

SENATE SUMMARY OF HOUSE AMENDMENTS

SB 137

2023 Regular Session

Barrow

KEYWORD AND SUMMARY AS RETURNED TO THE SENATE

CHILDREN. Provides for the state child ombudsman. (See Act)

SUMMARY OF HOUSE AMENDMENTS TO THE SENATE BILL

1. Move the state child ombudsman from the governor's office to the legislative auditor's office and eliminate the proposed creation of the Office of the State Child Ombudsman.
2. Change the duty of the ombudsman to notify the senator and representative representing the district in which a child has died from within 24 hours of the death to 24 hours of his knowledge of the death.
3. Remove proposed law provisions regarding the following:
 - (a) Written acknowledgments from agencies contacted by the ombudsman.
 - (b) Access to records.
 - (c) Private communications with children or other persons.
 - (d) Applying for and accepting grants, donations, and bequests.
 - (e) Confidentiality and disclosure of certain information.
 - (f) Discrimination and retaliation against an employee who makes a complaint to or cooperates with the ombudsman.
4. Make proposed law effective upon appropriation by the legislature of monies for the implementation of proposed law.
5. Make technical changes.

DIGEST OF THE SENATE BILL AS RETURNED TO THE SENATE

DIGEST

SB 137 Re-Reengrossed

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Proposed law requires the legislative auditor to appoint a state child ombudsman, subject to legislative appropriation, who has knowledge of the child welfare system and the legal system and is qualified by training and experience to perform the duties of the ombudsman. Proposed law further provides for the legislative auditor to employ necessary personnel to perform the duties assigned to the ombudsman.

Proposed law provides for the duties of the state child ombudsman who shall independently monitor and evaluate the public and private agencies involved in the protection of children and delivery of services to children with the goal of safeguarding the welfare of children through educational advocacy, system reform, public awareness, and training.

Proposed law requires the state child ombudsman to prepare the following reports:

- (1) A biennial, in-depth report on conditions of confinement regarding children 21 years of age or younger who are held in secure detention in any facility operated by a state agency.
- (2) An annual report on the goals of and projects undertaken by him, within available appropriations, that are consistent with his duties and responsibilities.

Proposed law requires any state agency having responsibility for the custody or care of children to provide monthly notice to the ombudsman of the death of a child in its custody or care. Proposed law further requires the ombudsman to notify the senator and representative who represent the district in which a child has died as a result of abuse or neglect within 24 hours of his knowledge of the death of the child.

Proposed law provides that the standing committee of each house having responsibility for oversight shall perform a biennial review and evaluation of the ombudsman.

Proposed law provides that the state child ombudsman or his designee shall serve as a member of the State Child Death Review Panel.

Effective when an Act of the Louisiana Legislature containing a specific appropriation of monies for the implementation of proposed law becomes effective.

(Amends R.S. 40:2019(C)(intro. para.); Adds R.S. 24:513(D)(7) and 525 and R.S. 40:2019(C)(23))

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