



Ohio Legislative Service Commission

Bill Analysis

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Sub. H.B. 50*

131st General Assembly
(As Reported by S. Finance)

Reps. Pelanda and Grossman, Sears, Driehaus, Stinziano, Rogers, Fedor, Rezabek, Blessing, Maag, Lepore-Hagan, LaTourette, Amstutz, Boyd, Kuhns, Anielski, Antonio, Arndt, Ashford, Barnes, Boccieri, Boose, Brown, Burkley, Celebrezze, Craig, DeVitis, Duffey, Green, Hayes, Howse, Kunze, M. O'Brien, S. O'Brien, Patterson, Phillips, Reece, Ruhl, Scherer, Schuring, Sheehy, Slesnick, K. Smith, R. Smith, Strahorn, Sweeney, Rosenberger

BILL SUMMARY

- Requires the Director of Job and Family services to submit amendments to the state's plan for child welfare services to expand foster care and adoption assistance for persons up to age 21.
- Establishes qualification standards and various other procedures and requirements for receiving payments under the foster care and adoption assistance expansion.
- Requires the Department of Job and Family Services to adopt rules to implement the foster care and adoption assistance expansion, including:
 - A rule to create an advisory council to evaluate and make recommendations regarding the bill's statewide implementation; and
 - Rules establishing the scope of practice and training for foster care workers and their supervisors.
- Requires the probate court to furnish appointed guardians with a guardianship guide, if such a guide has been prepared either by the Attorney General with the approval of the Ohio Judicial Conference or by the Ohio Judicial Conference.

* This analysis was prepared before the report of the Senate Finance Committee appeared in the Senate Journal. Note that the list of co-sponsors and the legislative history may be incomplete.

- Adds minimum age limits for children determined to be abused, neglected, or dependent to be placed in planned permanent living arrangements.
- Makes changes regarding the provision of independent living services by a public children services agency or private child placing agency.

CONTENT AND OPERATION

Extension of foster care and adoption assistance payments up to age 21

The bill requires the Director of Job and Family Services, not later than nine months after the effective date of this bill, to submit two amendments to the state's plan for child welfare services to the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services. The first amendment is to expand federal Title IV-E foster care payments. The second amendment is to expand adoption assistance. With the first amendment (Title IV-E payments), the plan would permit payments directly to, or on behalf of, persons up to age 21. The second amendment (adoption assistance payments) would permit payments to the adoptive parents with respect to an adopted person up to age 21. All payments are to be made in accordance with federal law, as generally proposed to be adopted as Ohio law by the bill (described below).¹ The Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is required to pay the full nonfederal share of the payments required under the bill. No public children services agency (PCSA) is to be responsible for those costs.²

Qualifications for foster care payments

To qualify for the foster care payments as provided in the bill, a person must:

- (1) Have reached age 18, but not yet reached age 21;
- (2) Sign a voluntary participation agreement;
- (3) Have been in the custody of a PCSA upon reaching age 18;³ and
- (4) Meet at least one of the following criteria:

(a) Is completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential;

¹ R.C. 5101.141 and 5101.1411.

² R.C. 5101.1413.

³ R.C. 5101.1411(A)(1).



(b) Is enrolled in an institution that provides post-secondary or vocational education;

(c) Is participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers to, employment;

(d) Is employed for at least 80 hours per month; or

(e) Is incapable of doing any of the activities described in (a) to (d) above because of a medical condition, which incapability is supported by regularly updated information in the case plan of the child.⁴

Qualifications for adoption assistance payments

To qualify for the adoption assistance payments as provided in the bill, an adoptive parent must meet all the following requirements:

(1) Have adopted a person while the adopted person was 16 or 17 years old and the adopted person had been in the custody of a PCSA or the parent enters into an adoption assistance agreement under the federal Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Program;

(2) The adopted person reached age 18, but not yet reached age 21;

(3) The parent maintains parental responsibility to that adopted person;⁵

(4) The adopted person meets at least one of the following criteria:

(a) Is completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential;

(b) Is enrolled in an institution that provides post-secondary or vocational education;

(c) Is participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers to, employment;

(d) Is employed for at least 80 hours per month; or

⁴ R.C. 5101.1411(A)(1) and (C); 42 U.S.C. 675(8)(B)(iv).

⁵ R.C. 5101.1411(B)(1).



(e) Is incapable of doing any of the activities described in (a) to (d) above because of a medical condition, which incapability is supported by regularly updated information in the case plan of the child.⁶

Application, termination, and resumption of payments

The bill provides that any person who qualifies may apply for foster care payments under the bill and may make the appropriate application at any time. An adoptive parent applying for adoption assistance payments may request an extension of adoption assistance payments at any time before the adopted person reaches age 21. Any person receiving foster care payments, or on whose behalf such foster care payments are received, or any adoptive parent receiving adoption assistance payments, under the bill may refuse them at any time, but must reapply if the person or adoptive parent seeks to receive the payments again at a later date. The bill also provides that if ODJFS terminates foster care and adoption assistance payments, that determination is subject to a state hearing by ODJFS.⁷

Other services

The bill provides that a person who is directly receiving foster care payments, or on whose behalf such foster care payments are received, or an adoptive parent receiving adoption assistance payments and the adopted person, as provided in the bill, are eligible for services set forth in the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351, 122 Stat. 3949).⁸

Additionally, the bill provides that a person who is receiving foster care payments, or on whose behalf such foster care payments are received, may be eligible to reside in a supervised independent living setting, including apartment living, room and board arrangements, college or university dormitories, host homes, and shared roommate settings.⁹

Voluntary participation agreements

The bill provides that a child who receives foster care payments, or on whose behalf payments are received, may enter into a voluntary participation agreement with ODJFS or its designee for the child's care and placement. A voluntary participation

⁶ R.C. 5101.1411(C).

⁷ R.C. 5101.1411(A)(2), (B)(2), (D), and (F).

⁸ R.C. 5101.1411(E)(1).

⁹ R.C. 5101.1411(E)(2).

agreement expires after 180 days and may not be renewed without court approval. ODJFS or its designee must seek approval from the court to extend the care and placement with ODJFS or its designee prior to the agreement's expiration if the extension is in the child's best interest.¹⁰ The bill provides that the court retains jurisdiction over a person who is qualified for foster care payments and who is subject to a voluntary participation agreement that is in effect.¹¹

Rules

The bill requires ODJFS to adopt rules, not later than nine months after the effective date of the bill, necessary to carry out the provisions of the bill, including rules that do the following:

- Allow a person who is directly receiving foster care payments, or on whose behalf such foster care payments are received, or a person whose adoptive parents are receiving adoption assistance payments, to maintain eligibility while transitioning between qualified employment or educational activities;
- Require a 30-day notice to a person determined to be ineligible before termination of payments under the bill.¹²

Foster care worker and supervisor training and oversight

ODJFS rules must also establish the scope of practice and training necessary for foster care workers and their supervisors who care for persons receiving foster care payments, or on whose behalf such payments are received.¹³ The training required by rule must be provided by the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program.¹⁴

Advisory council

The bill requires ODJFS to create an advisory council, not later than one month after the effective date of the bill, to evaluate and make recommendations for statewide implementation of the bill's provisions.¹⁵

¹⁰ R.C. 5101.1412.

¹¹ R.C. 2151.353(F)(1).

¹² R.C. 5101.1414(A) and (B).

¹³ R.C. 5101.1414(D).

¹⁴ R.C. 5103.30(F).

¹⁵ R.C. 5101.1414(B).



Implementation of amended state plan

The bill requires the state plan amendments to be implemented beginning 15 months after the effective date of the bill, if both of the following apply: (1) the plan as amended is approved by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and (2) the General Assembly has appropriated sufficient funds to operate the program required under the plan as amended.¹⁶

Oversight of ODJFS duties under amended state plan

The bill permits ODJFS to contract with another person to carry out the bill's new duties under the amended plan for foster care and adoption assistance, to the extent permitted by federal law.¹⁷

Background

Generally, foster care maintenance and adoption assistance payments for a child terminate at age 18 because funding is unavailable after the end of the month of the child's 18th birthday. In Ohio, foster care and adoption assistance funding is a combination of state and federal funds. To be eligible for federal funds, Ohio must have a state plan in place that complies with the requirements and conditions of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act. One requirement is that any child under age 18 be eligible for foster care maintenance or adoption assistance payments.¹⁸

Federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act

While eligibility until age 18 continues to be a requirement under federal law, Congress enacted the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351, 122 Stat. 3949) which gives states the option to extend foster care maintenance and adoption assistance payment eligibility for a child who has not yet attained 19, 20, or 21 years of age and who meets the criteria described in (4)(a) to (e) above under "**Qualifications for foster care payments**" and "**Qualifications for adoption assistance payments.**"

Guardianship guide

The bill requires the clerk of the probate court to furnish to a guardian a guardianship guide, created either by the Attorney General with the approval of the

¹⁶ R.C. 5101.141 (B)(2)(a).

¹⁷ R.C. 5101.141(B)(2)(b).

¹⁸ 42 U.S.C. 671, 672(a)(1)(B) and (a)(3), 673, and 674; 45 C.F.R. 233.90(b); R.C. 5101.141; and O.A.C. 5101:2-47-12(E), 5101:2-49-02, and 5101:2-49-04.

Ohio Judicial Conference or by the Ohio Judicial Conference.¹⁹ For purposes of the bill, a "guardian" is, generally, a person or entity appointed by a probate court to care for and manage the person, estate, or both of an incompetent or minor. A "ward" is a person for whom a guardian or the probate court is acting as provided in Ohio's guardianship law.²⁰

A guide must be furnished upon the appointment of the guardian or, if the guardian was appointed prior to the bill's effective date, upon the first filing by the guardian with the probate court of either of the following:

- A guardian's account, other than a final account, that is generally required to be filed biennially under current law;
- A report of a guardian of an incompetent person that is generally required to be filed biennially under current law.

The probate court must fulfill the requirements imposed by the bill, as described above. But those requirements can only be fulfilled if the Attorney General or the Ohio Judicial Conference prepares a guardianship guide.²¹

The bill does not directly authorize or require that the Attorney General create a guardianship guide. The current Attorney General, however, has created a guide that meets the requirements of the bill.²² That guide includes a list of the "rights of a ward." The bill requires the Attorney General to include the rights of a ward as are then current in the Revised Code in subsequent updates to the guide, if the guide is updated. The bill does not specify what those rights are.

If a guide has been made available by the Attorney General, the clerk of the probate court must furnish the most recent version of the guide to a guardian upon the guardian's appointment after the most recent version of the guide is prepared or, if the guardian was appointed prior to the date of the most recent version of the guide, upon the first filing by the guardian with the probate court of the guardian's account or report described above after that date.²³

¹⁹ R.C. 2111.011(A) and (B).

²⁰ R.C. 2111.01(A) and (B), not in the bill.

²¹ R.C. 2111.011(A).

²² See, [http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Files/Publications-Files/Publications-for-Consumers/Ohio-Guardianship-Guide-\(PDF\)](http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Files/Publications-Files/Publications-for-Consumers/Ohio-Guardianship-Guide-(PDF)) (last visited November 20, 2015).

²³ R.C. 2111.011(B)(1).



Alternatively, the bill permits the Ohio Judicial Conference to create an alternative to the Attorney General's guardianship guide, at the Conference's own cost. The alternative guide is to be distributed in the same manner as the Attorney General's guide is to be distributed.²⁴

Form acknowledging receipt of guardianship guide

The bill requires the probate court to establish a form for a guardian to sign acknowledging that the guardian received a guardianship guide.²⁵ The guardian must sign the form upon receiving the guide. The bill requires the signed form to be kept permanently in the guardianship file of the probate court.²⁶

Planned permanent living arrangements

The bill requires that a child who has been adjudicated to be an abused, neglected, or dependent child must be at least 16 years old before being placed in a planned permanent living arrangement if the child (1) is unable to function in a family-like setting due to physical, mental, or psychological problems or needs and (2) must remain in residential or institutional care.²⁷

Similarly, with respect to a child in temporary custody, if a planned permanent living arrangement dispositional order is requested on termination of temporary custody, the child must be at least 16 years old before being placed in such an arrangement if either of the following apply:

(1) The child is (a) unable to function in a family-like setting due to physical, mental, or psychological problems or needs and (b) must remain in residential or institutional care;

(2) All of the following apply: (a) the child's parents have significant physical, mental, or psychological problems, (b) adoption is not in the child's best interest, and (c) the child retains a significant and positive relationship with a parent or relative.²⁸

²⁴ R.C. 2111.011(B)(2).

²⁵ R.C. 2111.011(C).

²⁶ R.C. 2111.011(D).

²⁷ R.C. 2151.353(A)(5).

²⁸ R.C. 2151.415(C)(1).



Under current law, the requirement that the child be at least 16 years old is not applicable to the situations described above for which a planned permanent living arrangement disposition can be requested.²⁹

Independent living services

The bill requires a PCSA or private child placing agency that has temporary or permanent custody of, or is providing care in a planned permanent living arrangement to, a child who is at least 14 years old, to provide independent living services to the child. If housing is provided as part of the independent living services and the child is 16 or 17 years old, the housing must be supervised or semi-supervised by an adult (see **COMMENT**).³⁰

COMMENT

The provision requiring some level of adult supervision regarding housing as provided under independent living services applies, under the bill, only to 16 and 17 year olds receiving housing. It is not clear whether adult supervision is required, under the bill, if independent-living-services housing is provided to 14 and 15 year olds.

HISTORY

ACTION	DATE
Introduced	02-10-15
Reported, H. Community & Family Advancement	04-29-15
Re-referred to H. Finance	05-05-15
Reported, H. Finance	05-06-15
Re-referred to H. Rules & Reference	11-16-15
Reported, H. Rules & Reference	11-16-15
Passed House (92-2)	12-01-15
Reported, S. Finance	---

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²⁹ R.C. 2151.353(A)(5) and 2151.415(C)(1).

³⁰ R.C. 2151.82.

