

# **SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE**

**BILL NO.** House Bill 1866

**PRINTER NO.** 3064

**AMOUNT**

See Fiscal Impact

**FUND**

General Fund

**DATE INTRODUCED**

September 15, 2021

**PRIME SPONSOR**

Representative Boback

**DESCRIPTION**

House Bill 1866 amends Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) and Title 67 (Public Welfare) to provide for judicial determinations, services and data collections relating to older foster youth and their transition out of foster care.

The bill amends the chapter pertaining to "family finding" in Title 67 to further provide for services and communications to:

- Reduce the use of "another planned permanent living arrangement" (APPLA);
- Assist older foster youth in the transition out of foster care and into independent adulthood; and
- Provide for data collection to further inform practices relating to transitioning youth.

A new section, relating to permanency plans, requires that the county agency develop a permanency plan at the time a child is taken into protective custody and provide continuous services in support of the plan. A "permanency plan" is defined in the bill as a "comprehensive plan for a child in out-of-home placement that is intended to result in a permanent home and family relationships for the child." A child aged 14 or older must have the opportunity to participate in the development of the plan. The purposes of the services to be provided include identifying potential permanent placements; preparing the child for the identified permanency goal; and maintaining and strengthening sibling and other supportive connections.

The bill adds another new section relating to transition plans and services, which requires the county agency to provide certain services for older children who are in protective custody when they reach certain ages. Specifically, beginning at age 14, the county agency must begin to provide age and developmentally appropriate services to help the child plan and prepare for eventual adulthood. Beginning no less than six months before a child's 18th birthday, the county agency must develop a transition plan in collaboration with the child and provide the child with a copy of the plan. The bill includes particular requirements for a transition plan relating to housing, employment and other opportunities, family/personal contacts and documentation of the receipt of important documents. Prior to termination of court jurisdiction of a youth aged 18 or older, the county must provide the youth with his or her essential documents and must keep a copy of the transition plan, including copies of documents, for at least five years.

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The bill also amends the Juvenile Act (Chapter 63 of Title 42) in matters to be determined at a permanency hearing to add the requirement that the court determine whether services are being provided as required under 67 Pa.C.S. § 7505 (relating to transition plan and services) and whether a suitable transition plan has been presented, if the child is 18 years of age or older.

Additionally, the age at which the court may approve an APPLA placement is raised from 16 to 18 years. The county agency must also identify two (rather than one) significant connections with supportive adults and identify the specific planned permanent living arrangement it is asking the court to approve.

The bill amends the definition of “family finding” to better reflect the numerous reasons it is required, requires that specific information relating to the county’s efforts in this regard be set forth in the child’s case plan and requires the county agencies to retain and submit to the Department of Human Services 22 data points relating to any youth aged 18 to 21 at the time the court relinquishes jurisdiction.

This act shall take effect in 60 days.

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

According to the Department of Human Services, House Bill 1866 may result in increased costs associated with implementing a collection process and reviewing and verifying information that has been received for youth transitioning out of foster care at the age of 18 or older, as well as costs associated with analyzing data to determine permanency outcomes. Any increased costs can be accommodated within existing resources.