
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE
AND MANAGEMENT AUDIT OF THE CHILD WELFARE SERVICES BRANCH
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.

1 WHEREAS, the purpose of the Department of Human Services'
2 Child Welfare Services Branch is to:

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- 4 (1) Ensure the safety, stability, and well-being of
5 children in the State; and
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- 7 (2) Respond to allegations of child abuse and neglect
8 while providing supportive services to children and
9 their families; and
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11 WHEREAS, the public and news media have raised many
12 questions about the agency's operations, including policies,
13 procedures, and management; and
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15 WHEREAS, a recent review conducted by the United States
16 Department of Health and Human Services Administration for
17 Children and Families concluded that the State's Child Welfare
18 Services Branch made no improvements from the previous
19 evaluation conducted in 2009; and
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21 WHEREAS, the federal Administration for Children and
22 Families determined that the Child Welfare Services Branch was
23 not in "substantial conformity" with any of the seven outcome
24 categories of the evaluation, including the outcome that
25 "[c]hildren are first and foremost protected from abuse and
26 neglect"; and
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28 WHEREAS, the Child Welfare Services Branch met only five of
29 the seven systematic factor categories, an identical result to
30 the 2009 evaluation; and
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1 WHEREAS, concerns about the Child Welfare Services Branch
2 include insufficient quality and frequency of caseworker visits,
3 maltreatment allegations in pending cases not formally being
4 investigated, and children remaining in foster care beyond
5 fifteen months with no viable goal of permanency, whether by
6 reunification or adoption; and

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8 WHEREAS, the Child and Welfare Services Branch is still
9 recovering from the State's fiscal crisis of 2009 and 2010, when
10 the Department of Human Services cut dozens of positions,
11 implemented budget cuts, and eliminated or reduced certain
12 services, including services that assist families; and

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14 WHEREAS, attracting and retaining qualified employees has
15 been a significant and long-standing concern for the Child
16 Welfare Services Branch; and

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18 WHEREAS, at the end of 2017, about one quarter of the
19 agency's one hundred eighty positions for social workers and
20 human service professionals were vacant; and

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22 WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes child abuse and neglect
23 as matters of serious public concern and finds that there is an
24 urgent need to determine whether the Child Welfare Services
25 Branch has the personnel and resources necessary to effectively
26 perform its duties, including investigation into allegations of
27 abuse and neglect; now, therefore,

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29 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
30 Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of
31 2019, that the Auditor is requested to conduct a comprehensive
32 performance and management audit of the Child Welfare Services
33 Branch of the Department of Human Services; and

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35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that as part of the audit, the
36 Auditor is requested to examine compliance with and
37 effectiveness of the Child Welfare Services Branch's policies
38 and procedures, including:

- 39
40 (1) Investigating and substantiating reports of child
41 abuse and neglect;



- 1 (2) Providing services for substantiated cases of child
- 2 abuse and neglect, including risk assessment methods
- 3 to assess whether the child is in danger of abuse or
- 4 neglect;
- 5
- 6 (3) Establishing, maintaining, and enforcing policies that
- 7 safeguard the rights of the child and their non-abuser
- 8 family members;
- 9
- 10 (4) Sharing information and coordinating investigative
- 11 duties with county police departments;
- 12
- 13 (5) Sharing information and coordinating duties with the
- 14 Department of the Attorney General's Family Law
- 15 Division;
- 16
- 17 (6) Inputting and maintaining records in the Child Abuse
- 18 and Neglect Registry database; and
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- 20 (7) Providing effective oversight and supervision of all
- 21 child welfare offices in the State; and
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23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to
 24 examine and provide recommendations for additional personnel and
 25 other resources needed for the Child Welfare Services Branch to
 26 effectively perform its duties, including investigation into
 27 allegations of abuse and neglect; and

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 29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to
 30 submit a report to the Legislature of findings and
 31 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, no later
 32 than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session
 33 of 2020; and

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 35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 36 Resolution be transmitted to the Auditor, the Director of Human
 37 Services, and the Administrator of the Child Welfare Service
 38 Branch of the Department of Human Services.

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