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Senate Bill 227 (Substitute S-1 as reported)
Sponsor: Senator Irma Clark-Coleman
Committee: Families and Human Services

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Subsidized Guardianship Assistance Act to do the following:

- Rename the Act the "Guardianship Assistance Act", and replace references to "subsidized guardianship assistance" with "guardianship assistance" throughout the Act.
- Revise the criteria for a child to be eligible for guardianship assistance.
- Requirement a guardian to be a licensed foster parent, and to undergo a criminal background check and a central registry check for child abuse and neglect.
- Require the Department of Human Services (DHS) to enter into a written, binding, guardianship assistance agreement with a prospective guardian.
- Require the DHS to pay up to \$2,000 for the total cost of nonrecurring expenses associated with obtaining legal guardianship of an eligible child.
- Require the DHS, if a child's permanency plan included placement with a guardian and the receipt of guardianship assistance, to include in the case plan the steps taken to determine that reunification or adoption was not appropriate, among other information.
- Specify that only a relative who was a licensed foster parent caring for a child who was eligible to receive Title IV-E-funded foster care payments for six consecutive months would be eligible for Federal funding under Title IV-E for guardianship assistance, although a child who was not eligible for Title IV-E funding who was placed with a licensed foster parent could be eligible for State-funded guardianship assistance.

MCL 722.871 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Curtis Walker

FISCAL IMPACT

The Federal Foster Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act was passed by Congress and signed by the President in October 2008. The legislation made a number of modifications in Federal standards related to financing the provision of services to youths in foster care. One of the major modifications of the Act was to permit Federal reimbursement through Title IV-E of the Social Security Act to children in guardianship arrangements.

The Subsidized Guardianship Assistance Act, which permits use of State GF/GP dollars for subsidized guardianship arrangements. The FY 2008-09 DHS appropriation allocated \$4,575,000 GF/GP for operation of the subsidized guardianship program. This bill would align the requirements for subsidized guardianship in Michigan with the eligibility criteria for payment through Title IV-E of the Social Security Act. The bill would permit the State to obtain Title IV-E reimbursement for guardianship arrangements, reducing State expenditure per child by about 65%. Total GF/GP savings would be driven by the number of children in guardianships eligible for Title IV-E reimbursement.

Date Completed: 3-12-09

Fiscal Analyst: David Fosdick