



Senator Holly J. Mitchell

SB 1083 - Reducing Barriers to Resource Family Approval

THIS BILL

The California Department of Social Services recently implemented a new statewide system for approving individuals to serve as foster caregivers, known as Resource Family Approval (RFA). RFA is intended to be a family-friendly and child-centered caregiver approval process that eliminates duplication of existing processes to approve families. However, in practice, RFA has been afflicted with bureaucratic hurdles that fail to support relatives through the process until completion and has caused major delays in placing children with relatives.

This bill removes some of those hurdles to ensure that the RFA process is carried out a manner and timeframe that is supportive of potential caregivers and foster youth.

PROBLEM

Currently, the RFA approval is taking far longer than anticipated to complete and the average family spends well over 90 days going through the RFA process. This is extremely problematic for families seeking to support foster youth.

The lengthy process is a deterrent to recruiting and retaining families for permanent placements. This runs contrary to the fundamental goals of the recently implemented Continuum of Care Reform ("CCR"), which is intended to reduce reliance on congregate care and ensure that every child can live in a family.

Additionally, when pre-approval placement options are not used, children linger in group homes or foster homes - which are exceedingly in short supply - for extended periods of time while they wait to be placed with relatives or non-relative extended family members who have requested placement.

SOLUTION

This bill makes concrete changes in law to support the intent of RFA, which is to create a unified, child-centered and family-friendly approval process.

Specifically, this bill:

1. Extends the deadline for existing certified, licensed, or approved families who had a child in their care in 2017 to convert to RFA by an additional year (until December 31, 2020);
2. Clarifies that a family that withdraws a RFA application can resume the application at the point it was withdrawn if it is within 12 months of withdrawal; and
3. Clarifies that a youth can be placed with a relative or extended family member through a Voluntarily Placement Agreement (VPA) without that relative or extended family member having to be approved as a Resource Family.

SUPPORT/OPPOSE

Alliance for Children's Rights (Sponsor)
Children's Law Center of California (Sponsor)
Children Now (Sponsor)
John Burton Advocates for Youth (Sponsor)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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