

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

ENGROSSED

House Bill 4602

By Delegates Burkhammer, Mazzocchi, Chiarelli,

Flanigan, Heckert, Kimble, Miller, and Pinson

[Introduced January 20, 2026; referred to the

Committee on Health and Human Resources]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new section,
2 designated §49-2-131, relating to requiring the Department of Human Services to establish
3 a pilot program to contract for supplemental caseworker aide services for the Bureau for
4 Social Services.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

**ARTICLE 2. STATE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE PROTECTION AND CARE OF
CHILDREN.**

§49-2-131. Caseworker Services Pilot Program.

1 (a) (1) The Department of Human Services shall, within 90 days of the effective date of this
2 section, establish a pilot program through which it shall enter into a contract with one or more
3 qualified private entities to provide caseworker aide services to supplement existing departmental
4 staff within the Bureau for Social Services with administrative support services using a human
5 services technology platform to allow departmental staff more time for personal interactions with
6 children and families served by the department.

7 (2) Caseworker aides retained under the contract shall meet substantially equivalent
8 education, experience, training, and background check requirements as departmental
9 caseworkers and caseworker aides.

10 (3) The department shall maintain supervisory and decision-making authority over all
11 cases, and contracted caseworker aide personnel shall operate under departmental policies and
12 oversight.

13 (b) The department shall deploy contracted caseworker aide services in one or more
14 districts comprised of no more than three counties in the aggregate meeting criteria established by
15 rule or policy, including, but not limited to:

16 (1) Average caseloads exceeding state or federal guidelines;

17 (2) Persistent vacancy rates among child welfare positions; or

18 (3) A disproportionate percentage of children from that county placed in out-of-state foster
19 care or residential facilities.

20 (c) (1) The pilot program shall operate for 15 months following the execution of the contract
21 allowing for a three-month onboarding process to establish departmental priorities and workflow
22 processes and a one-year operational period.

23 (2) Prior to the conclusion of the pilot program, the department shall submit a written report
24 to the Joint Committee on Health detailing the pilot's implementation, performance outcomes,
25 costs, and recommendations for continuation or expansion.

26 (3) The department may, at its discretion, continue or expand the pilot program statewide if
27 the evaluation demonstrates improved case management capacity or outcomes.