
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6183 (as amended by House "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CHILD ADVOCATE.

SUMMARY

This bill makes various changes related to the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA), including:

1. extending the child advocate's term length from four to five years,
2. establishing a specified reappointment process for the child advocate that generally requires OCA's advisory committee (see BACKGROUND) to evaluate the advocate's performance and recommend whether he or she should be reappointed, and
3. requiring the advisory committee to (a) submit its annual evaluation on the child advocate's effectiveness, which it must complete under existing law, to the governor and the Judiciary, Children's, and Human Services committees and (b) post it on OCA's website.

The bill also makes minor, technical, and conforming changes.

*House Amendment "A" removes a provision transferring the authority to appoint the child advocate from the governor to OCA's advisory committee and replaces it with the provisions described above.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

CHILD ADVOCATE REAPPOINTMENT PROCESS

Existing law allows the child advocate to be reappointed at his or her term's conclusion. The bill establishes a specified reappointment process. Under the bill, no less than 12 months before the advocate's term ends, OCA's advisory committee must submit a preliminary report

evaluating the advocate's performance. Additionally, no less than six months before the advocate's term ends, the committee must submit a final report once again evaluating his or her performance and recommending reappointment or appointment of a new advocate.

The bill requires the advisory committee to give these reports to the governor, the child advocate, and the Judiciary, Children's, and Human Services committees. Within 90 days after receiving the final report, the governor must accept or reject the committee's recommendation. If he does not do so, the committee's recommendation is deemed accepted.

If the governor reappoints the child advocate (or the reappointment recommendation is deemed accepted), the advocate is sent to the General Assembly for confirmation. If the governor does not reappoint (or the recommendation not to reappoint is deemed accepted), a new child advocate is appointed based on existing law's appointment and confirmation procedure (see BACKGROUND).

BACKGROUND

OCA Advisory Committee

By law, OCA's advisory committee consists of seven members appointed by the governor, Senate president pro tempore, House speaker, and House and Senate majority and minority leaders. Each committee member serves a five-year term, at which point, they can be reappointed. Responsibilities of the advisory committee currently include providing an annual evaluation of OCA's effectiveness.

Child Advocate Appointment and Confirmation

Under existing law, following a vacancy in the child advocate position, OCA's advisory committee gives the governor a ranked list of three to five candidates from which to choose. If the governor does not make a selection, the candidate ranked first is automatically designated.

The designated candidate is then referred to the General Assembly for confirmation. If the General Assembly is not in session, the designated candidate serves as acting child advocate until the General Assembly meets to vote on the appointment.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 16 Nay 1 (03/06/2025)