

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 85

(Senator Conway)

Judicial Proceedings

Family Law - Treatment Foster Care Homes - Siblings

This bill authorizes the placement of up to three children who require treatment in an eligible treatment foster care home if at least two of the children are siblings and it is in the best interests of the siblings to be placed together. A “treatment foster care home” is an out-of-home placement facility that is part of a program designed and implemented by a child placement agency to provide intensive casework and treatment in a family setting to children with special physical, emotional, or behavioral needs.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not materially impact the operations or finances of the Department of Human Resources (DHR).

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: A local department of social services must place together siblings who are in an out-of-home placement if it is in the best interests of the siblings to be placed together and the placement does not conflict with a specific health or safety regulation. If there is a conflict with a specific regulation, the local department may place the siblings together if it makes a written finding describing how the placement serves the best interests of the siblings. Pursuant to the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), no more than

two children may be placed in a treatment home without prior justification and written approval from the Social Services Administration of DHR. (See COMAR 07.02.21.09).

Any siblings who are separated due to foster care or an adoptive placement may petition a court for reasonable sibling visitation rights, as specified.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Human Resources; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 19, 2017
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