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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

Trujillo L/Trujillo CH/
 SPONSOR Ferrary/ Roybal ORIGINAL DATE 2/10/18
 Caballero LAST UPDATED 2/13/18 HM 107/aHEC

SHORT TITLE Maltreated Children Safety Net Study SB _____

ANALYST Klundt

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY18	FY19	FY20	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total		Minimal	Minimal		Recurring	CYFD, DOH, HSD, LESC operating budgets

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

SUMMARY

Synopsis of House Education Committee Amendment

The House Education Committee amendment of House Memorial 107 makes the following technical amendments:

1. On page 2 line 17, after the “semi-colon” insert “and”.
2. On page 2, strike lines 18 through 25, removing representatives described in paragraphs D-I in synopsis of original bill
3. On page 3, strike lines 1 and 2 removing representatives or described in paragraphs J and K in synopsis of original bill, and reletter the subsequent subsection.
4. On page 3, line 4 strike “public education department” and insert in lieu thereof “legislative education study committee”

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Memorial 107 (HM 107) requests the Legislative Education Study Committee be requested to create a task force to study the measures necessary to create an interagency safety net for maltreated children who are vulnerable to falling through the cracks and to seek participation on the task force from at least one representative from each of the following entities:

- A. Public Education Department;
- B. Human Services Department;
- C. Protective Services Division of the Children, Youth and Families Department;
- D. New Mexico School Boards Association;
- E. New Mexico Superintendents' Association;
- F. New Mexico Association of Elementary School principals;
- G. New Mexico Association of Secondary School Principals;
- H. New Mexico Coalition for Charter Schools;
- I. Pegasus Legal Services for Children;
- J. New Mexico Voices for Children;
- K. New Mexico CASA network; and
- L. Any other entities or individuals deemed appropriate by the Public Education Department.

The task force publishes its findings and recommendations in a report, provide two copies of the report to the Legislative Council Service library and publish the report on the Legislative Education Study Committee website.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

To attend the taskforce convened in this bill staff time and cost for travel would be incurred, however this impact is most likely minimal to the agency operating budgets.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Protective Services program conducts child abuse and neglect investigations and offers in-home services, foster treatment, foster and adoptive placements and similar services. High rates of repeat maltreatment and rising caseloads remain a concern. In FY17, the number of children in the care of Protective Services increased by about 150, or 5 percent. Reports of maltreatment grew slightly higher, around 6 percent, an average of nearly 3,300 reports every month; of these, an average of 1,700 cases were accepted for investigation. The increase of children in care, volume of reports, and accepted maltreatment reports all increase caseloads for caseworkers. The average monthly caseload in FY17 was 20 for permanency planners and 13 for investigators. The Child Welfare League of America recommends permanency planning workers have an average caseload of 12 to 17 and 12 investigations per worker per month.

Neglect and abuse affect a child's emotional, physiological and behavioral health. In FY17, the agency continued to report an increase in the number of children subjected to repeat maltreatment. An LFC evaluation found 36 percent of children who are the victim of a substantiated maltreatment case will be abused or neglected again before age 18. Nationally, the Casey Foundation reports, an estimated 37.4 percent of all children experience a child protective services investigation by age 18. Costs of child maltreatment are substantial and result in general expenses to taxpayers and specific expenses to victims. The Protective Services Program did not meet a majority of performance targets at the end of FY17. Key quarterly performance reporting includes repeat maltreatment rates, reunification rates, and length of care. Most concerning, the rate of repeat maltreatment remains nearly double the national benchmark, meaning children who experience substantiated maltreatment are experiencing another case of maltreatment in a relatively short time frame, six months.

In addition, *Child Trends* recently reported the rate of referral per 1,000 children in New Mexico was 82.2, significantly above the national 53.2 average. In addition to high referral rates, the analysis also showed the victimization rate was 17.5, also significantly higher than the national rate of nine. These rates show the New Mexico child welfare system is overwhelmed and considerable additional resources may be needed to lower caseloads and provide services to an increasing number of children and families.

While significant additional resources have been provided to the agency, increasingly low economic and social indicators are hindering efforts by the agency to reduce stress on the child welfare system. Reducing child maltreatment and placement in foster care by 10 percent could save tens of millions of dollars and improve life-long outcomes for at-risk families. The leading child abuse prevention system in New Mexico is services for young children, mostly funded in the Early Childhood Services Program.

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