



## HOUSE BILL 1 CUTS FUNDING NEEDED TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE

Even in cases of abuse and neglect, the primary job of Child Protective Services (CPS) is to preserve families. Keeping a child safe in their own home is cheaper for the state and better for the child.

With the resources the Legislature has provided to CPS in recent years, removals have dramatically declined so that now, in about eight of every 10 new cases opened for services, CPS avoids a removal and keeps the family intact.<sup>1</sup> In 2009 alone, CPS served more than 93,000 children in its in-home services unit.<sup>2</sup>

Even with CPS' best efforts, however, in some cases removing the child from the home is the only way to keep them safe. In cases where a child has to be removed, CPS has also improved, placing more children with relatives and getting more of them into permanent homes.<sup>3</sup> Adoptions alone have increased by more than 100 percent,<sup>4</sup> with almost 5,000 children adopted every year.<sup>5</sup>

The proposed state budget bill filed on Tuesday [House Bill (HB) 1] endangers all the progress CPS has made and threatens to push CPS back to the days when removals were high, children were sleeping in CPS offices, and caseworkers were overwhelmed. Specifically HB 1:

- Cuts child abuse and neglect prevention by 55 percent with two programs eliminated completely.<sup>6</sup>
- Reduces the CPS budget through unrealistic assumptions about the number of abused and neglected children who will need services.<sup>7</sup>
  - Underestimates the number of abuse and neglect investigations by 11 percent.
  - Underestimates the number of abuse and neglect victims by 12 percent.
  - Underestimates the number of children in foster care by 14 percent.
- Does not support needed direct line staff and forces CPS to lay-off almost 400 investigators and caseworkers,<sup>8</sup> increasing caseloads by more than 25 percent in some cases.<sup>9</sup> Despite the increase in workload, the Legislature expects CPS to have lower turnover.<sup>10</sup>
- Does not give CPS the resources it needs to adequately support the children in its care and, at the same time, expects children to have better outcomes.<sup>11</sup>
  - Gives CPS almost 20 percent less than it needs for services to keep children safe in their own home.<sup>12</sup>
  - Reduces support for relatives caring for children in CPS custody.
    - Eliminates financial support for relatives caring for children in CPS custody.<sup>13</sup>
    - Gives CPS 60 percent less than it needs in day care funding for relative caregivers.<sup>14</sup>
  - Pushes foster care rates to historic lows, rolling back recent increases and then reducing rates even further,<sup>15</sup> jeopardizing recent efforts to improve and redesign the foster care system.
  - Reduces support for families who adopt or assume legal custody of a child, making it more difficult to get children into permanent homes.<sup>16</sup>

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> DFPS 2009 databook.

<sup>2</sup> DFPS 2009 data.

<sup>3</sup> 27 percent of kids in DFPS custody exiting to a permanent home (reunify, relative PMC, adoption) in 2003 vs. 31% in 2009.

<sup>4</sup> 2003 compared to 2009.

<sup>5</sup> DFPS 2009 databook.

<sup>6</sup> Family strengthening services and community based family services were the programs eliminated.

<sup>7</sup> Based on DFPS' projections in its 2012-13 Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR) compared to the performance measure targets in HB 1.

<sup>8</sup> DFPS LAR.

<sup>9</sup> Based on DFPS' projected caseloads in 2013 if needed funding is not appropriated compared to 2011 projected caseloads. (DFPS LAR). Caseloads for investigators will increase by 18 percent, in-home caseworkers by 26 percent and substitute care caseworkers by 14 percent.

<sup>10</sup> Based on DFPS' projections in its 2012-13 LAR for turnover compared to the performance measure targets in HB 1.

<sup>11</sup> Based on DFPS' projections in its LAR for percentage of children in substitute care achieving legal resolution within 12 months compared to the performance measure target in HB 1.

<sup>12</sup> Based on difference between what DFPS estimates it needs for the 2012-13 biennium to maintain protective day care (Line item B.1.5), substance abuse services (Line item B.1.9) and other purchased services (Line item B.1.10) and the amount appropriated in HB 1.

<sup>13</sup> Line item B.1.13

<sup>14</sup> Based on the difference between what DFPS estimates it needs for the 2012-13 biennium for relative day care in its LAR and amount appropriated in HB 1.

<sup>15</sup> The Legislative Budget Board (LBB) 2012-13 legislative budget estimates: summary.

<sup>16</sup> LBB 2012-13 legislative budget estimates: summary.