

AMENDED IN SENATE AUGUST 22, 2002

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 17, 2002

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 31, 2001

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2001–02 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 364

Introduced by Assembly Member Aroner

February 20, 2001

An act to add Section 10609.7 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to social services.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 364, as amended, Aroner. Child welfare services.

Existing law requires each county to provide child welfare services.

~~This bill would require the State Department of Social Services to establish minimum child welfare services worker to child ratios for certain child welfare services activities, to be implemented over a 5-year period commencing in the 2002–03 fiscal year. These provisions would be implemented only to the extent that funds are appropriated for this purpose.~~

~~Because the bill would require the imposition of these standards on counties, it would create a state-mandated local program.~~

~~The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.~~

~~This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.~~

Existing law provides for the administration of various child welfare services pursuant to regulations and procedures adopted by the State Department of Social Services.

Existing law requires the department to contract with an appropriate and qualified entity to conduct an evaluation of the adequacy of current child welfare services budgeting methodology, and to convene an advisory group. The Director of Social Services has convened an advisory group, the Child Welfare Services Stakeholders Group, to address concerns facing the child welfare system.

This bill would provide that it is the intent of the Legislature that the Human Resources Workgroup of the Child Welfare Services Stakeholders Group include in its next planned report the core strategies needed to establish minimum caseload standards under the redesigned child welfare services system. This bill would also provide that it is the intent of the Legislature that the Human Resources Workgroup make recommendations for implementing the new caseload standards.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: ~~yes~~ no. State-mandated local program: ~~yes~~ no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 10609.7 is added to the Welfare and
- 2 Institutions Code, to read:
- 3 10609.7. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 4 following:
- 5 ~~(1) The standards used to determine child welfare social~~
- 6 *(1) The department has convened the Child Welfare Services*
- 7 *Stakeholders Group for the purpose of making recommendations*
- 8 *to redesign California’s child welfare system to create and sustain*
- 9 *a flexible system, comprising public and private partnerships, that*
- 10 *provides a comprehensive system of support for families and*
- 11 *communities to ensure the well-being of every child.*
- 12 *(2) In the first year of the stakeholders group, there was*
- 13 *significant attention brought to the carrying capacity of direct*
- 14 *service professionals through the development of an*
- 15 *implementation plan of child welfare services workload study*
- 16 *pursuant to Section 10609.5.*
- 17 *(3) The stakeholders group has convened a series of working*
- 18 *groups, including the Human Resources Workgroup, whose tasks*



1 are to develop core strategies and recommendations resulting in a
2 high capacity, competent, satisfied child welfare services
3 workforce able to perform the essential functions of the redesigned
4 child welfare system.

5 (4) In the second year, the Human Resources Workgroup report
6 found that workload issues have not appreciably declined and that
7 for the child welfare services redesign to be successful, workforce
8 considerations need to be at the forefront of all redesign efforts.

9 (5) The stakeholders group and its Human Resources
10 Workgroup have entered the third year of the redesign process for
11 the state's child welfare services.

12 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature that the Human Resources
13 Workgroup of the Child Welfare Services Stakeholders Group
14 include in its next planned report the core strategies needed to
15 establish minimum caseload standards under the redesigned child
16 welfare services system for all service areas.

17 (c) It is the intent of the Legislature that the Human Resources
18 Workgroup also make recommendations for implementing the new
19 caseload standards, including a recommendation that would
20 achieve at least 20 percent of the caseload reductions annually
21 over a specified period of time, as required under the newly
22 recommended standards.

23 worker caseloads were developed in the mid-1980's and are now
24 over 15 years old.

25 ~~(2) The child welfare service workload study conducted by an~~
26 ~~independent contractor pursuant to Section 10609.5 of the Welfare~~
27 ~~and Institutions Code concluded that child welfare social workers~~
28 ~~currently bear caseloads that are far in excess of what is reasonable~~
29 ~~to meet the requirements of existing statutory and case law.~~

30 ~~(3) California's child welfare system is now severely~~
31 ~~understaffed as a result of these out-of-date caseload standards.~~

32 ~~(4) The effects of overly high child welfare worker caseloads~~
33 ~~on children and their families can be devastating and can include~~
34 ~~all of the following:~~

35 ~~(A) Inadequate response to reports of child abuse and neglect.~~

36 ~~(B) Inability to ensure that out-of-home placements are~~
37 ~~appropriate.~~

38 ~~(C) Reduced monitoring of children in out-of-home~~
39 ~~placements.~~



1 ~~(D) Reduced service to families attempting to reunify with~~
2 ~~their children.~~

3 ~~(E) Poor outcomes for foster youth and their families with~~
4 ~~children in foster care.~~

5 ~~(b) (1) The department shall establish regulations to require,~~
6 ~~except as provided in paragraph (3), counties to implement~~
7 ~~minimum caseload standards that reflect all of the following child~~
8 ~~welfare services worker to child ratios:~~

9 ~~(A) Screening/hotline/intake: one worker per 116.10 children.~~

10 ~~(B) Emergency response: one worker per 13.03 children.~~

11 ~~(C) Family maintenance: one worker per 14.18 children.~~

12 ~~(D) Family reunification: one worker per 15.58 children.~~

13 ~~(E) Permanency planning: one worker per 23.69 children.~~

14 ~~(2) The workload standards established under paragraph (1)~~
15 ~~shall be phased in over a five-year period, commencing in the~~
16 ~~2002-03 fiscal year, so that 20 percent of the caseload reductions~~
17 ~~required under those standards is completed each fiscal year, and~~
18 ~~the new caseload standards are fully implemented by the end of the~~
19 ~~2006-07 fiscal year.~~

20 ~~(3) Counties that opt to provide workload relief to child welfare~~
21 ~~social workers through methods other than the caseload reductions~~
22 ~~required in paragraph (1) shall submit a plan to the department~~
23 ~~describing the workload relief measure that the county will~~
24 ~~implement. In developing a workload relief plan, counties shall~~
25 ~~consult with representatives of child welfare services, consumers,~~
26 ~~children's advocacy organizations, and child welfare social~~
27 ~~worker organizations. Upon approval by the department, counties~~
28 ~~may be exempted from the requirements of paragraph (1).~~

29 ~~(c) This section shall be implemented only to the extent that~~
30 ~~funding is provided in the Budget Act or another statute.~~

31 ~~(d) In establishing compliance thresholds for outcome~~
32 ~~measures developed by the department pursuant to Section~~
33 ~~10601.2, the department shall take into consideration the extent to~~
34 ~~which the child welfare system is funded to meet the caseload~~
35 ~~reductions or workload relief as required in this section.~~

36 ~~SEC. 2. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to~~
37 ~~Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because~~
38 ~~a local agency shall only be required to provide services pursuant~~



1 ~~to this act to the extent that funds are appropriated by the~~
2 ~~Legislature for that purpose.~~

O

