

HCS SB 205 -- FOSTER CHILDREN

SPONSOR: Sater (Burlison)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Children, Families, and Persons with Disabilities by a vote of 11 to 0.

The substitute specifies that if a youth under 21 years of age is released from the custody of the Children's Division within the Department of Social Services and after the release it appears that it would be in the youth's best interest to have his or her custody returned to the division, the juvenile officer, the division, or the youth can petition the court to return custody of the youth to the division until the youth is 21 years of age. Currently, this provision applies to a child under 18 years of age.

The substitute requires, beginning July 1, 2014, children older than 15 years of age who are in the foster care system or the Division of Youth Services Program within the Department of Social Services to receive a visit to a state university or community or technical college in the child's area or an armed services recruiter before being adopted or terminated by foster care or completing the division's custody or training unless the visit is waived by the youth's family support team or his or her treatment team. The visit must include an entry application process, financial support application and availability, career options with academic or technical training, a school tour, and other information and experience desired. Specified agencies that are providing foster case management services for foster children can document and, if requested, must receive reimbursement from the department for the costs associated with meeting the requirements of these provisions.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill allows foster children to have a visit to an institution of higher education.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Sater; Kelly Schultz, Office of the Child Advocate; and Elise Herwig.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.