

Child & Youth Services Workgroup - Agenda for the 84th Legislative Session

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- 1) **Ensure children released from TJJD facilities have access to appropriate medical treatment by including them as a population under presumptive eligibility (HB 839 Naishtat)**
- 2) **Children in foster care should have an independent source to report violations of their rights while they are in foster care (HB 1371 Dutton | Naishtat / SB 830 Kolkhorst)**
 - Transfer the DFPS Office of Consumer Affairs to HHSC and strengthen its functions in order to ensure it is independent of DFPS and appropriately responds to the needs of youth who report complaints.
- 3) **Youth should not age out of foster care without plans for stable housing (HB 843 Naishtat)**

Section 263.303 of the Texas Family Code does not provide any detail or guidance to ensure housing stability and prevent homelessness of youth who age out of foster care. Therefore, the youth's transition plan should include identification of barriers to long-term stable housing and plans to ameliorate any challenges to this goal.
- 4) **Increase Opportunities to Serve Homeless Youth (HB 679 Sylvester Turner)**
 - Establish a state definition of homeless youth that mirrors the federal McKinney Vento Act.
 - Direct the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, Department of Family and Protective Services, and the Texas Education Agency, to conduct a study on homeless youth that will enable the state of Texas to understand the extent of the problem and what viable solutions are available.
- 5) **Strengthen the Ability of Kin to Care for Relative Children (HB 807 Dukes)**
 - Schools should accept an affidavit from family members who are caring for relative children so that the caregivers can enroll the children in school.
 - Benefits for kinship placements: Texas Family Code 264.755 currently states that \$ must be provided on initial placement of each child, but CPS policy indicates 90 days / 120 days for grandparents **(West / Burkett)**
 - Eligible kinship caregivers should receive the \$1,000 one-time integration payment within 30 days of a child being placed in their home and at a minimum, divide reimbursement payments into two during each year.
 - Ensure Permanent Managing Conservatorship is a stable guardianship arrangement: **(SB 314 West / HB 1391 Burkett)**
 - Section 1711.8 of the CPS handbook states that CPS should explain what a relative taking PMC means, but provides no further detail. TFC section 153.371 (and duplicated in part in TFC 153.376) presents some duties and rights that a non-parent managing conservator has, but excludes some important components. In addition, many relatives report that they were not aware of the rights conferred on them by taking PMC or the consequences of taking PMC.
 - Require that for grandparents (60+) caring for relative children **(West / Sylvester Turner / Allen):**
 - The TANF asset test be removed for grandparents caring for relative children living in informal arrangements and ensure sibling groups receive the same support that they do when in CPS custody
 - Require that Texas offer grandparents (age 60 and older) who are currently caring for relative children good cause exemptions from TANF asset requirement; include expenses associated with the minor relative children in the home when weighed against the applicant's income and exclude time limits until the relative child under their care reaches the age of 18.