

Legislative Analysis



TRANSFER OFFICE OF CHILDREN'S OMBUDSMAN

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House Bill 6440 (Substitute H-2)

Sponsor: Rep. David Law

Committee: Family and Children Services

Complete to 9-19-06

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 6440 AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE

House Bill 6440 would amend the Children's Ombudsman Act to transfer the Children's Ombudsman Office to the Legislative Council, effective October 1, 2007.

Currently, under the law, the office is an autonomous entity in the Department of Management and Budget. The Governor appoints an individual to serve as ombudsman, with the advice and consent of the Senate. House Bill 6440 would remove the gubernatorial appointment and place the responsibility for the appointment with the Legislative Council.

The Office of the Children's Ombudsman works to recommend changes in policy and legislation; to educate the public; to investigate and review actions of the department (originally the Department of Social Services, then the Family Independence Agency, and now the Department of Human Services), child placing agencies, or child caring institutions; and also to monitor and ensure compliance with relevant statutes pertaining to children's protective services and the placement, supervision, treatment, and improved delivery of care for children who are in foster care and adoptive homes. The Office of the Children's Ombudsman also receives and processes complaints, conducts investigations, holds informal hearings, and reports findings and recommendations that result from investigation.

MCL 722.923

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would have no fiscal impact, assuming the line item for the Office of Children's Ombudsman is transferred from the DMB budget to the Legislature's budget.

POSITIONS:

Office of Children's Ombudsman opposes the bill. (9-13-06)

Children's Law Section – State Bar is neutral at this time. (9-13-06)

Michigan's Children is currently reviewing the substitute. (9-14-06)

Legislative Analyst: E. Best

Fiscal Analyst: Robin Risko

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