ENGROSSED SENATE
BILL NO. 521 By: Treat and David of the Senate

and

Nelson of the House

[ children - establishing Child Welfare Specialist Compensation Enhancement Revolving Fund - codification - effective date - emergency ]

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

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1-8-111 of Title 10A, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. The Department of Human Services shall develop a workforce improvement plan for child welfare specialists that will increase the number of staff, reduce turnover, and continue to improve the experience level and practice competencies of staff responsible for day-to-day work on child welfare cases. The plan shall include recommendations to address worker training, assessments, discipline, compensation, and contain, but not be limited to, the following components:

1. An improved applicant review process for child welfare specialist positions that screens for the appropriate

characteristics and skills proven to be indicators of an effective child welfare specialist;

2. A competency-based assessment program for child welfare specialists that may be implemented in multiple stages. Competency-based assessment requires that a child welfare specialist shall:

a. successfully complete a job-family-level assessment for competency and fitness for duty upon completion of initial training,

b. maintain competency standards by successful completion of the appropriate job-level competency assessment or assessment by completion of the required yearly training, and

c. successfully complete the appropriate competency-based assessment for the job family level prior to any career progression, demotion, transfer, except for transfers within the same job family and level, or promotion to any child welfare specialist position;

3. A plan to transition current child welfare specialists into the competency-based program; and

4. A voluntary certification program that exceeds job-family standards, enhances core competencies, and provides opportunities for career growth or specialization within child welfare.

B. 1. In developing a plan which meets the requirements of subsection A of this section, the Department shall research best

practices from other states and consult with active child welfare specialists and take into consideration the recommendations and concerns of employees affected by the competency-based assessment and certification programs, and any other resources necessary to develop the plan.

2. The plan shall be submitted no later than January 1, 2014. The plan shall be subject to approval by the Legislature on or before March 1, 2014. If the Legislature does not disapprove the plan prior to March 1, 2014, the plan shall be considered to have been approved and the Department will implement the plan by April 1, 2014. If the Legislature disapproves the plan, the Department shall resubmit a new or modified plan by May 1, 2014. If the Legislature does not disapprove the new or modified plan by the end of the 2014 Session, the plan shall be considered to have been approved and the Department shall implement the new or modified plan by July 1, 2014. If no plan is approved during the 2014 Session, the Department shall resubmit a new or modified plan by January 1 of each year until the plan has been approved.

C. There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving fund to be designated the Child Welfare Specialist Compensation Enhancement Revolving Fund. The purpose of the fund shall be to provide for compensation for child welfare workers who have met the components of a plan approved pursuant to subsection B of this section. The fund shall be a continuing fund, not subject to fiscal

year limitations, and shall consist of all monies received from transfers of appropriations made to the Department of Human Services for the purpose of implementing subsections A and B of this section. All monies accruing to the credit of said fund are hereby appropriated and may be expended by the Department of Human Services except that no expenditures shall be made until approval of the plan created pursuant to subsection B of this section. Transfers from the Child Welfare Specialist Compensation Enhancement Revolving Fund to fund child welfare workers' pay shall be for purposes stated in subsections A and B of this section.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2013.

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

Passed the Senate the 11th day of March, 2013.

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Presiding Officer of the Senate

Passed the House of Representatives the ____ day of _____, 2013.

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Presiding Officer of the House of Representatives