Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

122 nd General Assembly of Ohio

BILL: **Am. H.B. 446** DATE: **April 1, 1998**

STATUS: **As Passed by the Senate** SPONSOR: **Rep. Williams**

LOCAL IMPACT STATEMENT REQUIRED: **No — No local cost**

CONTENTS: **Allows for the hiring of adoption assessors and modifies the criminal background standards of a potential adoptive or foster parent**

State Fiscal Highlights

STATE FUND	FY 1998	FY 1999	FUTURE YEARS
General Revenue Fund			
Revenues	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -
Expenditures	Minimal decrease	Minimal decrease	Minimal decrease

- If the bill results in an increase in the pool of adoptive and foster parents, there may be a minimal decrease in costs.
- The bill modifies language in Am. Sub. H.B. 215 (the operating budget for FY's 1998-1999), which governs the development of a computerized child welfare system. The bill clarifies that a vendor may develop an entirely new system, rather than adapt another state's existing system to Ohio. This change has no fiscal effect.

Local Fiscal Highlights

LOCAL GOVERNMENT	FY 1998	FY 1999	FUTURE YEARS
Counties			
Revenues	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -
Expenditures	Potential minimal increase	Potential minimal increase	Potential minimal increase

- Allows probate court judges the ability to hire additional individuals to act as assessors in adoption activities. This is permissive and does not impose any additional local costs.
- If the bill results in the redo or supplement of adoption and foster care assessments, there may be a minimal cost increase.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

Probate Court Assessor

This bill permits probate judges to provide additional individuals to act as assessors in adoption activities. These assessors may either be a current court employee, an independent contractor, or a contractually agreed to public or private child agency. Currently, assessments are conducted by individuals outside of the direct control of the court. The bill expands the number of people who may fulfill this necessary function by allowing the probate judge to add such duties to current staff or to add an assessor to court staff. Any local costs would be based upon the needs of the court as determined by the probate judges. However, it appears as though the need for assessors may be greater in the more populous counties of the state.

Redoing and Supplementing Reports

The bill permits a probate court to order the assessor or the Department of Human Services to redo or supplement a home study or prefinalization assessment report or social or medical history in a manner that the court directs, in situations where the court determines that the initial report or history does not comply with the requirements governing such reports and histories. The bill also gives the court the option to appoint a different assessor to redo or supplement the report or history.

Costs associated with this provision appear to be minimal. It is unknown how often the court would direct an assessor or the Department of Human Services to redo or to supplement a report or a history in a manner the court directs, but LBO would expect few such instances.

Rehabilitation Standards for Adoptive and Foster Parents

Under the bill, the Department of Human Services rules are required to include rehabilitation standards a person with the specified criminal history must meet for an entity to employ the person to provide out-of-home care to a child or to permit the person to become an adoptive or foster parent.

However, the Legislative Service Commission questions whether or not it was the intention of the General Assembly for rules adopted by the Department of Human Services regarding rehabilitation standards to cover prospective adoptive and foster parents. To become an adoptive or foster parent, a person is not hired by an out-of-home care entity but rather approved by probate court or certified by the Department of Human Services. According to LSC, rules adopted by the department regarding rehabilitation standards are not to cover prospective adoptive and foster parents. The rules are to specify circumstances under which an out-of-home care entity may hire a person with a specified criminal history. If the intent is to allow persons with criminal records to become adoptive parents, the pool of potential persons would increase, thereby possibly reducing the costs of lengthy foster care placements.

Child Protective Services Information System

The bill modifies language in Am. Sub. H.B. 215, (the biennial operating budget), which governs the development a computerized child welfare system. The bill clarifies that a vendor may develop an entirely new system, rather than adapt another state's existing system to Ohio. This change has no fiscal effect, as LBO assumes the same appropriation constraints will exist.

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