

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 54th Legislature (2013)

3 HOUSE BILL 2240

By: Nelson

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6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to children; directing the Department
8 of Human Services to develop and implement a plan to
9 create a workforce improvement program for child
10 welfare workers; stating purpose; specifying
11 requirements of plan; directing Department to
12 consider certain recommendations in the development
13 of the plan; establishing deadline for submission of
14 plan; requiring certain approval by Legislature;
15 establishing Child Welfare Specialist Compensation
16 Enhancement Revolving Fund; stating purpose;
17 specifying fund shall be a continuing fund; providing
18 for the appropriation and expenditure of monies from
19 Fund; stating legislative intent; providing for
20 codification; providing an effective date; and
21 declaring an emergency.

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

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

28 A. The Department of Human Services shall develop a workforce
29 improvement plan for child welfare specialists that will increase
30 the number of staff, reduce turnover, and continue to improve the
31 experience level and practice competencies of staff responsible for

1 day-to-day work on child welfare cases. The plan shall include
2 recommendations to address worker training, assessments, discipline,
3 compensation, and contain, but not be limited to, the following
4 components:

5 1. An improved applicant review process for child welfare
6 specialist positions that screens for the appropriate
7 characteristics and skills proven to be indicators of an effective
8 child welfare specialist;

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

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

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

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

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

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

6 B. 1. In developing a plan which meets the requirements of
7 subsection A of this section, the Department shall research best
8 practices from other states and consult with active child welfare
9 specialists and take into consideration the recommendations and
10 concerns of employees affected by the competency-based assessment
11 and certification programs, and any other resources necessary to
12 develop the plan.

13 2. The plan shall be submitted no later than January 1, 2014.
14 The plan shall be subject to approval by the Legislature on or
15 before March 1, 2014. If the Legislature does not disapprove the
16 plan prior to March 1, 2014, the plan shall be considered to have
17 been approved and the Department will implement the plan by April 1,
18 2014. If the Legislature disapproves the plan, the Department shall
19 resubmit a new or modified plan by May 1, 2014. If the Legislature
20 does not disapprove the new or modified plan by the end of the 2014
21 Session, the plan shall be considered to have been approved and the
22 Department shall implement the new or modified plan by July 1, 2014.
23 If no plan is approved during the 2014 Session, the Department shall
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1 resubmit a new or modified plan by January 1 of each year until the
2 plan has been approved.

3 C. There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving
4 fund to be designated the Child Welfare Specialist Compensation
5 Enhancement Revolving Fund. The purpose of the fund shall be to
6 provide for compensation for child welfare workers who have met the
7 components of a plan approved pursuant to subsection B of this
8 section. The fund shall be a continuing fund, not subject to fiscal
9 year limitations, and shall consist of all monies received from
10 transfers of appropriations made to the Department of Human Services
11 for the purpose of implementing subsections A and B of this section.

12 All monies accruing to the credit of said fund are hereby
13 appropriated and may be expended by the Department of Human Services
14 except that no expenditures shall be made until approval of the plan
15 created pursuant to subsection B of this section. Transfers from
16 the Child Welfare Specialist Compensation Enhancement Revolving Fund
17 to fund child welfare workers' pay shall be for purposes stated in
18 subsections A and B of this section.

19 D. It is the intent of the Legislature that adequate continuing
20 funding for implementation of the requirements of subsections A and
21 B of this section shall be included in the base pay of eligible
22 child welfare specialists meeting the requirements of this section
23 and in the base appropriation of the Department of Human Services in
24 subsequent years after approval of the plan by the Legislature.

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

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

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