

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

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

3 SENATE BILL 521

By: Treat

4
5 AS INTRODUCED

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

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

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

24 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,

1 compensation, and contain, but not be limited to, the following
2 components:

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

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

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

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

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

22 3. A plan to transition current child welfare specialists into
23 the competency-based program; and
24

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

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

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

1 C. There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving
2 fund to be designated the Child Welfare Specialist Compensation
3 Enhancement Revolving Fund. The purpose of the fund shall be to
4 provide for compensation for child welfare workers who have met the
5 components of a plan approved pursuant to subsection B of this
6 section. The fund shall be a continuing fund, not subject to fiscal
7 year limitations, and shall consist of all monies received from
8 transfers of appropriations made to the Department of Human Services
9 for the purpose of implementing subsections A and B of this section.
10 All monies accruing to the credit of said fund are hereby
11 appropriated and may be expended by the Department of Human Services
12 except that no expenditures shall be made until approval of the plan
13 created pursuant to subsection B of this section. Transfers from
14 the Child Welfare Specialist Compensation Enhancement Revolving Fund
15 to fund child welfare workers' pay shall be for purposes stated in
16 subsections A and B of this section.

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

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

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