

HB 35 — Social Worker Identification

by Rep. Richardson and others (SB 226 by Senators Rich, Bullard, Deutch, Villalobos, Margolis, Justice, and Lynn)

Social services are currently provided by persons using the title "social worker" in a variety of settings including child welfare programs, adoption agencies, schools, hospitals, correctional facilities, nursing homes, and hospices. The title "social worker" has no statutory definition, and there are no limitations on the use of the title "social worker."

The bill amends ss. 39.01 and 491.003, F.S., to define a social worker as a person who holds a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in social work.

The bill provides that a social worker must hold a license or certification issued pursuant to ch. 491, F.S., to conduct clinical social work.

The bill provides that a person holding himself or herself out to the public as a social worker either directly or through an entity commits a misdemeanor of the first degree unless that person:

- Holds at least a bachelor's or master's degree in social work from a social work program accredited by the Council of Social Work Education or from an institution actively seeking that accreditation.
- Completes a social work program outside the United States or Canada that is determined by the Council on Social Work Education to be equivalent to a bachelor's or master's degree in social work.

If a person used the title "social worker" on or before July 1, 2008, in his or her employment, or provides social work services under administrative supervision in a long-term care facility licensed by AHCA, that person is exempt from the provisions of this bill.

The bill provides rule making authority to DOH.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 39-1; House 117-0

SB 78 — Child Welfare Professionals Recognition Day

by Senators Wilson and Lynn

This bill designates the second Monday in May as "Child Welfare Professionals Recognition Day," to recognize the efforts of professionals who work with abused children and dysfunctional families.

The bill encourages the Department of Children and Families, local governments, and other agencies to sponsor events to promote awareness of the child welfare system and the personnel who work in the system.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 119-0

HB 489 — Employee Leave for Victims of Sexual Violence

by Rep. Jenne and others (CS/SB 994 by Judiciary Committee and Senators Fasano, Crist, and Joyner)

This bill requires employers to allow employees to request and take up to three working days of leave, if the employee, or a member of the employee's family or household, is the victim of sexual violence and the leave is sought to seek an injunction for protection, to obtain medical care, to access victim services or legal assistance, or to secure safe housing.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 36-0; House 113-0

CS/SB 502 — Missing Person Investigations

by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee and Senators Constantine, Jones, Fasano, Lynn, Ring, Haridopolos, Dockery, and Crist

Chapter 937, F.S., prescribes Florida's law concerning missing person investigations. Except for one section concerning dental records, ch. 937, F.S., deals exclusively with missing children. This bill amends ch. 937, F.S., making its provisions generally applicable not only to missing children, but also to missing adults.

The bill provides the following definitions:

- "Missing adult" means a person 18 years of age or older whose temporary or permanent residence is in, or is believed to be in, this state, whose location has not been determined, and who has been reported as missing to a law enforcement agency.

- "Missing child" means a person younger than 18 years of age whose temporary or permanent residence is in, or is believed to be in, this state, whose location has not been determined, and who has been reported as missing to a law enforcement agency.
- "Missing endangered person" means a missing child, a missing adult younger than 26 years of age. The definition also includes a missing adult 26 years of age or older who is suspected by a law enforcement agency of being endangered or the victim of criminal activity.

The bill requires law enforcement agencies to adopt written policies regarding the procedures to be used to investigate reports of missing children and adults, and provides that a report that a child or an adult is missing must be filed with and accepted by the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction in the locale where the person was last seen. The bill clarifies that a law enforcement agency must transmit any report of a missing child, as well as any credible report of a missing adult, to the state and federal criminal databases within two hours of receipt of the report.

The bill emphasizes that AMBER Alerts and Missing Child Alerts may be issued only for missing children (under the age of 18), but provides immunity for individuals who release information and photographs pertaining to missing adults.

The bill provides that if a missing child or missing adult is not located within 90 days, the law enforcement agency that accepted the report must attempt to obtain, and submit to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, a biological specimen for DNA analysis from the missing person or from appropriate family members.

The bill expands the scope of the existing Missing Children Information Clearinghouse to include all missing endangered persons as defined by the bill, and renames the clearinghouse the "Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse."

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 118-0

CS/HB 625 — Independent Living Transition Services for Youth in Foster Care

by Healthcare Council and Rep. Glorioso and others (CS/SB 2192 by Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee and Senator Storms)

This bill amends s. 409.1451, F.S., to allow family foster homes, residential child-caring agencies, and other authorized caregivers (in addition to foster parents) to participate in the development of written plans that specify age-appropriate activities and authorize the caregiver to approve the activities for youth in their care who are transitioning out of foster care.

The bill also requires the Independent Living Services Advisory Council to include in its 2008 report a specific analysis and recommendations regarding youth who have turned 18 while in foster care and who have not completed high school or its equivalent.

The bill removes the disability of nonage of minors for youths who have reached 17 years of age, have been adjudicated dependent, and are in the legal custody of the Department of Children and Families through foster care or subsidized independent living. The bill authorizes these minors to execute all instruments necessary to secure utility services at a residential property.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0

CS/HB 663 — Adoption/Termination of Parental Rights/Putative Father Registry

by Healthcare Council and Rep. Cannon and others (CS/CS/SB 1084 by Judiciary Committee; Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee; and Senators Rich, Lynn, Margolis, and Atwater)

This bill substantially amends ch. 63, F.S., relating to adoption, termination of parental rights, and the rights and responsibilities of unmarried biological fathers.

In 2003, Florida enacted a Putative Father Registry (the Registry). The Registry, and the concurrent revisions to ch. 63, F.S., were designed to protect the rights of all parties to an adoption proceeding. Since its establishment, the Registry has been subject to varying judicial interpretation, leaving its applicability uncertain in some aspects.

This bill clarifies that, in order to preserve his rights, an unmarried biological father must, *before* a petition for termination of parental rights is filed, either (1) file a claim of paternity; (2) file an affidavit of paternity; or (3) comply with the requirements of the Putative Father Registry. The bill also clarifies the notice and consent provisions of the chapter to ensure the due process rights of unmarried biological fathers are protected.

The bill amends the required language of adoption disclosures, to include detailed information about the Registry and the consequences of the failure of an unmarried biological father to respond as required. The bill also mandates an additional disclosure to prospective adoptive parents that must include detailed, available information about the child to be adopted.

The bill deletes provisions allowing a parent to revoke or rescind his or her consent to the adoption of a child who is older than six months at any time prior to placement of the minor with the prospective adoptive parents, limiting the revocation period to three business days.

The bill authorizes service of process by publication in termination of parental rights proceedings pursuant to ch. 63, F.S.

The bill provides that abandonment as a result of incarceration under ch. 63, F.S., for purposes of terminating parental rights, is established when the time period for which a parent has been, as well as is expected to be, incarcerated constitutes a significant portion of the child's minority, as measured from the date the parent enters into incarceration.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 115-0

CS/HB 739 — Guardian Advocates/Developmentally Disabled

by Healthcare Council and Rep. Ambler and others (CS/CS/SB 688 by Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee; Judiciary Committee; and Senators Crist, Gaetz, and Lynn)

The bill provides that a guardian advocate does not need to have legal representation, unless otherwise required.

The bill specifies that if the court appoints an attorney it must do so within a specified period, and that the appointed attorney must be from the private attorney registry compiled pursuant to s. 27.40, F.S., and have completed specific education requirements. The bill provides certain exemptions to the education requirements. To eliminate potential conflict, a person representing a developmentally disabled person is prohibited from also serving as the guardian advocate, counsel to the guardian advocate, or counsel for the person petitioning for the appointment of a guardian advocate.

The bill prohibits the court from appointing a guardian advocate if the developmentally disabled person executed an advance directive or durable power of attorney that provides an alternative to the appointment of a guardian that is sufficient for the person's need. Any interested person may seek to contest an advance directive or durable power of attorney.

If the court determines that a guardian advocate is needed, the court must specify the guardian advocate's authority. The court cannot suspend the powers of an attorney in fact unless it finds that the durable power of attorney is invalid or there has been an abuse of power.

The bill provides that any interested person may file a suggestion of restoration of rights. If no evidentiary support is attached, the court is required to immediately set a hearing to inquire as to the reason and enter the needed orders to secure the required documents. If an objection to the restoration of rights is timely filed (within 20 days after service of the notice) or if a medical examination suggests that restoration of rights is not appropriate, the court must notice the matter for a hearing. At the end of the hearing, the court may either deny the suggestion or restore some or all of the person's rights. The order must state which rights are restored, and the letters of

guardianship advocacy must be amended. Within 60 days after the order and amended letters of guardian advocacy are issued, the guardian advocate must amend the current plan and file a final accounting, if all property rights are restored to the person. If no objections are filed and the court is satisfied with the evidentiary support attached to the suggestion, the court shall enter an order, within 30 days after the suggestion is filed, restoring the person's rights.

The bill provides additional notice requirements, and clarifies the role of the guardian advocate in decisions regarding treatment.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 106-0

CS/SB 1042 — Open Government Sunset Review of the Putative Father Registry

by Judiciary Committee; Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee; and Senator Lynn

This bill reenacts the public records exemption for information contained in the Florida Putative Father Registry (the Registry). The bill also expands access to the information by providing an exception that allows a birth mother to have access to any Registry entry in which she is identified as the birth mother.

The Legislature created the Registry in 2003. In order to establish parental rights and preserve the right to notice and consent to an adoption, an unmarried biological father must file a claim of paternity form with the Registry before a petition for termination of parental rights is filed. A public records exemption for information contained in the Registry was also enacted in 2003. Section 63.0541, F.S., provides that all information contained in the Registry is confidential and exempt from public disclosure, except that such information shall be disclosed to the following:

- An adoption entity;
- The registrant unmarried biological father; and
- The court, upon issuance of a court order concerning a petitioner acting pro se.

The exemption was scheduled to sunset on October 2, 2008, unless saved from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect October 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 118-0

SB 1046 — OGSR/Foster Parents/DCFS

by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee and Senator Lynn

Sections 409.175(16)(a) and (b), F.S., make exempt from s. 119.07(1), F.S., and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution, certain information of a sensitive nature regarding a foster parent applicant and a licensed foster parent and his or her spouse, minor child, or other household member. The protected information includes the home, business, work, child care, or school addresses and telephone numbers, social security numbers, birth dates, medical records, home floor plans and photographs of these persons. This exemption was scheduled to sunset on October 2, 2008, unless saved from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.

This bill repeals the public records exemption for social security numbers in this section, since social security numbers are confidential and exempt under s. 119.071(5)(a)5., F.S. The bill retains the remainder of the exemption for the information held by the Department of Children and Families regarding a foster parent applicant or a licensed foster parent and his or her spouse, minor child, and other adult household member.

The bill strikes redundant language related to the release of records by courts.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 118-0

CS/HB 1141 — Public Records Exemption for Victims of Sexual Violence

by Jobs and Entrepreneurship Council and Rep. Jenne and others (CS/SB 2574 by Judiciary Committee and Senators Fasano and Crist)

This bill provides a public records exemption for HB 489 (CS/SB 994), to which it is linked. HB 489 requires the submission of specified documentation in order for an employee to seek leave from his or her employer in connection with an incident of sexual violence.

A public employee's personnel records are a public record unless specifically exempted from Florida's public records law. This bill makes personal identifying information that is contained in the records documenting an act of sexual violence that are submitted to a public agency by an agency employee confidential and exempt from s. 119.07(1), F.S., and s. 24(a), Art. I, State Constitution.

The bill provides a statement of public necessity for the exemption and a finding that disclosure may:

- Expose the victim of sexual violence to humiliation and shame;
- Deter the victim of sexual violence from seeking the relief provided by the statute; and
- Enable the perpetrator of sexual violence to determine the victim's schedule and location.

The bill specifies that the exemption is subject to the Open Government Sunset Review Act and provides that it will stand repealed on October 2, 2013, unless reviewed and saved from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect on the same date that HB 489 or similar legislation takes effect, if such legislation is adopted in the same legislative session, or an extension thereof, and becomes law.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 117-0

CS/CS/HB 1395 — Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys

by Policy and Budget Council; Safety and Security Council; and Rep. Llorente and others (CS/CS/SB 546 by Criminal and Civil Justice Appropriations Committee; Governmental Operations Committee; and Senator Wilson)

This bill amends s. 16.615, F.S., which establishes the Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys (the Council). The bill makes the Council permanent, requires it to develop a strategic program and funding initiative to establish local councils, and authorizes it to request assistance and information from the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee, the Legislature's Office of Economic and Demographic Research, historically black colleges and universities, and other state and local agencies. The bill permits the Council to apply for and accept funds, grants, gifts, and services to defray administrative costs.

The bill creates s. 16.616, F.S., authorizing the Department of Legal Affairs to establish a direct-support organization (DSO) to support the Council. The bill requires the DSO to operate under written contract with the Department of Legal Affairs and provides for staggered appointments of a 13-member board of directors.

The bill directs the DSO to develop strategic program and funding initiatives to implement or expand the following programs:

- 5000 Role Models of Excellence;
- Reading 4 Success;
- One Church, One Child; and
- Mapping the Future for Black Males.

The bill further directs the DSO to develop a marketing and public awareness campaign to showcase its programs and to fund the Council's clerical and administrative costs.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 111-0

CS/HB 1429 — Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

by Healthcare Council and Rep. Gardiner (CS/CS/CS/SB 2626 by Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee; Governmental Operations Committee; Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee; and Senators Storms and Lynn)

The bill provides legislative findings and intent relating to substance abuse and mental health disorders, and provides definitions.

The bill authorizes DCF to contract with community-based managing entities for the purchase, coordination, integration, and management of behavioral health services, and requires the secretary of DCF to determine the schedule for phasing in contracts with managing entities to serve a designated geographic area of sufficient size to allow for flexibility and maximum efficiency of behavioral health services. The bill provides that DCF may establish standards and a process for the qualification and operation of managing entities.

The bill provides for the funding of managing entities and requires that DCF negotiate a reasonable and appropriate administrative cost rate with each managing entity. The bill also authorizes DCF to employ capitation, case rates, or other methods of payment which promote flexibility and efficiencies. The bill requires DCF to terminate its mental health or substance abuse provider contracts for services to be provided by the managing entity as it contracts with the managing entity.

The bill provides that a managing entity must develop and implement written cooperative agreements among the criminal and juvenile justice systems, the local community-based care network, and the local behavioral health providers, and must collect and submit data to the department regarding service. The bill requires DCF to evaluate the managing entity's services, and to work with managing entities to establish performance standards.

The bill authorizes the Agency for Health Care Administration to establish a voluntary certified match program, limiting reimbursement to the federal Medicaid share to Medicaid-enrolled strategy participants.

The bill gives DCF rulemaking authority, and directs the department to submit reports on January 1 and July 1 of each year until the transition to managing entities has been accomplished statewide.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 118-0

SB 2516 — East Central Florida Memory Disorder Clinic

by Senator Haridopolos

In 1995, the Legislature designated The East Central Florida Memory Disorder Clinic at the Joint Center for Advanced Therapeutics and Biomedical Research of the Florida Institute of Technology and Holmes Regional Medical Center, Inc. as one of the memory disorder centers to receive state funding. Recently, the clinic changed its formal, corporate name to the Memory Disorder Clinic, Inc.

The bill amends s. 430.502(1)(e), F.S., changing the name of The East Central Florida Memory Disorder Clinic at the Joint Center for Advanced Therapeutics and Biomedical Research of the Florida Institute of Technology and Holmes Regional Medical Center, Inc. to The Memory Disorder Clinic, Inc., operating in Brevard County.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 118-0

CS/CS/SB 2532 — Dissolution of Marriage, Child Custody and Support

by General Government Appropriations Committee; Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee; and Senator Lynn

This bill amends ch. 61, F.S., relating to dissolution of marriage and the custody and support of minor children. The bill replaces references made throughout the chapter to the terms "custody," "primary residential parent," "primary residence," "noncustodial parent," and "visitation" with the updated terms "parenting plans" and "time-sharing."

The bill defines a parenting plan as a document developed by the parents of a minor child, and approved or established by the court, which governs the relationship between the parents regarding the child. The bill provides that a parenting plan must include a time-sharing schedule and address certain other issues relating to parental responsibility and the child's welfare. The parenting plan and time-sharing schedule proposed by the bill are similar to the family law form order currently used in dissolution cases involving minor children.

The bill replaces the term "custody evaluation" with the term "parenting plan recommendation," defined as a nonbinding recommendation made by a licensed psychologist concerning a parenting plan. The bill makes conforming amendments to s. 61.20, F.S., relating to court-ordered social investigations and recommendations.

The bill clarifies that there is no presumption made for or against either parent when a parenting plan is created or modified, and that for purposes of creating or modifying a parenting plan, the best interests of the child shall always be the primary consideration. The bill lists the factors to

be considered to determine the best interests of the child, rewording and deleting some of the factors identified in current law and adding new factors for courts to consider.

The bill permits a court to temporarily modify child support obligations when a parent is called to military service and makes conforming changes throughout the Florida Statutes.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect October 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 116-0

HB 7007 — Newborn Safe Abandonment

by Healthcare Council and Rep. R. Garcia and others (CS/SB 1704 Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee and Senators Storms, Peaden, Dockery, Bennett, and Crist)

This bill amends Florida's newborn safe abandonment laws to clarify that a parent who safely surrenders a newborn is presumed to have consented to termination of his or her parental rights. The bill expressly prohibits a licensed agency from searching for or notifying the surrendering parent, unless there is actual or suspected child abuse or neglect.

The bill extends the period during which a newborn infant may be legally surrendered from three days to seven days, and requires hospitals to complete the birth certificate of a safely surrendered newborn infant without naming the mother under specified circumstances.

The bill replaces the term "abandoned" with the word "surrendered" throughout the relevant statutes to distinguish infants who are relinquished to a safe haven from children who are abandoned as a matter of child abuse.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 116-0

HB 7041 — Self-Directed Care Program for Mental Health Treatment

by Healthcare Council and Rep. Bean and others (CS/SB 2390 by Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee and Senator Webster)

Self-Directed Care (SDC) is a consumer-centered model for mental health services in which participants manage the course of their mental health treatment and control the public financial resources available for their care. Each program participant has the opportunity to access traditional, alternative, and non-traditional services concurrently, and to purchase tangible items that he or she believes will enhance community integration and allow him or her to return to work, access other meaningful activities, and live productively. Participants establish their recovery goals, determine what services to purchase, and choose who provides the services.

In 2001, the Legislature established an SDC pilot program in the Department of Children and Families' (DCF or the department) district 4. The pilot program has served approximately 200 people in a five county area since 2002. The success of the northeast Florida program led to the creation of a second program in district 8, serving five counties and approximately 95 participants in southwest Florida.

This bill amends s. 394.9084, F.S., authorizing the department to establish SDC programs statewide to provide mental health treatment and support services to adults with serious mental illness. The bill changes the name and function of the entity that provides administrative support services to SDC participants from "managing entity" to "fiscal intermediary" and delineates the responsibilities of the fiscal intermediary.

The bill requires the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) to evaluate the effectiveness of the SDC program by December 31, 2009, and specifies the scope of OPPAGA's evaluation.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 105-1

HB 7073 — Child Support Enforcement

by Healthcare Council and Rep. Galvano (CS/CS/SB 1152 by Judiciary Committee; Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee; and Senators Storms and Lynn)

The bill specifies that payments on child support judgments are to be applied first to the current child support due, then to any past-due amount, and finally to the interest due. The bill also requires electronic disbursement of payments to an account designated by the obligee or, if an account is not designated, to a stored value account accessible to the obligee.

The bill requires the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, the Department of Health, the Department of Financial Services, the Department of Business and Professional Regulation, and the Department of Education to work cooperatively with the Department of Revenue (DOR or department) to implement an automated method for disclosing information regarding current license or certificate holders to the department, and clarifies that, upon notice by DOR, these state agencies and the Education Practices Commission must deny or suspend the license or certificate of those persons not in compliance with a child support order, a subpoena, an order to show cause, or a written agreement with DOR.

The bill provides that if a putative father is incarcerated, the correctional facility shall assist the putative father in complying with an administrative order for genetic testing and repeals a duplicative provision relating to administrative orders for genetic testing in s. 409.25645, F.S.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 111-0

HB 7075 — Developmental Disabilities

by Healthcare Council and Rep. Galvano (CS/SB 1950 by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee and Senator Rich; CS/SB 1954 by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee and Senators Rich and Lynn)

This bill amends the definition of the term "retardation" in ch. 393, F.S., to clarify that the disability requires manifestation prior to age 18 and an expectation that it will continue indefinitely. This amendment makes the definition of retardation consistent with the chapter's definition of the term "developmental disability." The bill also replaces the term "developmental disabilities institutions" throughout ch. 393, F.S., with the term "developmental disabilities centers" to more accurately reflect the nature of services delivered to the clients of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD or the agency).

The bill authorizes APD to suspend, revoke, or fine a residential facility licensee if that facility has been found to be responsible for abuse, neglect, abandonment, or exploitation of a child or vulnerable adult; and to deny an application for licensure if a facility has been found to be responsible for abuse, neglect, abandonment, or exploitation of a child or vulnerable adult, or previously had a license revoked by APD, the Department of Children and Family Services, or the Agency for Health Care Administration.

The bill amends the background re-screening requirements for direct care staff, and allows unlicensed direct care staff, with proper and validated training, to administer enteral medication to APD clients.

The bill amends s. 916.301, F.S., clarifying that the court must appoint at least two experts to evaluate competency when a criminal defendant is suspected to be retarded or autistic.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 119-0

HB 7077 — Child Protection

by Healthcare Council and Rep. Galvano and others (CS/CS/CS/SB 1048 by Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee; Judiciary Committee; Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee; and Senator Lynn)

This bill clarifies the responsibilities of the Department of Children and Families (the department) and law enforcement agencies in cases where children become missing while in the care of the department.

The bill also addresses issues raised in public hearings held by the Senate Committee on Children, Families and Elder Affairs, especially those relating to termination of parental rights and permanency. In this area, the bill:

- Amends the definitions of "abandoned" and "harm" in ch. 39, F.S.;
- Adds new grounds for terminating parental rights; and
- Gives priority for shelter placement to adoptive parents when a sibling of their adopted child comes into the department's care, and requires courts to consider such family when a child is determined to be dependent and in need of placement.

Finally, the bill includes the department's legislative priorities. Specifically, the bill:

- Adds a definition for "child who has exhibited inappropriate sexual behavior" to ch. 39, F.S., to provide a more precise name for young children who are reported to have acted inappropriately and who, under current law, are called juvenile sexual offenders;
- Clarifies the requirements for background screening of caregivers;
- Amends the law to reflect the department's current practice of accepting reports of abuse via fax and web interface;
- Provides exceptions to the requirement that all child protective investigations be closed within 60 days;
- Requires that notice of dependency proceedings be given to foster and pre-adoptive parents;
- Revises the provisions for a diligent search for a parent or prospective parent to include a thorough search of at least one electronic database;
- Authorizes courts to enter injunctions relating to domestic violence issues in certain child welfare cases;
- Permits courts to grant an exception to the requirement that a predisposition study be filed in every case;
- Allows the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to give the department access to information contained in its database for purposes of identifying persons who are the subject of child protective investigations;
- Makes significant changes to the Florida Child Welfare Student Loan Forgiveness Program;
- Authorizes community-based care providers to pay for automobile liability insurance coverage for employees who drive their personal cars in the course of their work; and

- Allows the department additional time to complete its reorganization process.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008, except as otherwise expressly provided.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 119-0