

CHILD WELFARE STAFFING RATIOS

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House Bill 5038

Sponsor: Rep. Kenneth Kurtz

Committee: Families, Children, and Seniors

Complete to 1-27-14

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 5038 AS INTRODUCED 10-1-13

The bill would amend the Social Welfare Act to require the Department of Human Services to maintain child welfare staffing ratios so each individual, bi-county, and tri-county configuration has sufficient child welfare caseworkers and supervisors to maintain, at a minimum, the following ratios:

- 12 cases per child protection investigation worker;
- 17 cases per each child protection ongoing worker;
- 15 cases per each direct foster care or direct adoption worker;
- 90 cases per each purchase-of-service monitor worker;
- 30 licensed foster homes per each foster home licensing worker; and
- 5 child welfare workers per each child welfare supervisor.

The bill would define "worker" to mean an individual who is employed and working full time. The term would not include an employee on extended medical leave, a trainee who has not completed training, or a worker with a restricted caseload.

MCL 400.1 et al.

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 5038 should not have a fiscal impact on the state and local units of governments. DHS is already mandated to maintain these caseload standards to comply with the Children's Rights Settlement Agreement, and the DHS budget has been appropriated accordingly.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On July 3, 2008, DHS entered into a settlement agreement with Children's Rights, a nonprofit advocacy group, in response to a class action lawsuit alleging certain failings within the state's child welfare system. This settlement agreement mandated the caseload standards listed above (with the exception of the caseload standard for purchase-of-service workers) be met by 95% of the workers no later than October 2011.

DHS and Children's Rights agreed to modify the settlement agreement on July 18, 2011, which mandates the caseload standard listed in this bill be met by 95% of the workers no later than December 31, 2013.

Since Fiscal Year 2007-08, the DHS budget has included increased appropriations for approximately 1,900 new child welfare staff to meet these mandated caseload standards and other requirements with the settlement agreement.

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