

## **Child Welfare System Task Force; House Sub. for SB 126**

**House Sub. for SB 126** requires the Secretary for Children and Families to establish a Child Welfare System Task Force (Task Force) to study the child welfare system in the State of Kansas.

### ***Organization of Task Force***

The Task Force is composed of the following voting members:

- The Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare;
- The Chairperson of the House Committee on Children and Seniors;
- The Vice-chairperson of the Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare;
- The Vice-chairperson of the House Committee on Children and Seniors;
- The Ranking Minority Member of the Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare;
- The Ranking Minority Member of the House Committee on Children and Seniors;
- One member appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court;
- One Kansas Court Appointed Special Advocates representative, appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court;
- One member representing a foster parent organization, appointed by the Judicial Council;
- One member of the Child Death Review Board, appointed by the Board;
- One county or district attorney with experience in child in need of care (CINC) cases, appointed by the Kansas County and District Attorneys Association;
- One guardian *ad litem* with experience representing children in CINC cases, appointed by the Judicial Council;
- One family law attorney with experience in providing legal services to parents and grandparents in CINC cases, appointed by the Judicial Council;
- One social worker licensed by the Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board, appointed by the Judicial Council;

- One Citizen Review Board member, appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court; and
- One law enforcement officer, appointed by the Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police.

The Task Force also includes the following non-voting members:

- Secretary for Children and Families, or the Secretary's designee;
- Department for Children and Families (DCF) Prevention and Protection Services Director; and
- One representative from each entity that contracts with DCF to provide foster care, family preservation, reintegration, and permanency placement services, appointed by each such entity.

Members of the Task Force must be appointed on or before July 15, 2017.

The Chairperson and Vice-chairperson of the Task Force alternate annually between the Chairperson of the House Committee on Children and Seniors and the Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare, starting in 2017 with the Chairperson of the House Committee as the first Chairperson of the Task Force.

### ***Filing of Vacancies***

Any vacancy on the Task Force will be filled by appointment in the manner prescribed for the original appointment.

### ***Meetings and Quorum***

The Task Force is required to meet in an open meeting at least six times per calendar year at any place within the state, upon call of the Chairperson.

A majority of the voting members of the Task Force constitute a quorum. Any action by the Task Force shall be by motion adopted by a majority of voting members present when there is a quorum.

### ***Duties of the Task Force***

The Task Force is required to study the child welfare system in Kansas by convening working groups addressing DCF's general administration of child welfare, protective services, family preservation, reintegration, foster care, and permanency placement. The required topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The level of oversight and supervision by the DCF over each entity that contracts with DCF to provide reintegration, foster care, and adoption services;
- The duties, responsibilities, and contributions of state agencies, nongovernmental entities, and service providers that provide child welfare services in Kansas;
- The level of access to child welfare services, including health and mental health services and community-based services, in the State of Kansas;
- The increasing number of children in the child welfare system and contributing factors;
- The licensing standards for case managers working in the child welfare system; and
- Any other topic the Task Force or working group deems necessary or appropriate.

The Task Force is required to advise and consult with citizen review boards established by statute in conducting the study required by this section.

### ***Working Groups***

The members of each working group organized by the Task Force must not have more than seven non-Task Force members and must not have fewer than two Task Force members. The Task Force Chairperson, Vice-chairperson, and the Ranking Minority Members together appoint the Chairperson and Vice-chairperson of each working group from the members of the Task Force. The Chairperson and Vice-chairperson of each working group jointly appoint the members of each working group. The non-Task Force members must be individuals with expertise in the specific working group topic for which they are appointed. All members of the working groups must be appointed by August 15, 2017.

### ***Data and Information Provided***

DCF is required, upon request by the Task Force, to provide data and information relating to child welfare systems in the State of Kansas that is not otherwise prohibited or restricted from disclosure by state or federal law.

The Task Force and each working group are required to consider U.S. Department of Health and Human Services child and family services reviews and child and family services plans and reports relating to foster care prepared by the Legislative Division of Post Audit, the 2015 Special Committee on Foster Care Adequacy, and the 2016 Special Committee on Foster Care Adequacy.

## ***Reports to the Legislature***

The bill requires the Task Force to submit a preliminary progress report to the Legislature detailing the Task Force's study on or before January 8, 2018, and a final report to the Legislature detailing the Task Force's study on or before January 14, 2019. The final report shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Recommended improvements regarding the safety and well-being of children in the child welfare system in Kansas;
- Recommended changes to law, rules and regulations, and child welfare system processes; and
- Whether an ongoing task force or similar advisory or oversight entity consisting of legislators, attorneys in the area of family law, judges, foster parents, parents with reintegrated children, and other interested parties could aid in addressing child welfare concerns and any other topics the Task Force deems appropriate.

## ***Support Services and Compensation***

DCF is required to provide administrative assistance to facilitate organization and meetings of any working groups to prepare and publish meeting agendas; public notices; meeting minutes; and any research, data, or information requested by a working group.

Staff of the Office of Revisor of Statutes, the Kansas Legislative Research Department, and the Division of Legislative Administrative Services will provide assistance as requested by the Task Force, including assistance to a legislative Task Force member serving on a working group, subject to approval by the Legislative Coordinating Council.

Task Force members are paid as specified in KSA 75-3223(e), except that any Task Force member who is employed by a state agency is reimbursed by such state agency.

Non-Task Force members of working groups attending working group meetings are paid by DCF, except that any non-Task Force member who is employed by a state agency is reimbursed by such state agency.

## ***Sunset Date***

The Task Force sunsets on June 30, 2019.