

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1806
By: Huffman
Human Services
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Informed observers note the many benefits children's advocacy centers can provide in the joint investigation of child abuse cases and contend that certain cases, including those involving a child fatality, should be referred to such a center. S.B. 1806 seeks to require the Department of Family and Protective Services to refer certain child abuse cases to a children's advocacy center for a multidisciplinary approach to joint investigations.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 1806 amends the Family Code to require the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to refer a case to a children's advocacy center and to require the center to initiate a response by the center's multidisciplinary team when conducting an investigation of a child fatality in which there are surviving children in the deceased child's household or under the supervision of the caregiver involved in the child fatality or a report of abuse that is made by a certain professional in accordance with state law and that alleges sexual abuse of a child or is a type of case handled by the center in accordance with the working protocol adopted for the center for purposes of certain contract eligibility. Those requirements apply only to an investigation of abuse in a county served by a center that has executed an interagency memorandum of understanding. The bill authorizes DFPS, if a county is not served by a center that has executed an interagency memorandum of understanding, to directly refer a case to a center in an adjacent county to initiate a response by that center's multidisciplinary team, if appropriate. The bill requires any interview of a child conducted as part of the investigation in a case referred to a children's advocacy center under the bill's provisions to be a forensic interview conducted in accordance with the center's working protocol unless a forensic interview is not appropriate based on the child's age and development or the center's working protocol.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2017.