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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Lopez ORIGINAL DATE 1/27/16
LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Kinship Caregiver Legal Services SB 127

ANALYST Klundt

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY16	FY17		
	\$250.0	Recurring	General

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)

SUMMARY

Senate Bill 127 appropriates \$250.0 thousand from the general fund to the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) for the purpose of to providing legal and casework services to support kinship caregivers statewide.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$250 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2017 shall revert to the general fund

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

ALTSD currently contracts with Pegasus Legal Services and Access New Mexico to provide a kinship guardianship helpline, while much of the assistance currently available to kinship caregivers is provided by HSD or DOH. CYFD states the agency does not have sufficient FTE to provide the services appropriated for in this bill. Additionally, the agency reports a majority of the children eligible for this program are not in CYFD foster care. CYFD states these funds may be more appropriately placed in agencies such as ALTSD, HSD, or DOH.

Further CYFD reports children eligible for services under this bill are similar to those whose care is monitored through domestic relations district court action, and to whom HSD/CSED already provides services

CYFD is concerned the agency CYFD does not have statutory oversight of the majority of children in kinship care placements, and CYFD does not administer most of the programs that would be available to kinship caregivers.

ALTERNATIVES

Consider directing the appropriation for a pilot to HSD or ALTSD.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

CYFD reports there may be up to 30,000 kinship caregivers in New Mexico and \$250.0 thousand may be insufficient to create a new program which adequately addresses the needs of this population.

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