

HCS HB 562 -- CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SPONSOR: Grisamore

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Standing Committee on Disability Services by a vote of 9 to 0.

Currently, the membership of the Missouri Children's Services Commission is comprised of the Director or Deputy Director of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and the director or deputy director of each state agency, department, division, or other entity which provides services or programs for children; one judge of a juvenile court; one judge of a family court; and eight legislative members, two from each political party of the House of Representatives and two from each political party of the Senate. This substitute changes the membership to be comprised of the director or the director's designee of the departments of Labor and Industrial Relations, Corrections, Elementary and Secondary Education, Higher Education, Health and Senior Services, Mental Health, Public Safety, and Social Services; one judge of a family or juvenile court; four legislative members, one from each political party of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker and one from each political party of the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tem; and five at-large members who must be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate with one member representing pediatricians, family physicians, hospital administrators, children's advocacy organizations, and parents of minor children.

The substitute specifies that the commission's plan to improve the quality of children's programs statewide must include goals with measurable outcomes for state agencies with respect to children's services and policy recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly.

A 23-member Missouri Task Force on Prematurity and Infant Mortality is established within the Children's Services Commission to measurably reduce the state's pre-term birth and infant mortality rates by proposing evidence-based legislation, regulation, and public policy changes. Six of the 23 members will be members of the General Assembly with two members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, one by the Minority Leader of the House, two by the President Pro Tem of the Senate, and one by the Minority Leader of the Senate. The task force must meet initially by October 15, 2011, and at least quarterly thereafter. By March 1, 2012, the task force must submit a report to the Governor and the General Assembly on the current state of prematurity in Missouri. Final recommendations including any legislation must be submitted to the Governor and General Assembly by January 15, 2013. A final report evaluating

the impact of implementing the recommendations must be submitted by January 15, 2015. The task force will expire January 31, 2015, or upon the submission of a final report, whichever is earlier.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2012, FY 2013, and FY 2014.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the commission is currently limited in its ability to publish reports and do advocacy work. The additional members will enhance the commission's work and allow it to do even more because of the added membership.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Grisamore; and Department of Social Services.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.