

HB 1842 -- JOINT COMMITTEE ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

SPONSOR: Lant

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Children and Families by a vote of 14 to 0.

This bill establishes the Joint Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect of the General Assembly composed of seven members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker and Minority Floor Leader and seven members of the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tem and the Minority Floor Leader.

The joint committee is required to:

- (1) Make a continuing study and analysis of the state child abuse and neglect reporting and investigation system;
- (2) Devise a plan for improving the structured decision making regarding the removal of a child from a home;
- (3) Determine the additional personnel and resources necessary to adequately protect children in this state and improve their welfare and the welfare of families;
- (4) Address the need for additional foster care homes and to improve the quality of care provided to abused and neglected children in the custody of the state;
- (5) Determine from its study and analysis the need for changes in statutory law;
- (6) Make any recommendation to the General Assembly necessary to provide adequate protection for the children of our state;
- (7) Meet within 30 days after its creation and select a chairperson and a vice chairperson, and meet quarterly thereafter; and
- (8) Compile a full report of its activities for submission to the General Assembly by January 15 of each year that the General Assembly convenes in regular session.

The provisions of the bill expire January 15, 2018.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2013, FY 2014, and FY 2015.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill would be a starting point to fix the problems that exist in the Children's Division

and provide a stronger framework for addressing the abuse and neglect of Missouri's children.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Lant; and Missouri Kids First.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say caution should be exercised to avoid creating a system that is too rigid or that creates, instead of solves, problems for Missouri families.

Testifying on the bill was Woody Cozad, Hartland Ministries.