

INDICATE THAT THE PARTICIPATION WILL PROVIDE COST BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY OR RESULT IN ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCIES AND SAVINGS OR PROVIDE OTHER JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ARRANGEMENT.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 1998.

Approved May 12, 1998.

**CHAPTER 544**

**(House Bill 1133)**

AN ACT concerning

**Child Welfare Workforce Initiative of 1998**

FOR the purpose of requiring the Secretary of Human Resources to hire only persons with certain qualifications for certain child welfare staff positions; ~~requiring the Secretary to hire sufficient staff to meet certain standards;~~ requiring the Secretary to develop, implement, and administer certain training curricula and competency tests; authorizing the Secretary to retain certain employees under certain circumstances; prohibiting the Secretary from hiring contractual child welfare caseworkers and supervisors except under certain circumstances and for a certain time period; requiring the Secretary to include certain requirements in contracts for the provision of child welfare services; requiring the Secretary of Human Resources and the Secretary of Budget and Management to develop a plan to hire sufficient staff to meet certain standards; requiring a certain report; and generally relating to child welfare staff qualifications.

BY adding to

Article 88A – Department of Human Resources

Section 3A

Annotated Code of Maryland

(1995 Replacement Volume and 1997 Supplement)

Preamble

WHEREAS, Ninety thousand children and their families are served by the child welfare system annually, and the number of children in foster care and kinship care has increased since Fiscal Year 1996, and the number of child welfare staff positions has been decreased by more than 7% during the same period; and

WHEREAS, The average length of stay for children in foster care has increased by more than 65% over the last decade; and

WHEREAS, Child welfare workers make decisions which profoundly affect the lives and futures of thousands of Maryland's children and their families; and