

Department of Planning and Budget 2008 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: SB 315

House of Origin ___ Introduced X Substitute ___ Engrossed
 Second House ___ In Committee ___ Substitute ___ Enrolled

2. Patron: Edwards

3. Committee: -

4. Title: Division of Children's Ombudsman

5. Summary: As substituted, this legislation would establish a Division of Children's Ombudsman within the existing Office of the Inspector General. The new division will provide ombudsman services, investigate complaints, and provide advocacy for the protection of children in the Commonwealth. In addition, the bill will reduce frequency of reporting by the Office of Inspector General from semi-annually to annually; while adding a requirement that the division report on its activities each year. The bill contains an enactment clause that stipulates that Division of Children's Ombudsman would phase-in the scope of its responsibilities and investigations over a four year period.

6. Fiscal Impact Estimate:

Expenditure Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Positions</i>	<i>Fund</i>
2008	-	-	-
2009	-	-	-
2010	\$162,840	2.0	General
2011	\$318,680	4.0	General
2012	\$537,491	7.0	General
2013	\$537,491	7.0	General
2014	\$537,491	7.0	General

7. Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes.

8. Fiscal Implications: The proposed legislation phases-in the responsibilities of the ombudsman over the next four years. Initially the division is only required to accept and investigate complaints from the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services. Its scope will expand in FY 2010 to include the Department of Social Services and again in FY 2011 to encompass the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Correctional Education. In FY 2012, the fourth year, the Division of Children's Ombudsman will accept and investigate complaints related to any child-serving agency or any public program, service or facility licensed, funded or operated by a child-serving agency. The fiscal impact and staffing reflect the staggered start of the division.

It is assumed that since this division will be housed with the Office of Inspector General, the office will absorb a portion of added costs and overhead. The office's existing director and office assistant position will handle the new division's initial administrative workload. In addition, there is sufficient overlap of responsibilities between the Office of Inspector General's current duties and those required by this legislation to assume that existing office staff will be able to handle most of the initial workload associated with added complaints. This staffing level should ensure that the division is able to respond to any initial complaints and perform the subsequent investigations.

In FY 2010, the division's responsibilities will increase significantly with the addition of Department of Social Services; moreover, the division and its function will be more well-known to agency clients. It is assumed that the office will require two additional human services analysts to accommodate this added workload. It is likely that additional staff will be needed in FY 2011 as the office's role again expands to include two large child-serving agencies; Department of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Correctional Education. The fiscal estimate assumes two additional human services positions. As the division's role is further expanded in FY 2011, it is estimated that it would require the services of two additional human services analysts as well as another office assistant. The initial cost of furniture, equipment and travel for each new employee is estimated at \$7,500 the first year and \$4,000 each subsequent year. Since the Division of Children's Ombudsman would be created within the Office of the Inspector General, it is anticipated that the division would not need additional resources for rent, utilities, etc. The following table summarizes the staffing and nonpersonal services associated with this proposal.

Positions	Annual Salary (Including Benefits)*			
	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Director	-	-	-	-
Office Services Specialist(s)	-	-	-	\$55,471
Human Services Analyst(s)	-	\$147,840	\$295,680	\$443,520
Nonpersonal Services	-	\$15,000	\$23,000	\$38,500
Total	-	\$162,840	\$318,680	\$537,491

*Does not include salary increases; such funding would be provided centrally.

The fiscal implications of this legislation will need to be revisited before FY 2012, when the division is expected to investigate complaints from child-serving agencies statewide. The staffing estimates are extremely tentative and will rely heavily on the number and complexity of complaints received by the division.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected:

Department of Social Services

Department of Juvenile Justice

Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services

Department of Education

Department of Correctional Education

Any child-serving agency or any program, service or facility licensed, funded or operated by a child-serving agency

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No

11. Other Comments: None

Date: 2/11/2008

Document: G:\2008 Fiscal Year\08 Session\Fis\Sb315s2.Doc

cc: Secretary of Health and Human Resources
Secretary of Public Safety
Secretary of Education