

**Senate File 564 - Introduced**

SENATE FILE 564  
BY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN  
SERVICES

(SUCCESSOR TO SF 251)

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act creating the positions of an ombudsman assistant for child  
2 foster care and a foster care advocate.  
3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

unofficial

1 Section 1. Section 2C.6, Code 2025, is amended to read as  
2 follows:

3 **2C.6 Deputy — ~~assistant for penal agencies~~ assistants.**

4 1. The ombudsman shall designate one of the members of the  
5 staff as the deputy ombudsman, with authority to act as ombudsman  
6 when the ombudsman is absent from the state or becomes disabled.  
7 The ombudsman may delegate to members of the staff any of the  
8 authority or duties of the office except the duty of formally  
9 making recommendations to agencies or reports to the governor or  
10 the general assembly.

11 2. The ombudsman shall appoint an assistant who shall be  
12 primarily responsible for investigating complaints relating to  
13 penal or correctional agencies.

14 3. The ombudsman shall appoint an assistant who shall be  
15 primarily responsible for investigating complaints relating to  
16 child foster care under chapter 237.

17 Sec. 2. NEW SECTION. **237.14B State foster care advocate and**  
18 **ombudsman assistant — information.**

19 All materials relating to child foster care that are made  
20 available by the department, or an agent of the department, to  
21 the public shall contain information about the state foster care  
22 advocate, and the ombudsman assistant described in section 2C.6,  
23 subsection 3. The information shall include the name, telephone  
24 number, and internet site of the state foster care advocate, and  
25 the telephone number and internet site for the state office of  
26 ombudsman.

27 Sec. 3. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES — STATE  
28 FOSTER CARE ADVOCATE.

29 1. For purposes of this section:

30 a. "Child foster care" means the same as defined in section  
31 237.1.

32 b. "Department" means the department of health and human  
33 services.

34 c. "Individual" means the same as defined in section 237.1.

35 d. "Licensee" means the same as defined in section 237.1.

1 2. a. The department shall designate a person to serve as  
2 the state foster care advocate.

3 b. The state foster care advocate shall serve within the  
4 department's compliance division, and remain separate from the  
5 department's family well-being and protection division.

6 c. The state foster care advocate shall act as a resource to  
7 individual licensees by doing the following:

8 (1) Improving department administrative and operational  
9 functions related to child foster care.

10 (2) Engaging in department policy discussions as an advocate  
11 for individual licensees.

12 (3) Making policy recommendations that consider the health  
13 and safety of children receiving child foster care.

14 (4) Engaging with public and private entities related to  
15 child foster care.

16 (5) Receiving complaints about the provision of child foster  
17 care services by the department or an agent of the department.

18 (6) Engaging with individual licensees relating to resources  
19 and services available to the individual licensee.

20 (7) Other duties related to child foster care advocacy as  
21 assigned by the department.

22 3. At the time a person obtains a license to provide child  
23 foster care, the department shall provide the person with the  
24 state foster care advocate's name, telephone number, and internet  
25 site, and a brief description of the services the state foster  
26 care advocate provides.

27 4. On or before December 1, 2025, the department shall submit  
28 proposed legislation to the general assembly that codifies and  
29 defines the state foster care advocate within the department,  
30 including the state foster care advocate's duties as outlined in  
31 subsection 2, paragraph "c". Prior to submitting the proposed  
32 legislation, the department shall solicit public input regarding  
33 the proposed legislation, specifically from persons involved in  
34 child foster care.

35

EXPLANATION

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

3       This bill relates to the creation of the positions of  
4 ombudsman assistant for child foster care (ombudsman assistant),  
5 and foster care advocate (advocate).

6       The bill requires the state ombudsman to appoint an ombudsman  
7 assistant for investigating complaints relating to child foster  
8 care.

9       The bill creates the advocate's position within the department  
10 of health and human services' (HHS) compliance division, and  
11 separate from HHS's family well-being and protection division.  
12 The bill requires the advocate to act as a resource to foster  
13 parents and lists several duties the advocate must perform to  
14 fulfill the purpose of the position. When a person obtains a  
15 license to provide child foster care, the bill requires HHS to  
16 provide the person with the advocate's name, telephone number,  
17 and internet site, and a brief description of the services the  
18 advocate provides. The bill requires HHS to submit proposed  
19 legislation to the general assembly on or before December 1,  
20 2025, that codifies and defines the advocate position within  
21 HHS. HHS must solicit public input about the proposed legislation  
22 prior to submission.

23       The bill requires all materials relating to child foster care  
24 that are made available by HHS, or an agent of HHS, to the public  
25 to contain information about the advocate and the ombudsman  
26 assistant. The information must include the name, telephone  
27 number, and internet site of the advocate, and the telephone  
28 number and internet site for the state office of ombudsman.