

Department of Planning and Budget

2008 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB 1141

House of Origin	<u>X</u>	Introduced	<u> </u>	Substitute	<u> </u>	Engrossed
Second House	<u> </u>	In Committee	<u> </u>	Substitute	<u> </u>	Enrolled

2. Patron: Fralin

3. Committee: Health, Welfare and Institutions

4. Title: Foster care; independent living services

5. Summary: The proposed legislation states that young people who leave foster care between the ages of 18 to 21 may return to the local board or licensed child-placing agency and request independent living services any time before their 21st birthday in accordance with regulations adopted by the Board. Moreover, the bill mandates these services be restored under the following conditions: the youth has not reached the age of 21; the youth has entered into a written agreement with the local board or licensed child placing agency regarding the conditions of receiving independent living services; and the agreement is entered within 60 days of the independent living services being discontinued.

6. Minimal Fiscal Impact

7. Budget Amendment Necessary: No

8. Fiscal Implications: The independent living program provides services and activities for current and former foster children to promote self-sufficiency. While the program covers a wide array of services, not all services require financial assistance from the state or localities. In addition, many of these services are covered by the federal funds Virginia receives to support independent living services statewide.

The eligible population currently includes young people ages 16-18 who are likely to remain in foster care and those 18-21 who have aged out of foster care, but continue to need independent living services. The independent living program provides services that are based on an assessment of life skills, such as personal development skills (self-esteem, communication skills, decision-making, and conflict resolution and anger management), as well as career exploration, job skills, money management, housing, transportation and legal issues. Also, for those children aging out of foster care and those adopted after 16, vouchers of up to \$5,000 per year are available for post-secondary education and training. The purpose is to assist foster care youth in making the transition to self-sufficiency by helping them receive the education, training and services necessary for them to obtain employment.

Under current code, the local agency's decision to provide services to youth between the ages of 18 to 21 is discretionary. HB 1141 requires localities to provide independent living services to youth between the ages of 18 – 21 if these youth refuse independent living services, but come back to the program within 60 days of leaving, as long as they meet specific requirements.

The department estimates 800 youth in the 18 - 21 age group would be eligible to continue receiving independent living services based on the data reported to the independent living program by the local departments of social services. Of the 800 eligible, approximately 50 percent of the youth are currently receiving services. This bill could require the local departments to serve the additional 400 individuals if they choose to cooperate with such services. However, the department estimates that the number of youth who would decide to return to the program within 60 days of leaving will be minimal and any cost can be absorbed with existing appropriation.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected:

Department of Social Services
Local departments of social services
Office of Comprehensive Services

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No

11. Other Comments: None

Date: 1/23/2008

Document: G:\2008 Fiscal Year\08 Session\FIS\HB1141.Doc

cc: Secretary of Health and Human Services