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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Sanchez, C ORIGINAL DATE 02/06/14
LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____
SHORT TITLE CYFD Caseworker Caseloads SB 300
ANALYST Klundt

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY15	FY16	FY17	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	\$1,001.2	\$1,001.2	\$1,001.2	\$3,003.6	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 300 enacts a new section of the Children's Code which would require that caseworkers of the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) shall be limited to a maximum caseload of fifteen cases effective July 1, 2014.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no appropriation attached to this bill. CYFD reports that, assuming the intent of this bill equates one case to one child, agency would need 22 additional FTE if caseworkers were not allowed to carry more than 15 cases. The cost to hire a caseworker for salaries and benefits is approximately \$45.5 thousand. The amount required to hire the 22 additional FTE would be approximately \$1,001.2 for salaries and benefits. Additionally, the agency states that there would be additional operating and training costs associated with the additional FTE.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to the CYFD, because this bill does not define "caseworker" and "case", there may be confusion regarding the intent of this bill. The CYFD has different types of caseworkers as follows: Placement, Permanency, Investigators, and In-Home Services. The agency reports that it is unclear what type of caseworkers is meant by this bill. Additionally, CYFD currently tracks

monthly data for Permanency Caseworkers and Investigations Caseworkers.

CYFD also reports that this bill does not define "case" and therefore the agency believes there may be confusion regarding the intent of this bill. CYFD measures the caseloads for caseworkers by the number of *children* in their caseload, not the number of legal cases. One legal case could include numerous siblings, changing the number of children a permanency caseworker can manage effectively. Currently, CYFD permanency workers have an average caseload of 20.8 *children* per caseworker. The agency reports that if staff are prohibiting from carrying more than 15 children on their cases, than at current staffing levels, there would be at least 319 children who do not have a caseworker and would therefore remain unserved. Therefore, CYFD states the department would need an allocation of at least \$1 million for salaries and benefits in order to hire the additional 22 FTE which exceed the current authorized FTE for permanency caseworkers.

For In-Home Services workers, caseloads are measured by *family*. The current average caseload for an In-Home Services worker is 5 to 7 *families*. The department states that a caseload of 15 families per worker would be unmanageable for an In-Home Services caseworker.

For Investigations, caseloads are investigated by *investigation*. The average number of investigations per investigations caseworker is 10.6. The department states that a caseload of 15 investigations per month would be unmanageable.

For Placement Workers, the caseload is measured by the number of *foster families* assigned to them. Currently there are 53 Placement Caseworkers who license and support approximately 978 foster homes, for a Placement caseload of 18.5 foster families.

Nationally, the Child Welfare League of America's recommended number of cases per caseworker varies by the type of case: initial assessment/investigation, ongoing cases, or combined assessment/investigation and ongoing cases. The recommendation for initial assessment/investigation is 12 active cases per month per social worker, for ongoing cases is 17 active families per social worker with no more than 1 new case assigned for every six open cases, and for combined assessment/investigation and ongoing cases is 10 active on-going cases and 4 active investigations per 1 social worker. The Child Welfare League of America also recommends 12-15 children per 1 social worker. The current average of investigations per investigator within CYFD is 12, while the overall ratio of children to caseworker in CYFD is 20.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

CYFD reported that the agency has performance measures related to children in custody which would be significantly negatively affected by this bill.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

In addition to needing a minimum of 22 additional FTE at a minimum cost of \$1 million, additional training and operational costs will be needed to fulfill the apparent intent of this bill.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

"Caseworker" is not defined. For protective services, CYFD has four staff classifications which

may be considered caseworkers."Case" is not identified. For protective services, "case" can mean four different types of clients.

ALTERNATIVES

CYFD has requested a definition "caseworker" and "case" which may clarify this bill, and to include an appropriation to address the significant increase in work.

KK/ds