

SB 09-164

Sen. Newell, Rep. Miklosi

Fact Sheet Prepared for House Committee on Health and Human Services

TITLE: Concerning Requiring Certain Persons Serving In The State Child Welfare System to Demonstrate The Necessary Competencies To Perform Their Job Responsibilities.

PURPOSE: The purpose of SB09-164 is the protection of Colorado's children by providing the child welfare workforce with necessary training to perform critical duties. The bill is a major priority of the Department of Human Services and the Child Welfare Action Committee. The Action Committee was appointed by the Governor to do a comprehensive review of Colorado's child welfare system following the tragedy of multiple child fatalities last year. Child Welfare is a specialized field that requires workers to effectively identify and intervene when child abuse and/or neglect are present. Child welfare workers are expected to perform complex tasks working with families who also may be experiencing issues related to substance abuse, mental health, poverty, socialization, parenting, and family violence. If Colorado's child welfare workforce is deficient in knowledge and skills they cannot adequately attend to the safety, permanency, and wellbeing of the children they serve.

WHAT THE BILL DOES:

- Establishes a Child Welfare Training Academy, and requires the Department of Human Services to promulgate rules for the administration of the Academy
- Requires that certain child welfare staff successfully complete the Academy prior to assuming their duties
- Creates statewide uniformity for training of certain child welfare staff in performing critical child welfare functions
- Implements a priority recommendation from the Governor's Child Welfare Action Committee outlined in its October 31, 2008 Interim Report
- Strengthens Colorado's child welfare system by providing training to assist staff in the performance of their essential job functions by having uniform interpretation and implementation of federal and state statutes, regulations, and generally accepted standards of practice.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS: Funding for the Academy has been included in SB09-259 as passed by the Senate and House, and is awaiting the Governor's signature. The reengrossed bill has specific language in Section 3 of the bill ("Effective Date") that links the implementation of SB09-164 to the funding in the Long Bill.