

CHAPTER NO. 350

SENATE BILL NO. 871

By Dixon

Substituted for: House Bill No. 583

By Chumney

AN ACT To amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 9; Title 33 and Title 37, relative to community based services for children and families.

WHEREAS, Services, including those related to child protection and mental health and developmental disability services, are best provided in a community-based setting, through a collaborative community partnership model, as accessible as possible to citizens needing such services; and

WHEREAS, The development of linkages between the criminal justice system, child protective services and community mental health and developmental disabilities services will aid families, reduce pressure on fragile public resources and protect public safety; and

WHEREAS, The Select Committee on Children and Youth has observed that community partnership models are providing positive results in communities such as St. Louis, Missouri; Jacksonville, Florida; Louisville, Kentucky; and Cedar Rapids, Iowa; and specialized court sites including that of Metropolitan Nashville/Davidson County are providing community-based court models; and

WHEREAS, It is appropriate that the general assembly should receive input from professionals who can conduct an in-depth study of issues pertaining to the child protection services system and the development of alternative court processes to identify and provide treatment and services to persons who are mentally ill, developmentally disabled or dually diagnosed, or persons who have a history of abuse of alcohol or other addictive drugs and; now, therefore,

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

SECTION 1. (a) There is established a study committee to examine issues pertaining to development of alternative statewide child protective services systems and pertaining to whether a pilot mental health court should be established in Shelby County.

(b) The committee shall consist of all members of the task force composed pursuant to Section 37-1-603(b)(1). Any vacancy in the membership shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(c) All members shall serve without compensation, but shall be eligible for reimbursement for travel expenses in accordance with the provisions of the comprehensive travel regulations as promulgated by the Department of Finance and Administration and approved by the attorney general and reporter.

(d) The initial meeting of the committee shall be convened by the commissioner of the Department of Children's Services or his designee. The committee shall select from their membership a person to serve as chair and other officers as needed.

(e) The committee shall study and recommend design of a collaborative community partnership model for a statewide child protection system that will protect children and enhance their well-being, especially as they are impacted by substance abuse and related family and community violence. Development of recommendations for a specialized mental health court pilot in Shelby County should be a central component of the partnership model. Such pilot should include identification of, and treatment, linkage and services to, persons who are mentally ill, developmentally disabled or dually diagnosed, and persons who have a history of abuse of alcohol or other addictive drugs.

(f) State departments and agencies shall assist the committee consistent with currently available resources. The Department of Children's Services shall provide technical assistance and support as may be necessary for the committee to perform its duties.

(g) The committee may meet and hold hearings at the places it designates during the sessions or recesses of the general assembly.

(h) Upon the conclusion of its study and assessment, the committee shall report its findings, along with any legislative recommendations it may have, to the governor; the general welfare, health and human services committee of the senate; the children and family affairs committee of the House of Representatives; and the select committee on children and youth by no later than February 15, 2002.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it, and is hereby repealed twelve (12) months following such effective date.

PASSED: May 29, 2001


JOHN S. WILDER
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE


JIMMY NAIFEH, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROVED this 7th day of June 2001


DON SUNDQUIST, GOVERNOR