

ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 305—COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS,
PROCEDURES, ETHICS, AND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

(ON BEHALF OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE TO OVERSEE THE
CONSULTANT TO STUDY THE HEALTH, SAFETY, WELFARE
AND CIVIL AND OTHER RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN THE CARE OF
CERTAIN GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES OR PRIVATE FACILITIES)

MARCH 14, 2007

Referred to Committee on Health and Human Services

SUMMARY—Revises provisions relating to the protection of
children. (BDR 17-871)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: May have Fiscal Impact.
Effect on the State: Yes.

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EXPLANATION – Matter in *bolded italics* is new; matter between brackets ~~omitted material~~ is material to be omitted.

AN ACT relating to the protection of children; creating the
Legislative Committee on the Health, Welfare, Safety and
Protection of Children; creating the position of Child
Welfare Specialist to audit and survey certain
governmental and private facilities that have custody of
children pursuant to a court order; and providing other
matters properly relating thereto.

Legislative Counsel's Digest:

Sections 2-12 of this bill create a Legislative Committee on the Health,
Welfare, Safety and Protection of Children to study various issues relating to
children in this State, including, without limitation, issues relating to child welfare
services, children placed in governmental and private facilities for children
pursuant to a court order, juvenile justice and other matters relating to children.

Sections 13-20 of this bill provide for the Legislative Auditor to employ or
enter into a contract with an auditor to serve as a Child Welfare Specialist. The
Child Welfare Specialist is charged with various duties, including conducting
performance audits of certain governmental facilities that have custody of children
pursuant to a court order and to inspect, review and survey governmental and
private facilities that have custody of children pursuant to a court order to
determine whether such facilities adequately protect the health, safety and welfare
of the children in the facilities and whether the facilities respect the civil and other
rights of the children in their care. The Child Welfare Specialist is required to



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15 report to the Legislative Committee on the Health, Welfare, Safety and Protection
16 of Children and to follow directions from the Committee.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN
SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 **Section 1.** Chapter 218 of NRS is hereby amended by adding
2 thereto the provisions set forth as sections 2 to 20, inclusive, of this
3 act.

4 **Sec. 2.** *As used in sections 2 to 12, inclusive, of this act,*
5 *unless the context otherwise requires, the words and terms defined*
6 *in sections 3 to 7, inclusive, of this act have the meanings ascribed*
7 *to them in those sections.*

8 **Sec. 3.** *"Abuse or neglect of a child" has the meaning*
9 *ascribed to it in NRS 432B.020.*

10 **Sec. 4.** *"Child Welfare Specialist" means the auditor selected*
11 *to serve in that position pursuant to section 18 of this act.*

12 **Sec. 5.** *"Committee" means the Legislative Committee on the*
13 *Health, Welfare, Safety and Protection of Children created by*
14 *section 8 of this act.*

15 **Sec. 6.** *"Governmental facility for children" has the meaning*
16 *ascribed to it in section 15 of this act.*

17 **Sec. 7.** *"Private facility for children" has the meaning*
18 *ascribed to it in section 17 of this act.*

19 **Sec. 8.** 1. *There is hereby created the Legislative*
20 *Committee on the Health, Welfare, Safety and Protection of*
21 *Children consisting of three members appointed by the Majority*
22 *Leader of the Senate and three members appointed by the Speaker*
23 *of the Assembly.*

24 2. *The Committee shall elect a Chairman and a Vice*
25 *Chairman from among its members. The Chairman must be*
26 *elected from one House of the Legislature and the Vice Chairman*
27 *from the other House. The chairmanship of the Committee must*
28 *alternate each biennium between the Houses of the Legislature.*
29 *After the initial election, the Chairman and Vice Chairman shall*
30 *hold office for a term of 2 years commencing on July 1 of each*
31 *odd-numbered year. If a vacancy occurs in the chairmanship or*
32 *vice chairmanship, the members of the Committee shall elect a*
33 *Chairman or Vice Chairman, as applicable, from among its*
34 *members to serve in that position for the remainder of the*
35 *unexpired term.*

36 3. *Any member of the Committee who is not a candidate for*
37 *reelection or who is defeated for reelection continues to serve until*
38 *the convening of the next session of the Legislature.*



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4. Vacancies on the Committee must be filled in the same manner as the original appointments.

Sec. 9. 1. The Committee shall meet throughout each year at the times and places as are specified by a call of the Chairman or a majority of the Committee.

2. The Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau or a person he has designated shall act as the nonvoting recording Secretary.

3. The Committee shall prescribe regulations for its own management and government.

4. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 5, four members of the Committee constitute a quorum, and a quorum may exercise all the power and authority conferred on the Committee.

5. Any recommended legislation proposed by the Committee must be approved by a majority of the members of the Senate and by a majority of the members of the Assembly appointed to the Committee.

6. Except during a regular or special session of the Legislature, the members of the Committee are entitled to receive the:

(a) Compensation provided for a majority of the members of the Legislature during the first 60 days of the preceding regular session;

(b) Per diem allowance provided for state officers and employees generally; and

(c) Travel expenses provided pursuant to NRS 218.2207 for each day or portion of a day of attendance at a meeting of the Committee and while engaged in the business of the Committee.

↪ The compensation, per diem allowances and travel expenses paid pursuant to this subsection must be paid from the Legislative Fund.

Sec. 10. The Committee may:

1. Study various issues relating to the provision of child welfare services in this State, including, without limitation:

(a) Programs for the provision of child welfare services;

(b) Licensing and reimbursement of providers of foster care;

(c) The availability and provision of mental health services;

(d) Compliance with any federal requirements in the provision of services;

(e) The quality of care provided to children in the child welfare system;

(f) The manner in which cases of alleged abuse or neglect of a child are handled and reported; and

(g) Other related issues.



2. Study issues relating to the health, safety, welfare, and civil and other rights of children placed in governmental and private facilities for children pursuant to a court order.

3. Study issues relating to juvenile justice.

4. Review and consider any other matter relating to the health, safety, welfare or protection of children in this State.

5. Conduct investigations and hold hearings.

6. Contract with a consultant to obtain assistance and advice.

Sec. 11. The Committee shall:

1. Receive reports from and provide direction to the Child Welfare Specialist selected pursuant to section 18 of this act.

2. Make any appropriate recommendations for legislation to the Legislature.

Sec. 12. 1. In conducting the investigations and hearings of the Committee:

(a) The Secretary of the Committee or, in his absence, any member of the Committee may administer oaths.

(b) The Secretary or Chairman of the Committee may cause the deposition of witnesses, residing either within or outside the State, to be taken in the manner prescribed by rule of court for taking depositions in civil actions in the district courts.

(c) The Chairman may issue subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of books and papers.

2. If any witness refuses to attend or testify or produce any books and papers as required by the subpoena, the Chairman may report to the district court by petition setting forth that:

(a) Due notice has been given of the time and place of attendance of the witness or the production of the books and papers;

(b) The witness has been subpoenaed by the Committee pursuant to this section; and

(c) The witness has failed or refused to attend or produce the books and papers required by the subpoena before the Committee which is named in the subpoena, or has refused to answer questions propounded to him,

↳ and asking for an order of the court compelling the witness to attend and testify or produce the books and papers before the Committee.

3. Upon such petition, the court shall enter an order directing the witness to appear before the court at a time and place to be fixed by the court in its order, the time to be not more than 10 days after the date of the order, and to show cause why he has not attended or testified or produced the books or papers before the Committee. A certified copy of the order must be served upon the witness.



1 4. If it appears to the court that the subpoena was regularly
2 issued by the Committee, the court shall enter an order that the
3 witness appear before the Committee at the time and place fixed in
4 the order and testify or produce the required books or papers.
5 Failure to obey the order constitutes contempt of court.

6 Sec. 13. As used in sections 13 to 20, inclusive, of this act,
7 unless the context otherwise requires, the words and terms defined
8 in sections 14 to 17, inclusive, of this act have the meanings
9 ascribed to them in those sections.

10 Sec. 14. "Child Welfare Specialist" means the person
11 selected to serve in that position pursuant to section 18 of this act.

12 Sec. 15. "Governmental facility for children" means any
13 facility, detention center, treatment center, hospital, institution,
14 group shelter or other establishment which is owned or operated
15 by a governmental entity and which has physical custody of
16 children pursuant to the order of a court.

17 Sec. 16. "Near fatality" means an act that, as certified by a
18 physician, places a child in serious or critical condition.

19 Sec. 17. "Private facility for children" means any facility,
20 detention center, treatment center, hospital, institution, group
21 shelter or other establishment which is owned or operated by a
22 person or entity which has physical custody of children pursuant
23 to the order of a court.

24 Sec. 18. 1. The Legislative Auditor shall employ or contract
25 with an auditor to serve as the Child Welfare Specialist. The Child
26 Welfare Specialist shall:

27 (a) Conduct such performance audits of governmental
28 facilities for children as assigned by the Legislative Committee on
29 the Health, Welfare, Safety and Protection of Children created by
30 section 8 of this act; and

31 (b) Inspect, review and survey other governmental and private
32 facilities for children to determine whether such facilities
33 adequately protect the health, safety and welfare of the children in
34 the facilities and whether the facilities respect the civil and other
35 rights of the children in their care.

36 2. In performing its duties pursuant to this section, the Child
37 Welfare Specialist shall:

38 (a) Receive and review copies of all guidelines used by
39 governmental and private facilities for children concerning the
40 health, safety, welfare, and civil and other rights of children;

41 (b) Receive and review copies of each complaint that is filed by
42 any child or other person on behalf of a child who is under the
43 care of a governmental or private facility for children concerning
44 the health, safety, welfare, and civil and other rights of the child;



(c) Perform unannounced site visits and on-site inspections of governmental and private facilities for children;

(d) Review reports and other documents prepared by governmental and private facilities for children concerning the disposition of any complaint which was filed by a child or any other person on behalf of a child concerning the health, safety, welfare, and civil and other rights of the child;

(e) Review practices, policies and procedures of governmental and private facilities for children for filing and investigating complaints made by children under their care or by any other person on behalf of such children concerning the health, safety, welfare, and civil and other rights of the children;

(f) Receive, review and evaluate all information and reports from governmental and private facilities for children relating to a child who suffers a fatality or near fatality while under the care or custody of a governmental or private facility for children;

(g) Report periodically to the Legislative Committee on the Health, Welfare, Safety and Protection of Children created by section 8 of this act; and

(h) Perform such other duties as directed by the Legislative Committee on the Health, Welfare, Safety and Protection of Children.

Sec. 19. Each governmental and private facility for children shall:

1. Cooperate fully with the Child Welfare Specialist;
2. Allow the Child Welfare Specialist to enter the facility and any area within the facility with or without prior notice;
3. Allow the Child Welfare Specialist to interview children and staff at the facility;
4. Allow the Child Welfare Specialist to inspect, review and copy any records, reports and other documents relevant to the duties of the Child Welfare Specialist; and
5. Forward to the Child Welfare Specialist copies of any complaint that is filed by a child under the care or custody of a governmental or private facility for children or by any other person on behalf of such a child concerning the health, safety, welfare, and civil and other rights of the child.

Sec. 20. 1. When conducting any performance audit pursuant to section 18 of this act, the Child Welfare Specialist shall carry out his duties in accordance with the provisions of NRS 218.737 to 218.893, inclusive, except that the Legislative Committee on the Health, Welfare, Safety and Protection of Children created by section 8 of this act replaces any reference to the Legislative Commission in those sections.



1 2. *The Legislative Auditor and the Child Welfare Specialist*
2 *shall keep or cause to be kept a complete file of copies of all*
3 *reports of audits, examinations, investigations and all other*
4 *reports or releases issued by him.*

5 3. *All working papers from an audit are confidential and may*
6 *be destroyed by the Legislative Auditor or the Child Welfare*
7 *Specialist 5 years after the report is issued, except that the*
8 *Legislative Auditor or the Child Welfare Specialist:*

9 (a) *Shall release such working papers when subpoenaed by a*
10 *court; and*

11 (b) *May make such working papers available for inspection by*
12 *an authorized representative of any other governmental entity for*
13 *a matter officially before him or by any other person authorized by*
14 *the Legislative Committee on the Health, Welfare, Safety and*
15 *Protection of Children.*

16 **Sec. 21.** This act becomes effective on July 1, 2007.

