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House Bills 4381 and 4382 (as reported without amendment)  
Sponsor: Representative Kenneth Kurtz (H.B. 4381)  
Representative Bruce Rendon (H.B. 4382)  
House Committee: Families, Children, and Seniors  
Senate Committee: Families, Seniors, and Human Services

## **CONTENT**

House Bill 4381 would amend the Michigan Adoption Code to permit the designee of an authorized representative of the Department of Human Services (DHS) to consent to the adoption of a child.

Generally, the Michigan Adoption Code requires each parent to give consent to the adoption of a child, unless the rights of the parent have been terminated, the child has been released for the purpose of adoption to a child placing agency or the DHS, or other circumstances exist.

Consent also must be given by the authorized representative of the DHS or of a child placing agency to whom the child has been released or permanently committed by an order of the family court.

Under the bill, consent would have to be given by the authorized representative of the DHS or his or her designee.

House Bill 4382 would amend Public Act 220 of 1935 (which deals with the Michigan Children's Institute) to authorize the Michigan Children's Institute (MCI) superintendent or his or her designee to consent to the guardianship of a child committed to the MCI.

Currently, the MCI superintendent is authorized to consent to the adoption, marriage, or emancipation of any child who may have been committed to the MCI, according to applicable law. Under the bill, the superintendent's designee would have the same authority. In addition, the superintendent or his or her designee would be authorized to consent to the guardianship of any child who may have been committed to the MCI, as provided in Section 19c of the juvenile code.

A child for whom a guardian was appointed under those provisions would cease to be a ward of the State.

(Under Section 19c of the juvenile code, if a child remains in placement following the termination of parental rights to the child, the family court must conduct review hearings and permanency planning hearings. The court may appoint a guardian for the child, if doing so is in the child's best interest. The court may not appoint a guardian without the MCI superintendent's written consent. Senate Bill 220, which the Senate has passed, would amend this provision to require the written consent of the superintendent or his or her designee.)

MCL 710.43 (H.B. 4381)  
400.209 (H.B. 4382)

Legislative Analyst: Patrick Affholter

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

It is possible that the bills would have the effect of reducing the State and county foster care payments. If the backlog at the MCI is causing children to remain in foster care for additional time, elimination of the backlog could result in some savings in foster care payments. These potential savings could be offset, in part, by increased payments for guardianship assistance and adoption subsidies.

The local governments must pay 50% of the costs of foster care placements supported by the Child Care Fund—those children who are not eligible for Title IV-E funding. The local governments are not required, however, to pay adoption subsidies.

Because the Department of Human Services does not have readily available data on the number of backlogged cases or the amount of corresponding and potentially avoidable foster care payments made each year, it is not possible to provide an estimate of State or local savings from a reduced backlog.

Date Completed: 5-18-11

Fiscal Analyst: Frances Carley

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.