LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED FIFTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 334

Introduced by Speaker Scheer, 19; at the request of the Governor.
Read first time January 12, 2017
Committee: Health and Human Services

A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to children; to amend sections 43-2201, 43-2203, 43-2205, and 43-2209, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to change provisions relating to family finding; to eliminate a pilot project and provisions relating to appropriations; to harmonize provisions; to repeal the original sections; and to outright repeal sections 43-2204, 43-2206, and 43-2208, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,
Section 1. Section 43-2201, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

43-2201 It is the intent of the Legislature to:

(1) Promote kinship care and lifelong connections through the process of family finding when a child has been removed from the legal custody of the child's parents;

(2) Prevent recurrence of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or other maltreatment of children;

(3) Reduce the length of time children spend in foster care;

(4) Reduce multiple placements of children in foster care; and

(5) Remain in compliance with the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, Public Law 110-351.; and

(6) Create a pilot project for the process of locating and engaging family members in the life of a child who is a ward of the state or is participating in the bridge to independence program as defined in section 43-4503, or both, and in need of permanency through a lifelong network of support.

Sec. 2. Section 43-2203, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

43-2203 The department, its contracted providers of family finding services, and family members of children involved in cases which are part of the pilot project created in section 43-2204 shall participate in family finding. Family finding is the process of engagement, searching, preparation, planning, decisionmaking, lifetime network creation, healing, and permanency in order to:

(1) Search for and identify family members and engage them in planning and decisionmaking;

(2) Gain commitments from family members to support a child through nurturing relationships and to support the parent or parents, when appropriate; and

(3) Achieve a safe, permanent legal home or lifelong connection for
the child, either through reunification or through permanent placement
through legal guardianship or adoption.

Sec. 3. Section 43-2205, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is
amended to read:

43-2205 (1) Under the pilot project created under section 43-2204,
the department shall refer a portion of all cases involving children who
are wards of the state in foster care or participating in the bridge to
independence program as defined in section 43-4503, or both, to providers
of family finding services who or which shall (a) locate family members
of the children, (b) engage and empower family members, and (c) create an
individualized plan to achieve a safe, permanent legal home for the
children when possible.

(2) The department shall provide administrative oversight of the
contracts entered into pursuant to the pilot project created under
section 43-2204.

(3) A child's departmental case manager, the child's foster parents,
and the provider of family finding services shall collaborate together to
maximize success throughout the family finding process.

(4) The department shall carry out the requirements of the
Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children when achieving out-of-
state placement of a ward of the court, including prompt submission of
required paperwork to ensure that the family finding process moves
forward in a timely manner.

Sec. 4. Section 43-2209, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is
amended to read:

43-2209 The department may adopt and promulgate rules and
regulations to carry out sections 43-2201 to 43-2207.

Sec. 5. Original sections 43-2201, 43-2203, 43-2205, and 43-2209,
Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, are repealed.

Sec. 6. The following sections are outright repealed: Sections
43-2204, 43-2206, and 43-2208, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska.