

HS HB 432 -- BIRTH MATCH PROGRAM

SPONSOR: Kelly (141)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Children and Families by a vote of 8 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 7 to 0 with 1 voting present. Voted "Do Pass with HS" by Legislative Review.

The following is a summary of the House Substitute for HB 432.

The bill orders data sharing between the Children's Division of the Departments of Social Services and the State Registrar's office to compare birth reports with reports of parents who have been convicted of certain crimes or have a termination of parental rights in order to ensure the safety of the child and provide services, if needed. The State Registrar shall provide to the Division the birth record information of children born to such individuals. The Division shall verify the identity of the parent and if that identity is verified, the Division shall provide the appropriate local office with information regarding the birth of the child. Appropriate local Division personnel shall initiate contact with the family, or make a good faith effort to do so, to determine if the parent or family has a need for services and provide such voluntary and time-limited services as appropriate. The Division shall document the results of such contact and services provided, if any, in the Division's information system.

Identifying information and records created and exchanged under this bill shall be closed records and shall only be used as specified in the bill.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this is a very timely and low cost solution that will prevent newborns from being placed in dangerous homes. Research indicates that there is often a pattern of abuse and even if one child is removed from a home when another is born there is no clear communication between departments. This new program will provide an opportunity to the departments to offer prevention and crisis management support along with other supportive services at an earlier stage. This bill will potentially protect the most vulnerable Missourians.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Kelly; D. Fosteradopt Connect; Missouri KidsFirst; Arnie C. Dienoff; Missouri Coalition

of Children'S Agencies; Kids Win Missouri; and Children's Trust Fund (CTF).

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that the fiscal note reflects that the mentioned registry does not currently exist and that it will be built to review case files and ensure that a voluntary relinquishment would not trigger inclusion.

Testifying on the bill was the Department of Social Services.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.