

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4975

By Delegates Burkhammer and Pinson

[Introduced January 22, 2024; Referred to the
Committee on Health and Human Resources then
Finance]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §49-2-111c of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
 2 to the creation of a child welfare information technology systems; requiring the Bureau of
 3 Social Services to implement of a child welfare information technology system; providing
 4 access to the system; setting forth the requirements of the system.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. STATE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CHILDREN.
§49-2-111c. Priorities for use of funds.

1 (a) Subject to appropriations by the Legislature, the department is ~~authorized and directed~~
 2 ~~to:~~ shall:

3 (1) Enhance and increase efforts to provide services to prevent the removal of children
 4 from their homes;

5 (2) Identify relatives and fictive kin of children in need of placement outside of the home;

6 (3) Train kinship parents to become certified foster parents;

7 (4) Expand a tiered foster care system that provides higher payments for foster parents
 8 providing care to, and child placing agencies providing services to, foster children who have
 9 severe emotional, behavioral, or intellectual problems or disabilities, with particular emphasis
 10 upon removing children in congregate care and placing them with suitable foster parents; ~~This~~
 11 ~~program shall be operational no later than December 1, 2020 and~~

12 ~~(5) Develop a pilot program to increase payment to uncertified kinship parents for the~~
 13 ~~purpose of further helping families who have accepted kinship placements.~~

14 ~~(b) During fiscal year 2021, the department shall expend at least \$16,900,000 for the~~
 15 ~~purposes of implementing the priorities and objectives listed in this section.~~

16 ~~(c) On or before July 1, 2022 and on or before July 1 of every year thereafter, the secretary~~
 17 ~~of the department shall present a report to the Joint Standing Committee on Government and~~
 18 ~~Finance regarding the expenditures made pursuant to subsection (b) of this section and the~~
 19 ~~department's progress in meeting the priorities and objectives listed in subsection (a) of this~~

20 section: ~~Provided~~, That the secretary shall provide the information described in this subsection
21 and updates to previous reports at any time, upon request of the Joint Standing Committee on
22 Government and Finance

23 (b) (1) The department shall incorporate into the existing child welfare information
24 technology system or through the purchase of additional products which shall communicate with
25 and pull information from the existing child welfare information technology system, a foster parent
26 information system. The components of the system may be implemented incrementally, except
27 that paragraph (i) shall be implemented by January 1, 2025, with the project completed by January
28 1, 2026.

29 (2) The system shall:

30 (A) Ensure that permission access to utilize the system about a foster child is granted to
31 only those parties with legal responsibilities to care for and support the foster child;

32 (B) Facilitate communications with those individuals involved the child welfare system,
33 including, but not limited to:

34 (i) Foster parent requests and responses to requests to staff of the Bureau for Social
35 Services and their contractual designees;

36 (ii) Updates regarding foster child movement, visitation, and travel;

37 (iii) Scheduled court hearings, guardian ad litem, and multidisciplinary team hearings and
38 meetings; and other communications that may improve care for the foster child amongst
39 designated parties with legal responsibilities to care for the foster child; and

40 (iv) Provide health records for the foster child to the foster parent by connecting with
41 existing health care systems;

42 (C) Have the capacity to archive communications for the purpose of running reports on
43 responsiveness by actors in the child welfare system; and

44 (D) Be created to prevent the input of the redundant information;

45 (3) By July 1, 2025, and quarterly thereafter, the department shall analysis and evaluate a

46 child protective worker's responsiveness to the information placed in the system, which shall be
47 shared with the Foster Care Ombudsman and the Legislative Oversight Commission on Health
48 and Human Resources Accountability.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to create an information sharing child welfare system.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.