Group to continue developing recommendations about the regional supervision plan in three stages and creates Stage Three, which requires the Working Group to review recommendations from certain agencies, to provide more detailed recommendations, and to conduct a study regarding publicly funded guardians. A preliminary report generated by the Working Group's findings in Stage Three must be reported to the Committee no later than October 15, 2022, and the final report must be submitted no later than February 1, 2023 at which time the Working Group shall terminate.

Section 6 requires DHHS to conduct a feasibility study and make recommendations on transferring adult guardianship cases from DHHS to counties and must report findings to the Committee by March 1, 2022.

Section 7 repeals two statutes, G.S. 7B-3807 and G.S. 7B-3808, which were enacted in S.L. 2019-172.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Except as otherwise provided, this act becomes effective when it becomes law.

**Staff Theresa Matula, staff to the House Health Committee, substantially contributed to this summary.*