

HCS HB 1944 -- FOSTER FAMILIES BACKGROUND CHECKS

SPONSOR: Anderson

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Special Committee to Improve the Care and Well-being of Young People by a vote of 13 to 0.

This bill changes the law regarding background checks for foster families. The bill requires the Children's Division to obtain fingerprints for any person over the age of 17 in the applicant's household; previously the division had to obtain three separate sets of fingerprints. The bill requires the State Highway Patrol to provide ongoing electronic updates of criminal history background checks, which will terminate when the applicant ceases to be a licensed foster parent or when no longer needed under the statute.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill will allow the Children's Division to use the RAPBACK program to know immediately if a foster parent is charged with a crime that would disqualify him or her from being a foster parent; currently the division can only do checks every two years.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Anderson; Department of Social Services; Missouri Coalition of Children's Agencies; Kate Watson, Office of Child Advocate; Great Circle; Kaycee Nail, FosterAdopt Connect; and Judy Dungan, Kids Win Missouri.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that to use the RAPBACK program, Children's Division will have a secure account to receive a notification within three minutes if a foster parent is arrested for a crime that would disqualify him or her from being a foster parent.

Testifying on the bill was Steve Frisbie, Missouri State Highway Patrol.