

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 53rd Legislature (2011)

3 HOUSE BILL 1359

By: Peters

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5
6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to children; establishing Foster Care
8 System Improvement Task Force; providing for
9 membership; designating cochairs; providing for staff
10 assistance; providing for travel reimbursement;
11 providing powers and duties; requiring certain
12 report; defining terms; providing for
13 noncodification; and declaring an emergency.

14 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

15 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law not to be
16 codified in the Oklahoma Statutes reads as follows:

17 A. There is hereby created until January 1, 2013, the Foster
18 Care System Improvement Task Force.

19 B. The task force shall consist of twenty-three (23) members as
20 follows:

21 1. The Director of the Oklahoma Commission on Children and
22 Youth, or designee;

23 2. The Director of the Department of Human Services, or
24 designee;

1 3. The Executive Coordinator of the District Attorneys Council,
2 or designee;

3 4. A child welfare worker employed by the Department of Human
4 Services to be appointed by the Director of the Department of Human
5 Services;

6 5. Three presiding judges of courts having juvenile law
7 jurisdiction, one from Tulsa County, one from Oklahoma County and
8 one from a district other than Tulsa and Oklahoma Counties to be
9 appointed by the President of the State Judicial Conference;

10 6. Eight members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the
11 Oklahoma House of Representatives as follows:

12 a. one shall be the president of a state foster parent
13 association,

14 b. one shall be an individual who has recent experience
15 providing foster care for a child placed in the home
16 for more than six (6) months,

17 c. one shall be a representative of a child-advocacy
18 organization,

19 d. one shall be a member of an Oklahoma Indian child
20 welfare association,

21 e. one shall be a court-appointed special advocate for
22 deprived children,

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- 1 f. one shall be a representative of a faith-based
- 2 organization that is actively involved in working with
- 3 the foster care system,
- 4 g. one shall be a member of a local multidisciplinary
- 5 coalition of children's services providers that works
- 6 to improve and strengthen the child protection system,
- 7 and
- 8 h. one shall be a member of the Oklahoma House of
- 9 Representatives; and

10 9. Eight members shall be appointed by the President Pro

11 Tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate as follows:

- 12 a. one shall represent a statewide association of
- 13 therapeutic foster care agencies,
- 14 b. one shall be a former foster youth,
- 15 c. one shall represent a statewide association of youth
- 16 services agencies,
- 17 d. one shall be a child welfare worker employed by the
- 18 Department of Human Services selected from a list
- 19 submitted by a statewide public employee association,
- 20 e. one shall be a public defender with experience
- 21 representing the interests of deprived children,
- 22 f. one shall be a member of a statewide association
- 23 representing psychiatric hospitals,
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1 g. one shall be a representative of a nonprofit
2 organization comprised of agencies that provide child
3 care to deprived children, and

4 h. one shall be a member of the Oklahoma State Senate.

5 C. 1. Members shall serve at the pleasure of their appointing
6 authorities. A vacancy on the task force shall be filled by the
7 original appointing authority.

8 2. Appointments to the task force shall be made within thirty
9 (30) days of the effective date of this act.

10 3. A majority of the members of the task force shall constitute
11 a quorum. A majority of the members present at a meeting may act
12 for the task force.

13 4. The Director of the Oklahoma Commission on Children and
14 Youth, or designee, and task force member who represents a child-
15 advocacy organization shall serve as cochairs of the task force and
16 shall hold an organizational meeting no later than July 1, 2011.

17 D. Staff assistance for the task force shall be provided by the
18 Oklahoma House of Representatives, the Oklahoma State Senate and the
19 Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth.

20 E. All departments, officers, agencies and employees of this
21 state shall cooperate with the task force in fulfilling its duties
22 and responsibilities including, but not limited to, providing any
23 information, records or reports requested by the task force.

1 F. Members of the task force may, as necessary, seek the advice
2 and input of professionals who are not members of the task force and
3 the services of experts in furtherance of their duties.

4 G. The Foster Care System Improvement Task Force may divide
5 into subcommittees in furtherance of its purpose.

6 H. Members of the task force shall receive no compensation for
7 their service, but shall receive travel reimbursement as follows:

8 1. Legislative members of the task force shall be reimbursed
9 for necessary travel expenses incurred in the performance of their
10 duties in accordance with the provisions of Section 456 of Title 74
11 of the Oklahoma Statutes; and

12 2. Nonlegislative members of the task force shall be reimbursed
13 by their appointing authorities or respective agencies for necessary
14 travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties in
15 accordance with the State Travel Reimbursement Act.

16 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law not to be
17 codified in the Oklahoma Statutes reads as follows:

18 A. The purpose of the Foster Care System Improvement Task Force
19 shall be to:

20 1. Compare Oklahoma's foster care system outcomes to the
21 Federal Children and Family Services Review standards;

22 2. Review current practices in the state's foster care system;

23 3. Study best practices that may assist in improving the
24 system; and

1 4. Identify specific areas for improvement in the state's
2 foster care system.

3 B. The task force shall issue a report to the Legislature and
4 to the Governor by March 15, 2012, that includes:

5 1. The indentified areas of the state's foster care system that
6 require improvement;

7 2. A delineation of desired outcomes that should occur for
8 children who become a part of the foster care system;

9 3. A compilation of best practices to assist in achieving the
10 desired outcomes for children and families;

11 4. The accountability standards that will be used to measure
12 the state's success in meeting the desired outcomes; and

13 5. A reporting of the estimated cost for implementing the
14 recommendations.

15 C. As used in this section:

16 1. "Foster care system" means the services and practices
17 related to children who have been removed from their home due to
18 abuse or neglect and who are alleged or found to be deprived. The
19 meaning shall encompass regular, kinship and therapeutic foster care
20 and more complex levels of care including group homes and
21 residential treatment centers. "Foster care system" shall also
22 include foster parent recruitment and retention, certification and
23 training and related services including case management; and

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1 2. "Best practice" means a practice that has been rigorously
2 researched through at least three independent clinical trials and,
3 upon implementation according to specified guidelines, the practice
4 can be systematically replicated in a way that renders statistically
5 significant outcomes "Best practice" shall also mean a practice
6 that has expert consensus or other support or utilizes very specific
7 approaches to problems that result in high rates of consumer or
8 clinician satisfaction, but which may not be widely known.

9 SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
10 of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby
11 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
12 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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