

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**LEGISLATIVE BILL REVIEW FORM: 2016**

Bill Number: S.189      Name of Bill: An act relating to foster parents' rights and protections

Agency/ Dept: DCF Family Services      Author of Bill Review: Cindy Walcott, Deputy Commissioner

Date of Bill Review: April 26, 2016      Related Bills and Key Players: H.532 is related, but different

Status of Bill: (check one):     Upon Introduction       As passed by 1<sup>st</sup> body       As passed by both

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**Recommended Position:**

Support       Oppose       Remain Neutral       Support with modifications identified in #8 below

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**Analysis of Bill**

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1. **Summary of bill and issue it addresses.** The as-introduced version of the bill proposed to establish a bill of rights and to create a cause of action for foster parents engaging in whistleblowing conduct. The version that passed the Senate was very different, in that it called for the formation of "Foster Parent Working Group to recommend legislation, rules, or policies, or any combination thereof, pertaining to rights and protections for foster parents in Vermont." The working group will include a variety of stakeholders from DCF, foster parents, and (as added by the House) a former foster youth.
2. **Is there a need for this bill?** The intent of the bill could be met without its passage; however, the bill elevates the importance of entering into dialog about a range of issues that have, at times, strained the working relationship between DCF and some foster parents.
3. **What are likely to be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for this Department?** There are significant implications. The working group will be making a set of recommendations to the Legislature. Any resulting bill could have programmatic implications, but is unlikely to have fiscal implications.
4. **What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for other departments in state government, and what is likely to be their perspective on it?** The courts will also participate in the working group.
5. **What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for others, and what is likely to be their perspective on it?** (for example, public, municipalities, organizations, business, regulated entities, etc) Foster parents will likely be positively impacted.
6. **Other Stakeholders:**
  - 6.1 **Who else is likely to support the proposal and why?** Vermont Foster and Adoptive Parent Association supports this as it attempts to address some areas of challenge and frustration for foster parents.
  - 6.2 **Who else is likely to oppose the proposal and why?** No known appointments.
7. **Rationale for recommendation:** The bill will support a good working relationship between DCF and foster families.
8. **Specific modifications that would be needed to recommend support of this bill:** None needed.

*Please return this bill review as a Microsoft Word document to [Jahala.Dudley@vermont.gov](mailto:Jahala.Dudley@vermont.gov) & [Jessica.Mishaan@vermont.gov](mailto:Jessica.Mishaan@vermont.gov)*

9. Will this bill create a new board or commission AND/OR add or remove appointees to an existing one? If so, which one and how many? No.

*Secretary/Commissioner has reviewed this document:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date:* \_\_\_\_\_