

## HB 2216 -- PRESERVATION OF THE FAMILY

SPONSOR: Coleman (97)

This bill modifies many sections of current statute relating to child protection, foster care and adoption, and treatment of caretakers.

### ADOPTION

The bill eliminates the "special needs" requirement in the adoption tax credit and makes it available to any family in Missouri adopting any child.

It also eliminates the requirement for adoptive parents to pay the legal fees of the birth parents and opens all adoption records in cases of involuntary termination of parental rights.

Finally, it lowers the time limit to be considered willful abandonment of a child to 60 days for a child under the age of three (Sections 135.325, 326, 327, and 335 and 453.030, 040, and 121, RSMo).

### CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM GOALS AND PRIORITIES

These sections refine the goals and priorities of the Department of Social Services and the Children's Division of the department to prioritize safety of children, birth or adoptive families, kinship placements, foster families, and other institutional settings. It also requires more data collection and reporting by the department and the division to provide individual-level anonymized data to the University of Missouri that allows researchers to track children through the system (Sections 210.001, 210.109, 210.188).

### CHILD PROTECTION REPORTING AND CASE MANAGEMENT

The bill modifies the required practices of the department to include creation of an Individualized Service Plan with time requirements and expectations for everyone with care, custody and control of the child, for each child that enters the child protection system.

It also requires the department to create a response and evaluation team of division personnel, academic experts and service agency personnel that will develop an evaluation tool with which to provide a transparent system of review for the division and all contractors of the division (Sections 210.110, 112, 113, 115, 117, 145, and 147).

#### ELECTRONIC SHARING

Allows the division to exchange electronic reports with other states (Section 210.116).

#### BIRTH MATCH PROGRAM

Creates a data sharing system between the department and the Department of Health and Senior Services to compare birth reports with reports of parents who have been convicted of certain crimes or have a termination of parental rights (Section 210.157).

#### ALIGNMENT OF COURT PRACTICES

Revisions in court practices are necessary to effect the changes in Chapter 210. Specifically, the bill updates crimes to be considered when placing or removing children from homes, the role of the guardian ad litem, conditions required for abandonment of an infant or young child, and when the court shall consider filing a petition for termination of parental rights (Sections 211.038, 183, 444, 447).

#### COMMUNITY-BASED SENTENCING

Requires courts to consider alternatives to incarceration for convictions of non-violent offenses for primary caretakers of dependent persons (Section 217.779).