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BILL ANALYSIS

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House Bill 4159 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Representative Alma Wheeler Smith
House Committee: Families and Children's Services
Senate Committee: Families and Human Services

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Social Welfare Act to do the following:

- Revise the requirements for adoptive parents to be eligible for support subsidies from the Department of Human Services (DHS).
- Specify that the maximum amount of a support subsidy would have to be equal to the rate that the child received in the family foster care placement or the rate the child would have received if he or she had been in such a placement at the time of adoption.
- Require an adoption assistance agreement to include any services and other assistance to be provided under the agreement, and provisions to protect the interests of the child if the adoptive parent or parents moved to another state.
- Revise the conditions under which the DHS may continue to pay adoption assistance until a child reaches the age of 21, limiting it to adoptees who are pursuing a high school diploma, certificate of completion, or GED.
- Allow an adoption support subsidy agreement to be extended through Title IV-E funding for an eligible adoptee up to the age of 19 years if the State determined that he or she had a mental or physical disability that warranted continuation of adoption assistance.
- Require payments of adoption assistance to an appointed guardian to be made through State funding.

Currently, the conditions for eligibility require certification to be made before the adoption petition is filed. Under the bill, instead, certification would have to be made and the contract agreement signed by the adoptive parent or parents and the DHS before the adoption was finalized. The bill also would delete a requirement that the adoptive parent request a support subsidy not later than the date of confirmation of the adoption.

MCL 400.115g et al.

Legislative Analyst: Curtis Walker

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would make it easier for some adoptive parents to obtain adoption subsidies. This would lead to a small, indeterminate increase in State expenditure in the adoption subsidy line. It should be noted that an estimated 85% to 90% of Michigan children adopted from the child welfare system receive adoption support subsidy payments. Because of the high proportion of adoptive parents who already have access to adoption support subsidy payments, the cost associated with modifying eligibility requirements would be relatively minor.

Date Completed: 4-1-09

Fiscal Analyst: David Fosdick