

SUBJECT: Subsidy for health benefits coverage for certain adopted children

COMMITTEE: Human Services — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Rose, S. King, J. Davis, Naishtat, Parker, Pierson

0 nays

3 absent — Eissler, Herrero, Hughes

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 27 — 31-0

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND: Family Code, sec. 162.304 regulates adoption assistance agreements. Subject to eligibility, adoption assistance agreements can subsidize the cost of adoption and medical care for adopted children.

DIGEST: SB 1098 would require the Department of Family and Protective Service (DFPS) to pay a \$150 subsidy each month for premiums for health benefits coverage for adopted children age 18 and under who previously had been under the conservatorship of the state and were not eligible for Medicaid. The executive commissioner of HHSC would adopt rules regarding the subsidy, including:

- limiting eligibility to a child whose adoptive family income was less than 300 percent of the federal poverty level;
- providing for the manner DFPS would pay the subsidy; and
- specifying any documentation required to provide proof that the subsidy was used to obtain and maintain health benefits coverage for the adopted child.

A child receiving the health coverage subsidy who did not receive any other subsidy provided under adoption assistance agreements would not be considered to be the subject of an adoption assistance agreement for any other purpose, including for determining eligibility for the exemption from payment of tuition and fees for higher education.

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The bill would take effect September 1, 2007, and would apply only to children who were placed in adoptive care on or after this date.

NOTES:

The fiscal note indicates the bill would cause no significant fiscal impact. Any costs would be absorbed into the existing DFPS budget.