

Department of Planning and Budget
2025 General Assembly Session
State Fiscal Impact Statement

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ORIGINAL - REVISED

Bill Number: SB1372

Patron: Suetterlein

Bill Title: Petitions for relief of care and custody of a child; investigation by local department of social services; Office of the Children’s Ombudsman work group; report.

Bill Summary: Requires a local department of social services, as a part of its investigation after the referral of a request for a petition for relief of the care and custody of a child, to (i) refer the parent to the local family assessment and planning team and (ii) create a written report. The bill directs the Department of Social Services, in coordination with the Virginia League of Social Services Executives, to create a template for and provide guidance on what should be included in such written report. The bill also changes the evidentiary standard of whether there is good cause shown for the petitioner's desire to be relieved of the child's care and custody from a finding based on preponderance of the evidence to a finding based on clear and convincing evidence.

The bill also directs the Office of the Children's Ombudsman to convene a work group composed of relevant stakeholders to determine the factors a court should consider when determining whether there is good cause shown for a petitioner's desire to be relieved of the care and custody of a child. The bill directs the work group to submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Virginia Commission on Youth by November 1, 2025. This bill is a recommendation of the Virginia Commission on Youth.

Budget Amendment Necessary: No

Items Impacted:

Explanation: This fiscal impact statement has been revised from the original to properly account for the possible number of new children served.

Fiscal Summary: This legislation is unlikely to result in a fiscal impact to the state, however, utilizing calendar 2023 data, there is a possible exposure of up to \$1.7 million per year if the children impacted by this legislation are not already under the care of a Family Assessment Team and Planning Team and receiving services.

Fiscal Analysis: The Department of Social Services (DSS) anticipates the population impacted by the bill are served under the existing Children’s Services Act (CSA) mandate type of “Foster Care Child in Need of Services (CHINS) Prevention”. DSS does not anticipate an increase in workload at the state or local level and, therefore, this legislation will not have a fiscal impact for the DSS or local DSS.

The Office of Children’s Services (OCS) has indicated that most, if not all, of these children are already currently participating in the system and accessing services through a Family Assessment Team and Planning Team. This legislation does not create any new eligibility categories. While this legislation may capture some children who are not currently receiving services through the CHINS mandate, OCS does not believe this figure will be significant. The Virginia Commission on Youth indicates that 382 petitions were filed in calendar year

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2023, and of those, 140 cases were dismissed. If those 140 children are not currently receiving any CSA services and would now be served in community-based or residential care in order to remain in the custody of their parents, the cost would be between \$818,454 and \$1.7 million.

		Community-Based Care	Residential Care
Number of Children	140	\$ 8,994	\$27,974
State Match		65%	44%
Total GFCost		\$ 818,454	\$ 1,713,408

The Office of the Children’s Ombudsman has indicated that the costs of convening a workgroup can be absorbed in existing resources.

Other: This bill is a companion to HB1733.