

SUBJECT: Requiring DFPS to maintain a supply of luggage for foster children

COMMITTEE: Human Services — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Frank, Rose, Campos, Klick, Manuel, Ramos
3 nays — Hull, Noble, Shaheen

WITNESSES: For — Hallie Lively, Bags of Love; Kate Murphy, Texans Care for Children (*Registered, but did not testify*: Gregg Knaupe, Ascension Seton and Dell Children’s Medical Center; Andrea Sparks, Buckner International; Bryan Mares, National Association of Social Workers-Texas; Jamie McCormick, Texas Alliance for Child and Family Services; Julia Hatcher, Christina Perrone, Texas Association of Family Defense Attorneys; Sarah Crockett, Texas CASA; Joshua Houston, Texas Impact; Lauren Rose, Texas Network of Youth Services; Kerrie Judice, TexProtects; Ashley Harris, United Ways of Texas; and 23 individuals)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Richard Bohnert; Henry Bohnert)

On — Erica Baunelos, DFPS

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised that children removed from their homes sometimes use trash bags to transport their belongings, which could add to the stress of removal.

DIGEST: HB 3765 would require the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to establish and maintain a decentralized supply of luggage to be used to transport a foster child’s personal belongings and develop procedures for the storage and distribution of luggage to ensure the maximum number of children could use the luggage. DFPS would be required to provide luggage to a child being removed from their home or changing placement. DFPS could solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations of any kind and from any source for the bill’s purposes.

DFPS would be required to maintain a record of each time a trash bag was used to move a foster child's personal belongings, including the reason DFPS did not provide appropriate luggage. DFPS would be required to submit an annual report to the Legislature summarizing the number of times a trash bag was used to transport a foster child's belongings, the reasons why DFPS did not provide appropriate luggage, and DFPS' supply inventory and inventory management practices.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board, HB 3765 would have a negative impact of \$766,977 on general revenue related funds for fiscal 2024-25.