

HOUSE BILL 1688
By Chumney

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 37, Chapter 2,
Part 4, relative to foster care.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 37, Chapter 2, Part 4, is amended by adding section 3 as a new section to be appropriately designated.

SECTION 2. The general assembly finds, consistent with presentations by the department of children's services, that cost-effective legal services are essential in providing effective and timely processing of foster care cases, monitoring of services delivery, and meeting state and federal goals of permanency plans for children in foster care. The general assembly further finds that cost effectiveness in meeting those purposes can best be accomplished by hiring and using well-trained paralegals under the supervision of licensed attorneys in the department of children's services.

SECTION 3. The department of children's services shall create twelve (12) new paralegal positions, to be phased in over two (2) years, to be used exclusively for purposes related to the foster care program. Six (6) of the paralegals shall be hired by the end of the current calendar year, as quickly as possible under current hiring processes. The remaining six (6) shall be hired during the following calendar year, as quickly as possible under current hiring processes. It is the intent of the general assembly that such paralegals, under proper supervision of licensed attorneys in the department, shall be used primarily for timely processing of foster care cases, monitoring of services delivery, and meeting state and federal goals of

permanency plans for children in state custody. Further, it is the legislative intent that, to the extent legally available, any increased costs incurred by the department related to such positions shall be paid from any federal funds that may be available for such use.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.