

Second Regular Session
Seventy-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

DRAFT
10/3/23

BILL 8

LLS NO. 24-0348.01 Alana Rosen x2606

INTERIM COMMITTEE BILL

Colorado's Child Welfare System Interim Study Committee

BILL TOPIC: Child Welfare Worker Task Force
DEADLINES: File by: 10/3/2023

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 **CONCERNING CREATING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE CHILD WELFARE**
102 **WORKFORCE.**

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov/>.)

Colorado's Child Welfare System Interim Study Committee.
The bill creates the child welfare worker task force (task force) in the office of the child protection ombudsman. The purpose of the task force is to analyze child welfare worker training, certification, and grievance procedures, develop accountability standards for child welfare workers, and make recommendations on how to implement the accountability

*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing law.*

standards.

The task force shall analyze:

- The development and implementation processes for Colorado's child welfare worker training curriculum, including whether the current processes are inclusive, responsive, and ensure that the training needs of child welfare workers are addressed in a timely manner;
- The existing child welfare worker certification process;
- The benefits and challenges of the child welfare worker certification process;
- Whether the current training and certification processes promote the overall health and longevity of the child welfare workforce;
- Whether similar training and certification programs are needed for other professionals who serve the child welfare system; and
- The adequacy of current child welfare system grievance procedures to ensure timely and appropriate review of a child welfare worker's conduct.

The task force shall analyze national best practices and consult with additional stakeholders as necessary to finalize its findings and recommendations and may propose clarifications to the law to help implement its recommendations. The task force operates for 2 years. The task force shall submit a final report on its findings and recommendations on November 1, 2026, to the house of representatives public and behavioral health and human services committee and the senate health and human services committee, or their successor committees; the governor; and the department of human services.

1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 19-3.3-112 as
3 follows:

4 **19-3.3-112. Child welfare worker task force - creation -**
5 **reports - legislative declaration - definitions - repeal.** (1) (a) THE
6 GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS AND DECLARES THAT:

7 (I) FOR THE PAST TWO DECADES, THE COLORADO CHILD WELFARE
8 SYSTEM HAS STRUGGLED WITH RECRUITMENT, HIGH RATES OF STAFF
9 TURNOVER, AND RETENTION OF A HIGHLY QUALIFIED WORKFORCE;

1 (II) CHALLENGES TO THE PROFESSION INCLUDE LOW
2 COMPENSATION, ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE, LACK OF PEER SUPPORT,
3 INCREASED ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, HIGH CASELOADS, LACK OF
4 AVAILABLE COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES FOR REFERRALS, AND THE
5 TRAUMA THAT MANY CHILD WELFARE WORKERS EXPERIENCE AS THEY
6 WORK WITH FAMILIES;

7 (III) MANY FAMILIES THAT INTERACT WITH THE CHILD WELFARE
8 SYSTEM FACE COMPLEX CHALLENGES, INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH
9 PROBLEMS AND SUBSTANCE USE, AND THE TRAINING AND SYSTEMS TO
10 SUPPORT THE CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE MUST ENSURE THAT THE
11 WORKFORCE IS CAPABLE OF HANDLING SUCH CHALLENGES;

12 (IV) COLORADO CITIZENS DESERVE A CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE
13 THEY CAN TRUST, WHICH REQUIRES A CONSISTENT AND TRANSPARENT
14 ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM FOR WHEN WORKPLACE MISCONDUCT OCCURS;

15 (V) CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION
16 SYSTEMS MUST PROMOTE AN UNDERSTANDING OF HOW PUBLIC PROGRAMS
17 NEED TO EQUITABLY SERVE ALL COLORADO CITIZENS;

18 (VI) COLORADO CURRENTLY DOES NOT HAVE ANY LAWS OR
19 REGULATIONS THAT REQUIRE AN INVESTIGATION OR THAT ENFORCE
20 ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION AGAINST THE CERTIFICATION OF A CHILD
21 WELFARE WORKER WHO HAS VIOLATED A STATE LAW OR REGULATION;
22 AND

23 (VII) THERE ARE NO REQUIREMENTS THAT CHILD WELFARE
24 SYSTEM CLIENTS OR APPROPRIATE STATE AGENCIES ARE NOTIFIED OF A
25 CHILD WELFARE WORKER'S VERIFIED MISCONDUCT.

26 (b) (I) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS, THEREFORE, THAT CHILD
27 WELFARE WORKERS MUST RECEIVE TRAINING THAT PREPARES THEM TO

1 HELP COLORADO FAMILIES CONFRONT THE COMPLEX CHALLENGES THEY
2 FACE. THE CREATION OF A MECHANISM TO INVESTIGATE AND TAKE
3 ADVERSE ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION AGAINST WORKER MISCONDUCT WILL
4 ENSURE THAT COLORADO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ARE SERVED ONLY BY
5 HIGHLY QUALIFIED CHILD WELFARE WORKERS WHO MAINTAIN INDUSTRY
6 STANDARDS.

7 (II) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FURTHER FINDS THAT A CHILD
8 WELFARE WORKER TASK FORCE WILL ALLOW PROFESSIONALS WITHIN THE
9 INDUSTRY TO ANALYZE CHILD WELFARE WORKER TRAINING,
10 CERTIFICATION, AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES, DEVELOP ACCOUNTABILITY
11 STANDARDS FOR CHILD WELFARE WORKERS, AND MAKE
12 RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO IMPLEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY
13 STANDARDS.

14 (2) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE
15 REQUIRES:

16 (a) "CHILD WELFARE WORKER" MEANS HOTLINE WORKERS,
17 HOTLINE STAFF SUPERVISORS, SOCIAL CASEWORKER TRAINERS, SOCIAL
18 CASEWORKERS, SOCIAL CASEWORKER SUPERVISORS, CASE AIDE AND LIFE
19 SKILLS WORKERS, AND SUPERVISORS WHO WORK WITHIN THE CHILD
20 WELFARE SYSTEM.

21 (b) "CHILD WELFARE WORKER TASK FORCE" OR "TASK FORCE"
22 MEANS THE CHILD WELFARE WORKER TASK FORCE CREATED IN
23 SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION.

24 (c) "OFFICE OF THE CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN" MEANS THE
25 OFFICE OF THE CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN ESTABLISHED IN SECTION
26 19-3.3-102.

27 (d) "TRAILS" MEANS THE STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE CHILD

1 WELFARE CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.

2 (3) THERE IS CREATED IN THE OFFICE OF THE CHILD PROTECTION
3 OMBUDSMAN THE CHILD WELFARE WORKER TASK FORCE. THE PURPOSE OF
4 THE TASK FORCE IS TO ANALYZE CHILD WELFARE WORKER TRAINING,
5 CERTIFICATION, AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES, AND TO DEVELOP
6 ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS FOR CHILD WELFARE WORKERS. THE TASK
7 FORCE MAY PROPOSE CLARIFICATIONS TO THE LAW TO HELP IMPLEMENT ITS
8 RECOMMENDATIONS. THE TASK FORCE MAY MAKE FINDINGS AND
9 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THE GOVERNOR, AND
10 THE STATE DEPARTMENT ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGISLATIVE CHANGES
11 TO UPDATE CHILD WELFARE WORKER TRAINING PROCESSES, CERTIFICATION
12 PRACTICES, AND ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS.

13 (4) (a) THE TASK FORCE CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

14 (I) THE CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN OR THE CHILD
15 PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN'S DESIGNEE;

16 (II) ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING THE STATE DEPARTMENT WITH
17 KNOWLEDGE OF CHILD WELFARE TRAINING CURRICULA TO BE APPOINTED
18 BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT, OR THE
19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESIGNEE;

20 (III) ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING THE STATE DEPARTMENT WITH
21 EXPERIENCE INVESTIGATING ALLEGED CHILD WELFARE WORKER
22 MISCONDUCT TO BE APPOINTED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
23 STATE DEPARTMENT, OR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESIGNEE;

24 (IV) ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF
25 REGULATORY AGENCIES TO BE APPOINTED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
26 OF THE DEPARTMENT OF REGULATORY AGENCIES, OR THE EXECUTIVE
27 DIRECTOR'S DESIGNEE; AND

1 (V) THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS, WHO SHALL BE APPOINTED BY THE
2 CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN OR THE CHILD PROTECTION
3 OMBUDSMAN'S DESIGNEE:

4 (A) ONE CHILD WELFARE SOCIAL CASEWORKER WHO HAS
5 EXPERIENCE AS A CHILD WELFARE SOCIAL CASEWORKER IN A RURAL
6 COUNTY;

7 (B) ONE CHILD WELFARE SOCIAL CASEWORKER SUPERVISOR WHO
8 HAS EXPERIENCE AS A CHILD WELFARE SOCIAL CASEWORKER SUPERVISOR
9 IN A RURAL COUNTY;

10 (C) ONE CHILD WELFARE SOCIAL CASEWORKER WHO HAS
11 EXPERIENCE AS A CHILD WELFARE SOCIAL CASEWORKER IN AN URBAN
12 COUNTY;

13 (D) ONE CHILD WELFARE SOCIAL CASEWORKER SUPERVISOR WHO
14 HAS EXPERIENCE AS A CHILD WELFARE SOCIAL CASEWORKER SUPERVISOR
15 IN AN URBAN COUNTY;

16 (E) ONE CHILD WELFARE HOTLINE STAFF SUPERVISOR WHO HAS
17 EXPERIENCE HANDLING REPORTS OF CHILD MALTREATMENT WITH A
18 STATE-OPERATED CALL CENTER;

19 (F) ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION FOR
20 COUNTY HUMAN OR SOCIAL SERVICES DIRECTORS;

21 (G) ONE MEMBER FROM A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION
22 REPRESENTING COUNTY OR STATE HUMAN OR SOCIAL SERVICES WORKERS;

23 (H) ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING THE OFFICE OF THE RESPONDENT
24 PARENTS' COUNSEL, AS CREATED IN SECTION 13-92-103;

25 (I) ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING A COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE OR
26 A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING COUNTY ATTORNEYS'
27 OFFICES;

1 (J) ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING ATTORNEYS WHO PRACTICE
2 EMPLOYMENT LAW;

3 (K) ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS;

4 (L) ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES;

5 (M) ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING INDIVIDUALS WITH LIVED
6 EXPERIENCE AS A CHILD WITHIN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM;

7 (N) ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING INDIVIDUALS WITH LIVED
8 EXPERIENCE AS AN ADULT CAREGIVER WITHIN THE CHILD WELFARE
9 SYSTEM;

10 (O) ONE MEMBER FROM A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION
11 REPRESENTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH;

12 (P) ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING A STATEWIDE
13 NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION WHO SPECIALIZES IN THE
14 PREVENTION OF CHILD MALTREATMENT AND HAS KNOWLEDGE OF AND
15 EXPERIENCE WITH TRAINING AND EDUCATING PROFESSIONALS WITH
16 DIVERSE LEARNING NEEDS; AND

17 (Q) ONE MEMBER FROM A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION
18 REPRESENTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

19 (b) THE APPOINTING AUTHORITIES SHALL MAKE APPOINTMENTS ON
20 OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1, 2024. IN MAKING APPOINTMENTS, THE
21 APPOINTING AUTHORITIES SHALL SELECT MEMBERS WHO REPRESENT
22 DIVERSE GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS AND GENDERS. THE TERM OF THE
23 APPOINTMENT IS FOR THE DURATION OF THE TASK FORCE. THE APPOINTING
24 AUTHORITIES SHALL FILL ANY VACANCY SUBJECT TO THE SAME
25 QUALIFICATIONS AS THE INITIAL APPOINTMENT.

26 (c) THE CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN, OR THE CHILD
27 PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN'S DESIGNEE, SHALL ESTABLISH

1 ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL RULES FOR THE OPERATION OF THE
2 TASK FORCE.

3 (5) EACH MEMBER OF THE TASK FORCE SERVES WITHOUT
4 COMPENSATION. NONGOVERNMENTAL MEMBERS MAY BE REIMBURSED FOR
5 REASONABLE EXPENSES INCURRED IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR DUTIES
6 PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION.

7 (6) THE CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN, OR THE CHILD
8 PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN'S DESIGNEE, SHALL SERVE AS THE CHAIR, AND
9 THE TASK FORCE SHALL SELECT A VICE-CHAIR FROM AMONG ITS MEMBERS.
10 THE CHAIR AND THE VICE-CHAIR SERVE FOR THE DURATION OF THE TASK
11 FORCE AS THE CHAIR AND THE VICE-CHAIR.

12 (7) (a) THE CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN, OR THE CHILD
13 PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN'S DESIGNEE, SHALL CONVENE THE FIRST
14 MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 1, 2024. THE
15 TASK FORCE SHALL MEET AT LEAST TWENTY-FOUR TIMES UNTIL THE TASK
16 FORCE SUBMITS ITS FINAL REPORT. THE CHAIR MAY CALL ADDITIONAL
17 MEETINGS AS NECESSARY FOR THE TASK FORCE TO FULFILL ITS DUTIES.
18 THE TASK FORCE SHALL ESTABLISH PROCEDURES TO ALLOW MEMBERS OF
19 THE TASK FORCE TO PARTICIPATE IN MEETINGS REMOTELY.

20 (b) THE CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN, OR THE CHILD
21 PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN'S DESIGNEE, SHALL ENSURE MEETINGS ARE
22 OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, PROVIDE ADVANCE PUBLIC NOTICE OF THE MEETINGS,
23 AND ALLOW PUBLIC COMMENTS AT THE MEETINGS. THE CHILD PROTECTION
24 OMBUDSMAN, OR THE CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN'S DESIGNEE, SHALL
25 CONDUCT OUTREACH AND ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AT
26 THE PUBLIC MEETINGS.

27 (8) (a) PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION, THE TASK

1 FORCE, AT A MINIMUM, SHALL ANALYZE:

2 (I) THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES FOR
3 COLORADO'S CHILD WELFARE WORKER TRAINING CURRICULUM, INCLUDING
4 WHETHER THE CURRENT DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES
5 ARE INCLUSIVE, RESPONSIVE, AND ENSURES THAT THE TRAINING NEEDS OF
6 CHILD WELFARE WORKERS ARE ADDRESSED IN A TIMELY MANNER;

7 (II) THE EXISTING CHILD WELFARE WORKER CERTIFICATION
8 PROCESS, INCLUDING THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF THE CHILD
9 WELFARE WORKER CERTIFICATION PROCESS;

10 (III) WHETHER CURRENT TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION PROCESSES
11 PROMOTE THE OVERALL HEALTH AND LONGEVITY OF THE CHILD WELFARE
12 WORKFORCE;

13 (IV) WHETHER SIMILAR TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS
14 ARE NEEDED FOR ALL PROFESSIONALS WHO SERVE THE CHILD WELFARE
15 SYSTEM; AND

16 (V) THE ADEQUACY OF EXISTING GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES TO
17 ENSURE THE TIMELY AND APPROPRIATE REVIEW OF A CHILD WELFARE
18 WORKER'S CONDUCT.

19 (b) BASED ON THE TASK FORCE'S ANALYSIS OF CHILD WELFARE
20 WORKER TRAINING, CERTIFICATION, AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES AS SET
21 FORTH IN SUBSECTION (8)(a) OF THIS SECTION, THE TASK FORCE MAY:

22 (I) ESTABLISH PROCESSES TO TAKE ADVERSE ADMINISTRATIVE
23 ACTION AGAINST A CHILD WELFARE WORKER'S CERTIFICATIONS THAT
24 COMPLY WITH LEGAL AND OTHER STATUTORY PROVISIONS;

25 (II) RECOMMEND CHANGES, IF NECESSARY, TO THE EXISTING CHILD
26 WELFARE WORKER CERTIFICATION PROCESS;

27 (III) DEVELOP STANDARD NOTIFICATION PRACTICES TO ALERT

1 CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM CLIENTS, COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OF HUMAN OR
2 SOCIAL SERVICES, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT
3 WHEN CHILD WELFARE WORKER MISCONDUCT OCCURS;

4 (IV) DEVELOP AN ONGOING STATEWIDE QUALITY ASSURANCE
5 PROTOCOL THAT CONSISTENTLY MONITORS FOR THE FALSIFICATION OF
6 INFORMATION IN THE TRAILS CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM;

7 (V) DEVELOP A STATEWIDE STANDARD PROCEDURE FOR
8 INVESTIGATING CHILD WELFARE WORKER MISCONDUCT;

9 (VI) DEVELOP A STATEWIDE STANDARD PROCEDURE FOR
10 DETERMINING WHEN CHILD WELFARE WORKER MISCONDUCT HAS
11 OCCURRED;

12 (VII) CREATE A STANDARD DEFINITION OF MISCONDUCT;

13 (VIII) DEVELOP A STATEWIDE STANDARD SYSTEM FOR TAKING
14 ADVERSE ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION WHEN CHILD WELFARE WORKER
15 MISCONDUCT OCCURS;

16 (IX) DEVELOP A STATEWIDE STANDARD CODE OF ETHICS FOR
17 CHILD WELFARE WORKERS; AND

18 (X) DEVELOP A PUBLIC-FACING STATEWIDE DATABASE
19 DOCUMENTING THE CERTIFICATION STATUS FOR ALL CHILD WELFARE
20 WORKERS ADMINISTERING SERVICES TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

21 (9) THE TASK FORCE SHALL ANALYZE NATIONAL BEST PRACTICES
22 AND CONSULT WITH ADDITIONAL STAKEHOLDERS AS NEEDED TO ADDRESS
23 ALL QUESTIONS NECESSARY TO FINALIZE ITS FINDINGS AND
24 RECOMMENDATIONS.

25 (10) THE TASK FORCE MAY CREATE SUBCOMMITTEES AS NEEDED
26 TO CARRY OUT THE DUTIES OF THE TASK FORCE. THE SUBCOMMITTEES
27 MAY CONSIST, IN PART, OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE

1 TASK FORCE. THESE INDIVIDUALS MAY VOTE ON ISSUES BEFORE THE
2 SUBCOMMITTEE BUT ARE NOT ENTITLED TO VOTE AT TASK FORCE
3 MEETINGS.

4 (11) ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 1, 2025, THE TASK FORCE SHALL
5 SUBMIT ITS FIRST-YEAR STATUS REPORT, INCLUDING ITS INITIAL FINDINGS
6 AND RECOMMENDATIONS, IF ANY, ON ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN SUBSECTION (8)
7 OF THIS SECTION, TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PUBLIC AND
8 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE AND THE SENATE
9 HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR
10 COMMITTEES; THE GOVERNOR; AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT. THE OFFICE
11 OF THE CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN SHALL MAKE THE REPORT
12 PUBLICLY AVAILABLE ON ITS WEBSITE.

13 (12) ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 1, 2026, THE TASK FORCE SHALL
14 SUBMIT ITS FINAL REPORT, INCLUDING ITS FINDINGS AND
15 RECOMMENDATIONS, IF ANY, ON THE ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN SUBSECTION (8)
16 OF THIS SECTION, TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PUBLIC AND
17 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE AND THE SENATE
18 HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR
19 COMMITTEES; THE GOVERNOR; AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT. THE OFFICE
20 OF THE CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN SHALL MAKE THE REPORT
21 PUBLICLY AVAILABLE ON ITS WEBSITE.

22 (13) THIS SECTION IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 31, 2026.

23 **SECTION 2. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act
24 takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the
25 ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly; except
26 that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V
27 of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this

1 act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take
2 effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in
3 November 2024 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the
4 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.