

HB 2331 -- Foster Care and Adoption

Sponsor: Franz

This bill establishes the Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board within the Department of Social Services to provide consultation and assistance to the department, draft and provide an independent review of the foster care and adoption policies and procedures of the Children's Division, and determine the nature and content of in-service training that must be provided to foster and adoptive parents in order to improve foster care and adoption services consistent with Section 210.566, RSMo. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Specifies that the board must be comprised of foster and adoptive parents, appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate, from each of the seven regional division areas within the department;

(2) Specifies the terms of the board members and its officers, the procedures for filling board vacancies and the reimbursement of the member's expenses, and that all members of the board must serve for a term of at least two years and members may be re-appointed to the board for consecutive terms;

(3) Requires the board to establish procedures to:

(a) Review the division's proposed policies, provide written responses to the division indicating approval or disapproval, and provide recommendations for changes within 30 days of receipt of a proposed policy;

(b) Provide draft policy suggestions, at the request of the division or in response to issues by the board, to the division for improvements in foster care or adoption; and

(c) Fulfill its statutory requirement in accordance with Section 210.566 to determine the content of in-service training to be provided by the division to foster and adoptive parents; and

(4) Requires the board to submit an annual report on its activities to the department director, the Governor, the Office of the Child Advocate, and upon request to members of the General Assembly.

The bill also requires the division to make reasonable efforts to place siblings in the same foster care, kinship, guardianship, or adoptive placement unless doing so would be contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings. If siblings are not placed together, the division must make reasonable efforts to

provide frequent visitation or other ongoing interaction between siblings, unless this interaction would be contrary to a sibling's safety or well-being.