



National Association of Public
Child Welfare Administrators

an affiliate of the American Public Human Services Association

Legislative Summary

State Child Well-Being Research Act of 2009

The Senate and House introduced identical bipartisan bills that require the Health and Human Services Department to conduct research on child well-being indicators. The bills, known as the State of Child Well-Being Research (S. 1151 & H.R. 2558), were introduced on May 21, 2009, by the majority leader, Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.) and Sens. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.V.) and Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) and both members of the Senate Finance Committee. The House sponsors include Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-Pa.) and Rep. Dave Camp (R-Mich.) and ranking member of the House Ways and Means Committee.

The legislation would amend Title IV-A of the Social Security Act, otherwise known as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, which is due for reauthorization next year. S. 1151 and H.R. 2558 would rename the National Survey of Children's Health, conducted by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau at the Health Resources and Services Administration, to the Survey of Children's Health and Well-Being.

Survey Modification

The HHS secretary is required to modify the survey to better assess child well-being and collect information on the following:

- Education
- Social and emotional development
- Physical and mental health and safety
- Family well-being, such as structure, income, employment, child care and family relationships

Data Collection Requirements

With respect to the indicators, the HHS secretary must collect information that is statistically representative of the state and national levels and consistent across the country. This information must be collected on an annual basis, measured with reliability, and over-sampled with respect to low-income children and families. Collected information must be made available to the public.

This information must be published as absolute numbers and expressed in rates and percentages and include indicators on demographics and ratios of income to poverty. The sample sizes must be adequate for micro data on all indicators.

The secretary must consult with a subcommittee of the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics and will include experts on child education, social and emotional development, physical and mental health and safety as well as family well-being. The subcommittee shall delegate work assignments to the Maternal and Child Health Bureau on the survey design, content and methodology.

Advisory Panel on Child Well-Being

The HHS secretary, in consultation with the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, will establish an advisory panel that will provide recommendations on other matters surrounding the survey and methods of dissemination.

Funding

S. 1151 and H.R. 2558 authorize \$20 million for the survey for fiscal years 2010 through 2014.

GAO Report

Within one year after the enactment of the legislation, the Government Accountability Office will report to Congress on the adequacy of and the methods for collecting and reporting data on the deaths of children in the child welfare system. The report will also include the number of children who received services under Title IV-B and IV-E and have died due to abuse and neglect. The GAO is asked to provide recommendations on how data can best capture the number of child deaths in the child welfare system.

NAPCWA's Position

Child welfare administrators are currently reviewing S. 1151 and H.R. 2558.

Contact Information

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