

Fiscal Estimate Narratives

DCF 11/18/2013

LRB Number 13-2737/3	Introduction Number AB-0405	Estimate Type Original
Description Relinquishing custody of a newborn child		

Assumptions Used in Arriving at Fiscal Estimate

Under current law, a parent, who does not express intent to return for a newborn child, may relinquish a child 72 hours old or younger to a law enforcement officer, emergency medical technician, or hospital staff member. This law is commonly referred to as the "safe haven law." This bill permits a parent to relinquish custody of a child 30 days old or younger under the safe haven law. The bill also permits a health care clinic staff member to take a child into custody under that law.

It is difficult to predict how many additional children would be relinquished under the safe haven law if the time period was extended up to 30 days. However, the number of children relinquished is expected to increase under this bill. As a result of the increase, Department and County social workers may be required to deal with additional cases as the result of this law, but the extent of such an increase cannot be determined at this time.

This bill may also create additional work for county and DCF attorneys. As a result of additional relinquishments, Corporate Counsel or District Attorneys in the counties and DCF attorneys may need to spend additional time attending to additional child welfare cases. Further, on occasion DCF attorneys and County Attorneys may address legal issues surrounding relinquishment and the Federal Indian Child Welfare Act and the Wisconsin Indian Child Welfare Act. The impact of these time requirements cannot be quantified.

Long-Range Fiscal Implications