

(4) BY JANUARY 1, 1999, SHALL DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A SET OF MANDATORY STANDARDS FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR ALL CASEWORKERS AND CASEWORK SUPERVISORY STAFF, MANDATING THAT EMPLOYEES WHO FAIL TO OBTAIN THE REQUIRED CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS SHALL BE SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION INCLUDING DEMOTION, SUSPENSION, AND DISMISSAL.

(D) (1) THE SECRETARY MAY NOT HIRE PROFESSIONAL CASEWORKERS OR CASEWORK SUPERVISORS ON A CONTRACTUAL BASIS AFTER JUNE 30, 1999, AND MAY NOT EMPLOY PROFESSIONAL CASEWORKERS OR CASEWORK SUPERVISORS ON A CONTRACTUAL BASIS AFTER JUNE 30, 2000, EXCEPT AS MAY BE REQUIRED TO MEET AN UNANTICIPATED NEED RESULTING FROM:

(I) A SIGNIFICANT AND UNEXPECTED INCREASE IN REPORTS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT; OR

(II) A SIGNIFICANT AND UNEXPECTED INCREASE IN THE FOSTER CARE OR KINSHIP CASELOAD, OR BOTH.

(2) NO PROFESSIONAL CASEWORKER OR CASEWORK SUPERVISOR CONTRACTUAL POSITION MAY EXIST LONGER THAN 1 YEAR

(D) (E) WHENEVER THE SECRETARY CONTRACTS WITH AN OUTSIDE ENTITY FOR THE PROVISION OF CASEWORK SERVICES, THE SECRETARY SHALL REQUIRE THE CONTRACTOR TO MEET ALL EMPLOYMENT QUALIFICATIONS, STAFFING RATIOS, TRAINING CURRICULUM, PRESERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS, AND COMPETENCY TESTING REQUIRED UNDER THIS SECTION.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That it is the intent of the General Assembly that the Secretary of Human Resources employ a sufficient number of qualified caseworkers and casework supervisors to maintain caseload ratios that meet the requirements of this section. The Secretary of Human Resources and the Secretary of Budget and Management shall develop appropriate caseload ratios using the ratios recommended by the Child Welfare League of America, in its January 1997 report entitled, A Report of the Maryland Child Welfare System, as a basis for establishing relevant caseloads in the 24 jurisdictions. The Secretary of Human Resources and the Secretary of Budget and Management shall report no later than November 1, 1998, subject to § 2-1312 of the State Government Article, to the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, the Senate Finance Committee, and the House Appropriations Committee, on proposed caseload ratios for Child Protective Services, Family Preservation, Foster Care, Kinship Care, and Preadoption Cases.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Secretary of Human Resources and the Secretary of Budget and Management shall review the salaries of caseworkers and casework supervisors in Child Protective Services, Family Preservation, Foster Care, Kinship Care, and Preadoption Services, and shall recommend by October 1, 1998, salaries at levels that will be adequate to recruit and retain caseworkers and casework supervisors. The plan shall include a phase-in of appropriate salary adjustments.

SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, through June 30, 2000, notwithstanding the provisions of § 13-302 of the State Personnel and Pensions