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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research
and Drafting

Legislative Budget
Office

Synopsis of Senate Committee Amendments

(This synopsis does not address amendments that may have been adopted on the Senate Floor.)

Sub. H.B. 4 of the 134th General Assembly

Senate Judiciary Committee

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Ombudsman Office changes

Changes the name of the Office to “Youth and Family Ombudsman Office” from “Children Service Ombudsman Office.”

Provides that the Office consists of (1) a family ombudsman, appointed by the Governor, to investigate complaints made by adults, and (2) a youth ombudsman, appointed by the Governor with advice from the Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio Youth Advisory Board (OHIO YAB), to investigate complaints made by youth and to advocate for the best interests of children involved in concerns investigated by the Office (rather than an ombudsman and a youth advocate, to advocate for the best interests of children involved in concerns investigated by the Office).

Requires the Office to also provide its annual report to OHIO YAB representatives.

Requires, no later than 60 days after the release of the Office’s annual report, OHIO YAB to provide an evaluation of the report to the Governor and the Office’s youth ombudsman.

Provides that the Ombudsman Office provisions of the bill apply to “youth” who:

- Are persons under 18 years old;
- Are in the temporary or permanent custody of a public children services agency (PCSA), planned permanent living arrangement (PPLA), or in the Title IV-E eligible care and placement responsibility of a juvenile court or other governmental agency that provides Title IV-E reimbursable placement services; or
- Meet all of the following:
 - Were in the temporary or permanent custody of a PCSA, PPLA, or in the Title IV-E eligible care and placement responsibility of a juvenile court or other governmental agency that provides Title IV-E reimbursable placement services;
 - Whose custody, arrangement, or care and placement was terminated on or after the person turned age 18;

- Who has not yet attained the age of 21.

Foster care and adoption home study assessor qualifications

Expands who is eligible to become a foster care and adoption home study assessor to include (1) current and former PCSA caseworkers and PCSA caseworker supervisors, and (2) individuals who hold at least a bachelor's degree in certain human services fields and at least one year of experience working with families and children.

Removes from the bill the requirement that, to be eligible to become a home study assessor, a person must have a master's degree in social work or a related field and be currently employed, and have been employed for at least two years in a human services-related occupation.

Court order to interview and examine a child

Removes the provisions from the bill concerning a juvenile court's ability to order, if probable cause exists, a child's parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker to permit a PCSA to interview and examine a child who may be abused, neglected, or dependent if the parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker refuses the PCSA reasonable access to the child, as these provisions were previously enacted under H.B. 110 of the 134th General Assembly.