

MINUTES
SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Monday, February 05, 2018
- TIME:** 3:00 P.M.
- PLACE:** Room WW54
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Heider, Vice Chairman Souza, Senators Martin, Lee, Agenbroad, Foreman, Potts, and Jordan
- ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senators Harris
- NOTE:** The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.
- CONVENED:** **Chairman Heider** called the meeting of the Health and Welfare Committee (Committee) to order at 3:04 p.m.
- MOTION:** **Senator Foreman** moved that the Committee hear **S 1227**. **Senator Potts** seconded the motion. **Chairman Heider** ruled the motion out of order, as the legislation in question was not on the agenda. **Senator Foreman** stated he was advised **S 1227** was on the agenda. He then exited the meeting.
- RS 26026** **Resolution Relating to Self-Sufficient Families.** **Senator Thayne** explained that this resolution recognizes the importance of self-funded families.
- MOTION:** There being no questions, **Senator Martin** moved to send **RS 26026** to print. **Vice Chairman Souza** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
- RS 26010** **Relating to Health Care Organizations.** **Vice Chairman Souza** stated that **RS 26010** addresses peer review for health care organizations. Peer review is a process by which health care organizations can improve patient care. It involves gathering information about activities such as credentialing, quality assurance, and professional review action. **Vice Chairman Souza** explained that **RS 26010** adds residential care facilities to the list of health care organizations in Section 1.3 of the RS.
- MOTION:** There being no questions, **Senator Martin** moved to send **RS 26010** to print. **Senator Lee** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
- PRESENTATION:** **2017 Legislative Foster Care Report.** **Roxanne Printz** introduced herself as the Deputy Administrator of the Division of Family and Community Services within the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. **Ms. Printz** stated that the Child and Family Services program (program) has four main responsibilities: 1.) receiving reports of abuse or neglect; 2.) assessing allegations of abuse and neglect; 3.) providing ongoing case management services to children either in their own homes or in foster care; and 4.) assuring that children have safety and permanency in their own homes or other permanent homes.

All reports of child abuse or neglect in Idaho are directed to the program's centralized intake unit. Once a referral is prioritized for response, regional staff initiate a comprehensive safety assessment. When a safety threat exists, the program must establish a plan to manage the child's safety. Safety plans may be implemented in the home, or may necessitate the removal of a child from their home. In fiscal year (FY) 2017, the program received 22,125 referrals regarding concerns of abuse, neglect, or abandonment; 8,994 resulted in a comprehensive safety assessment, and 1,337 children were placed into foster care. The number of

children served in foster care has increased by 13.6 percent within the past five years. In FY 2017, 1,170 children exited foster care; 770 of these were reunited with their parents.

Ms. Printz stated that placement in the home of a relative is prioritized when searching for foster placements. If there are no local relative or fictive kin placement options, a child is typically placed with a non-relative foster parent. Children with significant mental health, behavioral, or developmental needs may be placed in a group home or residential care. **Ms. Printz** referenced the graphs in the 2017 Legislative Foster Care Report (see Attachment 1). In FY 2017, there was an increase in the number of licensed foster homes.

Ms. Printz noted that the foster care program attempts to prevent unannounced placement changes. In FY 2017, the program began sending written notices to foster parents regarding placement changes. An unplanned placement change is an unexpected disruption in the child's placement. Examples include: 1.) a foster family placement change request; 2.) a safety issue in the foster home (allegations of abuse or neglect); or 3.) a child's treatment needs requiring higher intensity care. To reduce foster parent requests for placement changes, the program provides support services and resources to foster families. **Ms. Printz** referenced tables in the 2017 Legislative Foster Care Report (see Attachment 1), which provide statistics regarding placement changes.

Vice Chairman Souza asked what percent of placement changes are unplanned. **Ms. Printz** responded that she did not know the percentage. She offered to find the percentage and send the information to the Committee after the meeting.

Ms. Printz referenced an overview of best practices and a list of policy modifications included in the 2017 Legislative Foster Care Report (see Attachment 1). Improvements to the foster care program include: 1.) improving staff capacity; 2.) establishing clearly-defined roles and responsibilities for leadership; 3.) monitoring program practices; 4.) implementing a coaching model for workers and supervisors; and 5.) increasing worker/supervisor/foster parent communication.

DISCUSSION:

Senator Lee noted that the numbers in Table 11 of the 2017 Legislative Foster Care Report (see Attachment 1) did not correlate with the numbers in Table 9. **Ms. Printz** explained that Table 11 displayed reasons for foster parent placement change requests. **Senator Lee** noted that the category "temporary placements only" did not seem to belong in Table 11. She stated that Table 9 did not appear to account for that category. **Senator Lee** also felt that a one-night stay should not be counted as a placement change. **Ms. Printz** noted that the numbers in Table 11 correlate with the numbers in Table 10. She explained that it is important for DHW to track placement changes.

Senator Potts asked what percentage of children who are placed with their families return to the foster care system. **Ms. Printz** stated that she did not know the percentage. She offered to find the percentage and inform Senator Potts.

Vice Chairman Souza stated that she had been a member of an interim foster care committee. She noted that the process of establishing paternity is lengthy, which can delay a permanent placement decision. **Vice Chairman Souza** asked if there has been an improvement in the length of time required to establish paternity. **Ms. Printz** stated that DHW conducts internal reviews that identify case-specific barriers to locating a child's father. She mentioned that the foster program collaborates with child support services and vital statistics to ensure that the establishment of paternity is a quick process.

Senator Lee noted that the foster care program received over 22,000 inquiries in 2017. Not all inquiries result in a child's removal from his or her home. **Senator Lee** asked how the program screens inquiries. **Ms. Printz** stated that the program follows priority guidelines, which establish when a response is warranted and the timeframe in which a response is needed. She explained that the program has a centralized intake unit; therefore, one team reviews all cases consistently. **Ms. Printz** noted that information about a particular case may come from various sources.

Chairman Heider commended Ms. Printz for her work.

S 1254

Wireless Phone Service Transfers. **Carlie Foster** spoke on behalf of AT&T. She stated current Idaho law does not provide mechanisms for domestic violence victims to alter their existing wireless service accounts if they are not an account holder. **S 1254** would allow courts to order wireless service providers to transfer a domestic violence victim's cell phone plan into the victim's name. **Ms. Foster** noted that this would allow victims to gain control of their service plan and retain the use of their wireless device.

Senator Martin asked if the objective of **S 1254** was to allow domestic violence victims to retain the use of their phone number. **Ms. Foster** responded in the affirmative. She noted that victims who did not wish to keep their phone number would not have to do so.

Senator Jordan asked if employees and administrators would receive training regarding service transfers for domestic violence victims. She asked if AT&T encounters this process in other states. **Ms. Foster** noted that similar legislation has been enacted in nine states; therefore, AT&T is accustomed to the process.

Senator Potts asked if the language in **S 1254** reflects the language used in legislation in other states. **Ms. Foster** stated that she was unsure if the language reflects other states' legislation. She noted that the proposed legislation had been examined by legislators to ensure its suitability. **Senator Potts** noted that some victims may not financially qualify for their own account. The victim could select a prepaid service plan, but the primary account holder would remain financially responsible for the remainder of the contract timeframe. **Senator Potts** asked who would be responsible for the cancellation fees and the remainder of the contract. **Ms. Foster** stated that AT&T waives cancellation fees and deposit fees associated with the transfer. She noted that she was not familiar with other wireless companies' practices. **Senator Potts** expressed concern that the proposed legislation obligates cell phone companies to take actions for which they may not be prepared.

Vice Chairman Souza noted that the proposed legislation allows courts to issue an order for a wireless service transfer, but does not require them to do so. She asserted that **S 1254** allows for judicial discretion. **Vice Chairman Souza** asked if the proposed legislation is meant to allow victims who are not primary account holders to establish their own wireless service account. **Ms. Foster** responded in the affirmative. She noted that victims can start their own contract or select a prepaid plan; the new account would not be a continuation of the existing contract.

Senator Potts again expressed concern regarding who would be financially responsible for the existing account if there is time remaining on the contract. **Senator Agenbroad** addressed Senator Potts' concern. He noted that the proposed legislation holds the transferring party financially responsible for the new account. If the victim cannot accept financial responsibility, then the existing contract will not change. **Ms. Foster** explained that the transfer of service would not cancel the original contract; the individual accused of domestic violence would

remain liable for the original contract. Only the victim's device and telephone number would be transferred to a new account.

MOTION: There being no further testimony or questions, **Vice Chairman Souza** moved to send **S 1254** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Martin** seconded the motion. **Senator Jordan** acknowledged that there may be concerns about financial responsibility, but she emphasized that the objective of the proposed legislation is to protect domestic violence victims. She asserted that, in domestic violence situations, the concern should lie with the victim, and not the perpetrator. The motion carried by **voice vote**, with **Senator Potts** voting **nay**. Chairman Heider will carry the bill on the floor of the Senate.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business, **Chairman Heider** adjourned the meeting at 3:48 p.m.

Senator Heider
Chair

Rachel Goodman
Secretary