

Department of Planning and Budget

2017 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: SB1199-S1

House of Origin	<input type="checkbox"/> Introduced	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Engrossed
Second House	<input type="checkbox"/> In Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled

2. Patron: Favola

3. Committee: Courts of Justice

4. Title: Rights of blind parents.

5. Summary: Provides that a blind parent's blindness, as defined in the bill, shall not be the sole basis of the denial or restriction of such parent's custody or visitation rights. The bill requires a party who alleges that a parent's blindness should be a factor to be considered to not be in the best interests of the child, or should otherwise be a reason to deny or restrict such a parent's custody or visitation rights, to prove by clear and convincing evidence that the child's best interests would not be met or served due to such parent's blindness. The bill allows a blind parent to demonstrate how supportive parenting services would appropriately address any threats to the child's best interests and further allows that such services be ordered by the court and requires the supportive service provider to be allowed opportunities to comment. Additionally, the bill requires a court to issue findings where the court denies or restricts custody or visitation of a blind parent or where supportive parenting services are not ordered to blind parents or foster or adoptive parents in an accessible format. The same requirements apply to the denial of approval of a blind prospective foster parent, or removal of a child from a blind foster parent's home, and to the denial of a final order of adoption wherein the prospective adoptive parent is blind.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: No.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Preliminary. See Item 8.

8. Fiscal Implications: This bill does not have a fiscal impact. The number of legally blind foster and adoptive parents is minimal compared to the total population of foster and adoptive parents. It is unclear what supportive parenting services may be requested and approved by the courts.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Department of Social Services, local Departments of Social Services, Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, Office of Children's Services

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No.

11. Other Comments: