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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Sanchez, M DATE TYPED 2/3/2005 HB _____

SHORT TITLE Extend Temporary Placement of Children Times SB 242

ANALYST Dunbar

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY05	FY06	FY05	FY06		
	NFI				

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Children Youth and Families Department (CYFD)

Attorney General (AG)

Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 242 extends the time for temporary voluntary placement of children into CYFD custody, from ninety days to one hundred eighty days. The bill also provides that the child can remain an additional one hundred eighty days upon order of the court whereas previously the limit was an additional ninety days. The proposed amendment extends the maximum allowable time in voluntary placement (with court extension) to a total of 360 days. The bill contains an emergency clause.

Significant Issues

The existing time limitation on voluntary placement frequently does not provide adequate time for CYFD to provide necessary long-term services to children who must be in state custody to qualify for those services. For example, the proposed amendment would provide CYFD adequate time to successfully assist families whose daughters under the age of 18 have had

babies, and who are in need of services available (due to funding considerations) only to children in CYFD's legal custody. CYFD also indicates the extended time for voluntary custody provides a less restrictive, more supportive alternative to filing neglect petitions against these young mothers. It is not best practice to force involuntary custody on a young mother who is willing to give the state voluntary custody in order to get needed services and assistance. The proposed amendment includes an emergency clause, to accommodate the immediate needs of teens currently participating in the Life Options program. Life Options provides skill-building and support services to young mothers under the voluntary placement provisions of Article 3A of the Children's Code. Life Options is a one-year program, so the emergency clause will extend the placements of current participants for the duration of the service.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

CYFD says the proposed amendment would reduce administrative burden by eliminating the need to file neglect petitions.

According to AOC extending the time frames for temporary voluntary placement of children outside the home may have a positive impact on caseloads for the courts. SB 242 provides the opportunity for families who are in critical need of treatment and other services to work with CYFD for longer periods of time through voluntary placement of children without involving the courts.

BD/lg