

2026 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 52

BY SENATOR CATHEY

CHILDREN/FAMILY SERVICES DEPT. Provides relative to public assistance benefits for children. (8/1/26)

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 24:525(C)(14) and R.S. 46:109, relative to public assistance benefits; to
3 provide for the duties of the Department of Children and Family Services and the
4 Louisiana Department of Health; to provide for reporting; to provide for the
5 adjustment of benefits under certain circumstances; to provide for the duties of the
6 state child ombudsman; and to provide for related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. R.S. 24:525(C)(14) is hereby enacted to read as follows:

9 §525. State child ombudsman; duties

10 * * *

11 C. The state child ombudsman shall have all of the following duties and
12 responsibilities:

13 * * *

14 **(14) Conduct an annual review of the implementation of R.S. 46:109 by**
15 **the Department of Children and Family Services and the Louisiana Department**
16 **of Health, including the timely compliance with reporting requirements and a**
17 **review of department procedures.**

1 * * *

2 Section 2. R.S. 46:109 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

3 **§109. Public assistance benefits; change in household; reporting; fraud**

4 **A. For the purpose of assisting the Louisiana Department of Health in**
5 **identifying changes in household circumstances for benefit allotments, the**
6 **Department of Children and Family Services shall report identifying**
7 **information to the Louisiana Department of Health within seventy-two hours**
8 **following a hearing held pursuant to Children's Code Article 624. The**
9 **Louisiana Department of Health shall determine the required information**
10 **necessary to identify the child and the child's household.**

11 **B. Upon receipt of a report from the Department of Children and Family**
12 **Services pursuant to this Section, the Louisiana Department of Health shall**
13 **immediately:**

14 **(1) Review whether either of the child's parents is receiving any public**
15 **assistance benefits as a result of the child being included in the parent's**
16 **household.**

17 **(2) Adjust any Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Special**
18 **Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or Family**
19 **Independence Temporary Assistance Program benefits for the parent's**
20 **household to reflect the change in circumstance.**

21 **(3) If the child is enrolled in Medicaid, issue a new Medicaid managed**
22 **care insurance card for the child at the child's new residence.**

23 **C. If the child has not reached the age of eighteen at the time the child**
24 **is returned to the custody of the child's parent, the Department of Children and**
25 **Family Services shall report to the Louisiana Department of Health when the**
26 **child is returned to the custody of the child's parent.**

27 **D. If the Louisiana Department of Health receives an application for a**
28 **public assistance benefit for a child that is included in another household that**
29 **receives benefits, the department shall conduct an assessment to determine**

1 **where the child is currently residing and adjust the benefit allotment**
 2 **accordingly.**

3 **E. If the Louisiana Department of Health determines that an individual**
 4 **failed to report a change in household circumstances and is receiving public**
 5 **assistance benefits for a child that is no longer living in the household, the**
 6 **department shall report the individual to the fraud detection unit of the**
 7 **department for investigation and recovery of ineligible benefits.**

8 **F. Upon request of the state child ombudsman, the Department of**
 9 **Children and Family Services and the Louisiana Department of Health shall**
 10 **provide access to any records identifying changes in household circumstances**
 11 **or related to the adjustment of public assistance benefits as required by this**
 12 **Section.**

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Senate Legislative Services. The keyword, summary, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

DIGEST

SB 52 Re-Reengrossed

2026 Regular Session

Cathey

Proposed law requires the Dept. of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to report identifying information to the La. Dept. of Health (LDH) within 72 hours following a hearing held pursuant to present law for the purpose of identifying changes in household circumstances for benefit allotments.

Proposed law requires LDH, upon receipt of a report from DCFS, to immediately:

- (1) Review whether either of the child's parents is receiving any public assistance benefits as a result of the child being included in the parent's household.
- (2) Adjust any SNAP, WIC, or FITAP benefits for the parent's household to reflect the change in circumstance.
- (3) If the child is enrolled in Medicaid, issue a new Medicaid managed care insurance card for the child at the child's new residence.

Proposed law requires DCFS to report to LDH if a child under the age of 18 is returned to the custody of the child's parent.

Proposed law requires LDH to conduct an assessment to determine where a child is residing and adjust the benefits allotment accordingly if LDH receives an application for benefits for a child that is included in another household that receives benefits.

Proposed law requires LDH to report any individual that failed to report a change in household circumstances and is receiving public assistance benefits for a child that is no

longer living in the household to the department's fraud unit.

Present law provides for a state child ombudsman appointed by the legislative auditor to monitor and evaluate public and private agencies involved in the protection and delivery of services to children and provides for the duties and responsibilities of the state child ombudsman.

Proposed law retains present law and further requires the state child ombudsman to conduct an annual review of the implementation of proposed law by DCFS and LDH, including the timely compliance with reporting requirements and a review of department procedures.

Proposed law requires DCFS and LDH to provide access to any records identifying changes in household circumstances or related to the adjustment of public assistance benefits at the request of the state child ombudsman.

Effective August 1, 2026.

(Adds R.S. 24:525(C)(14) and R.S. 46:109)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Finance to the engrossed bill

1. Requires DCFS to report identifying information to LDH within 72 hours following a hearing held pursuant to present law.
2. Makes technical changes.

Senate Floor Amendments to reengrossed bill

1. Requires the state child ombudsman to conduct an annual review of the implementation of proposed law by DCFS and LDH.
2. Requires DCFS and LDH to provide access to certain records at the request of the state child ombudsman.
3. Makes technical changes.