

House File 2356 - Introduced

HOUSE FILE 2356
BY COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

(SUCCESSOR TO HSB 566)

A BILL FOR

1 An Act establishing the state public defender's pilot project
2 to implement innovative models of child welfare legal
3 representation as the project to preserve families.
4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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1 Section 1. Section 13B.13, Code 2026, is amended to read as
2 follows:

3 **13B.13 State public defender pilot project — child welfare**
4 **legal representation project to preserve families.**

5 1. Notwithstanding any other provision of the law to the
6 contrary, ~~for each fiscal year for the period beginning July~~
7 ~~1, 2020, and ending June 30, 2025,~~ the state public defender
8 ~~may establish a pilot~~ shall administer and maintain the project
9 to ~~implement innovative models of legal representation in order~~
10 preserve families to assist families involved in the child
11 welfare system. ~~The state public defender shall have sole~~
12 ~~discretion to establish and implement the pilot project.~~

13 2. The state public defender may ~~implement~~ administer and
14 maintain the new pilot project in up to sixteen counties to
15 preserve families throughout the state.

16 3. ~~The purpose of the pilot project is to preserve families~~
17 shall implement, administer, and study innovative ways models of
18 legal representation, through a team approach or ~~through~~ other
19 methods, to achieve positive outcomes for families, reduce trauma
20 to young children, and deliver financial benefits to families and
21 their communities.

22 4. The state public defender may coordinate with other
23 agencies and organizations to ~~implement the pilot project~~
24 administer and maintain, seek grant funding for, and ~~measure the~~
25 results analyze the outcomes of the project to preserve families.

26 5. The state public defender may appoint an attorney to
27 represent an indigent person prior to initiation of formal
28 proceedings, without court order, if such representation is
29 deemed appropriate by the state public defender and relates to
30 the purposes of the ~~pilot~~ project to preserve families.

31 6. The state public defender may adopt rules pursuant to
32 chapter 17A to administer this section.

33 EXPLANATION

34 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
35 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

1 Under current law, the state public defender (SPD) may
2 establish a pilot project to implement innovative models of legal
3 representation to assist families involved in the child welfare
4 system by implementing and studying ways to achieve positive
5 outcomes for families, reduce trauma to young children, and
6 deliver financial benefits to families and their communities.
7 The SPD may implement the pilot project in up to 16 counties
8 throughout the state, and the pilot project expires on June 30,
9 2025.

10 This bill changes the pilot project into a permanent program
11 known as the project to preserve families (PPF) and allows the
12 SPD to administer and maintain the PPF throughout the state. The
13 SPD may adopt rules to administer the PPF.

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