



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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February 7, 2018

TO: Members
Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Bob Lang, Director

SUBJECT: Assembly Bill 787 and Senate Bill 676: Funding for Grants to Support Foster Parents and Children

Assembly Bill 787 was introduced on December 27, 2017, and referred to the Committee on Children and Families. On January 31, 2018, that Committee recommended the bill for passage by a vote of 10 to 0. On February 2, 2018, the bill was referred to the Joint Committee on Finance.

Senate Bill 676, a companion bill to AB 787, was introduced on January 4, 2018, and referred to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services. On February 2, the bill was withdrawn from that Committee and rereferred to the Joint Committee on Finance.

CURRENT LAW

Most children in out-of-home care statewide are in licensed foster care. Under foster care, a family provides care and maintenance for four or fewer children who are unable to live with their families due to issues of abuse or neglect. Under the levels of care foster care licensing system, a foster home is certified in one of five levels commensurate with the foster parent's knowledge, skills, training, experience, and relationship to the child.

Counties, tribes, and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) make monthly payments to foster parents to support food, clothing, housing, basic transportation, personal care, and other expenses for children in foster care. All foster care payments include the basic maintenance rate, which is established by statute. Currently, the basic maintenance rate for all level one foster care providers is \$238 per month. For levels two and above, the basic monthly maintenance rates are: (a) \$394 for children up to age five; (b) \$431 for children between the ages of five and 11; (c) \$490 for children between the ages of 12 and 14; and (d) \$511 for children ages 15 and older.

SUMMARY OF BILL AND FISCAL EFFECT

The bill would create an annual appropriation of \$400,000 GPR in 2018-19 for DCF to award grants to counties, nonprofit organizations, and tribes to support foster parents and provide normalcy for children in out-of-home care. Qualifying uses of the funds may include incentives for the retention of foster parents, enhancing foster parent education, and reimbursing foster parents for foster care related expenses.

DCF would be required to conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of the grant program in achieving its stated goals and submit a report by June 30, 2021 to the appropriate standing committees of the Legislature.

Prepared by: John Gentry