



## SB 1 THREATENS THE PROGRESS THE DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY PROTECTIVE SERVICES HAS MADE IN KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

Preserving families and protecting children from abuse and neglect is the very essence of an essential state function and the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) has been getting the job done. Despite a growing volume of cases, DFPS has improved investigations, kept more children safe in their homes or with relatives, and increased the number of adoptions for children who could not return home.<sup>1</sup> The cuts to the DFPS budget in SB 1, however, threaten all this progress and will force DFPS back to the days when removals were high, caseloads were unmanageable and children were sleeping in DFPS offices.

### Cutting Family Based Services Won't Save the State Money

- SB 1 cuts protective day care by 20 percent.<sup>2</sup> It also eliminates the relative caregiver program and related day care funding so that there would be no financial support for relatives who take kids into their homes. If DFPS doesn't get the funding it needs to keep kids safe in their own homes or with a relative, more kids will go into foster care which is much more expensive.

Cost to keep a kid safe at home	Cost to keep a kid with a relative	Cost to keep a kid in foster care
\$1,092 <sup>3</sup>	\$3,277 <sup>4</sup>	\$8,924 GR/\$21,766 All funds <sup>5</sup>

- If 1 in 7 of the kids who could've stayed safe at home go into foster care, the state will have spent more on foster care than it saved by cutting protective day care.
- If 2 in 5 of the kids who could've stayed with a relative go into foster care, the state will have spent more on foster care than it saved by eliminating the relative support program.

### Cuts to Direct Delivery Staff Will Increase Caseloads and Turnover

- SB 1 forces DFPS to cut at least 112 currently employed caseworkers and investigators who work directly with families and children.<sup>6</sup> With the cuts to direct delivery staff, caseloads in all areas will increase, although the in-home services caseworkers will be hit the hardest.
  - The LBB estimates that the cuts would increase in-home caseloads by 25 percent<sup>7</sup> and DFPS estimates that they would increase by 33 percent,<sup>8</sup> which means that each caseworker could be supervising 65 children by 2013.<sup>9</sup>
  - The higher workload would increase turnover, making it even more difficult for the remaining caseworkers to do their job in preserving families and keeping children safe.

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## **Elimination of Adoption Subsidies Jeopardizes Texas' Federal Adoption Incentive Payment**

- In 2010, 4,803 children were adopted compared to 2,512 children in 2004—a 90 percent increase.<sup>10</sup> Almost all adoptive parents received an adoption subsidy.
  - The average adoption subsidy in 2012-13 would cost the state \$2,722 a year in general revenue<sup>11</sup> vs. \$8,924 a year in general revenue for foster care.
- Under SB 1, DFPS cannot provide a subsidy for any child adopted in 2012-13. Without subsidies, there will be many fewer adoptions. This means more children will languish in the more expensive alternative of foster care and the state may lose its adoption incentive payment from the federal government.
  - In 2010, Texas received a \$7.5 million payment because of its increase in adoptions, the highest award in the nation. This money is used in lieu of general revenue to fund adoption services.<sup>12</sup>

## **Foster Care Rate Cuts Would Force Kids Back to Sleeping in DFPS Offices**

- Even with the rate increase from last legislative session, the payment to foster families is only 83 percent of what it cost to care for the child,<sup>13</sup> making it difficult to find quality providers in the communities where they are needed the most.
  - More than half of all children in foster care are placed outside their home county.<sup>14</sup>
- SB 1 reduces current rates by 5 percent and does not cover projected caseload growth. To cover all the children who are projected to need foster care within the SB 1 budget, DFPS will actually have to reduce rates by a total of 12 percent.<sup>15</sup>
- Such a large reduction in rates will make it even more difficult to recruit and sustain quality homes, forcing DFPS back to the days when children were regularly sleeping in caseworker offices because no foster homes were available.

## **With Cuts to Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention, Fewer than 3,000 Families Will Get Services**

- Texas has the third lowest rate of child abuse and neglect prevention in the nation.<sup>16</sup>
- SB 1 cuts funding for child abuse and neglect prevention programs by 44 percent.<sup>17</sup>
  - In a state with more than 6.5 million children, less than 3,000 families<sup>18</sup> will receive child abuse and neglect prevention services.

Respectfully submitted,

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the data discussed in this paper comes from the annual databooks produced by the Department of Children and Family Services (DFPS).

<sup>2</sup> Including both cuts from 2010-11 funding levels and lack of funding for projected caseload growth. (LBB Budget Estimates 2012-13).

<sup>3</sup> DFPS' revised exceptional items.

<sup>4</sup> DFPS' revised exceptional items.

<sup>5</sup> All funds was calculated by taking the average monthly foster care payment in 2013 and multiplying it by 12. (LBB Budget Estimates 2012-13). Looking at the funding streams for foster care in 2012-13, general revenue accounts for 41% of what is budgeted. To get the general revenue estimate of foster care costs, we took 41% multiplied by the all funds yearly cost.

<sup>6</sup> DFPS testimony at Senate Finance hearing on February 1, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Comparing average daily caseload for FBSS in 2011 to 2013. (LBB Budget Estimate).

<sup>8</sup> DFPS testimony at Senate Finance hearing on February 1, 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Each family is counted as one FBSS case. To estimate the number of children on an average caseload, we took the LBB Budget Estimate for the average daily caseload and multiplied it by the average number of children on an in-home services case (2.7 children).

<sup>10</sup> Based on average monthly payments in 2009. (DFPS LAR).

<sup>11</sup> Looking at the funding streams for adoption subsidies in 2012-13, general revenue accounts for 54% of what is budgeted. To get the general revenue estimate of an adoption subsidy, we took 54% and multiplied it by the average annual adoption subsidy. (LBB Budget Estimate).

<sup>12</sup> DFPS 2010 operating budget.

<sup>13</sup> HHSC calculates the average cost of caring for a child in foster care. For the 2010-11 biennium, the Legislature funded 83 percent of this calculated cost.

<sup>14</sup> In May 2010, only 45 percent of children in foster care lived in their home county. (Regional Statistical Information about Children in DFPS Care, available at: [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/PCS/regional\\_care.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/PCS/regional_care.asp). Accessed on December 16, 2010).

<sup>15</sup> DFPS testimony at Senate Finance hearing on February 1, 2011.

<sup>16</sup> 2009 Child Maltreatment Report. Children's Bureau.

<sup>17</sup> Although there are several different prevention program the Department of Family and Protective Services operates, the only ones aimed specifically at child abuse and neglect are the Texas Families Together and Safe, Community Based Child Abuse Prevention program, Family Strengthening Services and Community Based At-Risk Family Services.

<sup>18</sup> Taking 55 percent of the families that received services in 2010. (DFPS 2010 databook).