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BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 1254 (as enrolled)  
Sponsor: Senator Bill Hardiman  
Senate Committee: Families and Human Services  
House Committee: Family and Children Services

Date Completed: 12-21-06

### **CONTENT**

**The bill would amend the Child Protection Law to require the Department of Human Services (DHS) to report to the Legislature after fiscal years 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2007-08 the number of certain child abuse or neglect cases that were closed during the time period covered by the report, and the reasons for the case closures, as well as other information about those cases.**

The Law requires the DHS, upon investigating an allegation of child abuse or neglect, to rank the case according to five categories, with Category I being cases requiring a court petition, and Category V being cases in which there is no evidence of abuse or neglect. Category III cases are those in which the DHS determines that there is a preponderance of evidence of child abuse or neglect, and an indication of low to moderate risk of future harm to the child. In these cases, the DHS must assist the family in receiving community-based services. If the family does not participate in the services, or participates but does not progress toward alleviating the child's risk level, the DHS must consider reclassifying the case as Category II (which requires child protective services).

The Law required the DHS to furnish a written report regarding Category III cases to the appropriate House and Senate standing committees and to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees within four months after the following periods:

- From October 1, 1999, to September 30, 2000.
- From October 1, 2000, to September 30, 2001.
- From October 1, 2001, to September 30, 2002.

The bill would require the report to be furnished within four months after the following periods:

- From October 1, 2005, to September 30, 2006.
- From October 1, 2006, to September 30, 2007.
- From October 1, 2007, to September 30, 2008.

Under the Law, the previous report had to contain certain information on families that were classified in Category III during the time period covered by the report, including the number and percentage of Category III families that voluntarily participated in services and that did not participate in services.

The bill instead would require the report to include the number of Category III cases closed or reclassified during the specified time period, as follows:

- The number of cases referred to voluntary community services and closed with no additional monitoring.
- The number of cases referred to voluntary community services and monitored for up to 90 days.
- The number of cases for which the DHS entered more than one determination

that there was evidence of child abuse or neglect.

- The number of cases reclassified from Category III to Category II.
- The number of cases reclassified from Category III to Category I, and the number of those cases that resulted in a removal.

In addition, for fiscal years 2006-07 and 2007-08, the report would have to include the number of cases that were reclassified from Category III to Category I or II that were referred to and provided voluntary community services before being reclassified.

MCL 722.628d

Legislative Analyst: Curtis Walker

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on State government. The Department does not collect data as to how and why cases are reclassified. In 2007, the DHS will pilot a new support system that would allow this type of data collection. Currently, the information required would have to be counted and assembled by hand, which would require additional personnel and time resulting in additional administrative costs. At this time, there is insufficient information to determine the exact costs.

Fiscal Analyst: Constance Cole

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.