

Testimony
Engrossed Senate Bill 2108 –Department of Human Services
House Human Services Committee
Representative Weisz, Chairman
March 18, 2013

Chairman Weisz, members of the House Human Services Committee, I am Alex C. Schweitzer, Director of Field Services for the Department of Human Services (DHS). I am here today to testify in support of Engrossed Senate Bill 2108, introduced at the request of the Department of Human Services.

Engrossed Senate Bill 2108 makes changes to the statutes governing the regional human service councils and the DHS regional human service centers (HSCs). Additionally, there are multiple changes that are more housekeeping than substantive changes.

The change on page 1, line 14, cleans up language that describes the role of the regional human service centers. While these services are provided from the HSC locations, they are functions of divisions of the DHS central office.

The change on page 2, line 9, requires the Executive Director of DHS to appoint the members of each regional human service center's human service council, and changes the nature of the council to advisory. The intent of this, like many of the changes proposed in this bill is to clarify that the Executive Director of DHS has statutory authority over the regional HSCs and proposes that local councils be made advisory with respect to the day-to-day operation of the HSCs.

The change on page 2, line 10, clarifies existing language limiting membership on the advisory group to thirteen members.

The changes on page 2, lines 11 through 15, remove the requirement that members are appointed by the board of county commissioners of the respective counties in the region and retains the requirement that each member of the advisory group be a resident of a county served by the regional HSC.

The Senate amendment to the bill is found on page 2, lines 15 through line 18, and requires the Executive Director of DHS to appoint two current county commissioners and one current county social service board member to the advisory group. The amendment allows the Executive Director to appoint an additional county commissioner to serve in lieu of the current county social service board member.

The changes on page 2, lines 22 through 24, describe the term of office for the members of the regional advisory group. The actual terms of advisory group members are not changing. The proposed language acknowledges that not all advisory groups will have thirteen members, so one half of the members' terms expire at a time.

The changes on page 2, lines 25 through 31, require the Executive Director of DHS to select members of each regional advisory group, to assure that each county in the region is represented on the advisory group, and to assure membership reflects the regional interests in human services.

The changes on page 3, lines 1 through 4, require the Executive Director to appoint a chairman of each advisory group in the eight regions of the state.

The changes on page 3, lines 4 through 12, require the Executive Director of DHS to fill vacancies on the advisory group and clean up the language relative to the compensation of members, and the expenses of advisory group members.

The changes on page 3, lines 15 and 16, make the change from council to advisory group.

The changes on page 3, lines 18 through 28, clarify the responsibilities of the advisory groups in light of the change of the councils to advisory groups.

The changes on page 4, lines 2 through 4, remove the requirement that the Executive Director of DHS consult with the regional human service council prior to appointing a regional HSC director and clarify the Executive Director's authority to delegate oversight for the regional director to a designee.

The changes on page 4, lines 5 through 20, delineate the authority of the Executive Director of DHS to identify a designee to assist with the oversight of the human service centers.

Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions.