

INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2007-194

REQUESTING THE HOUSE AGING, CHILDREN AND YOUTH, LEGISLATIVE AND MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE STUDY THE OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ADOPTION PROCEDURES UTILIZED BY THE DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN ITS CUSTODY COMPARED TO PROCEDURES UTILIZED BY PRIVATE ADOPTION AGENCIES.

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the state to provide a strong adoption system to fulfill permanency needs of our most vulnerable children; and

WHEREAS, there are approximately four thousand five hundred (4,500) children currently in the state's foster care system; and

WHEREAS, while the foster care system provides a temporary placement for a child in a safe alternative living arrangement; and

WHEREAS, adoption provides a permanent and stable living setting for a child; and

WHEREAS, many potential adoptive parents are forgoing the opportunity to adopt children in Department of Human Services custody due to cumbersome agency regulations, Department of Human Services staff shortages, and the availability of the option for a private adoption; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for an interim study to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the ability of the Division of Children and Family Services of the Department of Human Services to provide an efficient adoption system for children in the Department of Human Services custody,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT PROPOSED BY THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON AGING, CHILDREN, AND YOUTH, LEGISLATIVE AND MILITARY AFFAIRS AND THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF THE EIGHTY-SIXTH ARKANSAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

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THAT the House Interim Committee on Aging, Children, and Youth,
Legislative and Military Affairs and the Senate Interim Committee on Children
and Youth:

- (1) Study current laws and regulations governing adoption in the state;
- (2) Compare requirements for selecting and evaluating adoptive parents in Department of Human Services adoption cases and private adoption cases;
- (3) Review information and hear testimony from the Department of Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services, private adoption agencies, and other interested parties; and
- (4) Make recommendations for changes in the laws, rules, and procedures designed to create a more efficient adoptive system for children in Department of Human Services custody to the Eighty-Seventh Arkansas General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

Representative Donna Hutchinson
District 98