

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 203
By: West
Health & Human Services
6/8/2017
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

After passage of the Federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act in October of 2008, the Texas Legislature acted during the 81st Session in 2009 to take advantage of federal matching funds by passing legislation to create the Permanency Care Assistance (PCA) program at the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS).

The PCA program gives financial support to kinship caregivers who want to provide a permanent home to children who cannot be reunited with their parents. In most cases, kinship caregivers are relatives such as aunts, uncles, or grandparents.

Monthly payments are \$400 to \$545 per month, depending upon the child's needs. This is the same as the adoption assistance rate, and less than traditional paid foster care, which averages almost \$2,000 per month.

To qualify, a person/couple must: (1) become verified as foster parents; (2) care for the child as foster parents for at least six months; (3) negotiate and sign a permanency care agreement; and (4) go to court to get legal custody of the child.

PCA benefits continue until children turn 18 (or 21 if the child is 16 years old or older when the PCA agreement is entered into).

In addition to being more cost effective than foster care, the PCA program provides better outcomes for kids than foster care. Children in this program are more likely to be placed with siblings and less likely to drop out of school or run away. They achieve permanency and exit state care more quickly and more successfully than those who are not placed with relatives.

The PCA program began in 2011. There are currently 3,587 children in the program. The number of children in PCA increased by 37 percent from 2014 to 2015, and 27 percent from 2015 to 2016.

A provision added in the house of representatives to the legislation that created the program in 2009 prohibits DFPS from entering into new PCA agreements after August 2017. S.B. 203 repeals that provision.

S.B. 203 amends current law relating to removing the deadline for the Department of Family and Protective Services to enter into permanency care assistance agreements.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Repealer: Section 264.857 (Deadline For New Agreements), Family Code.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.