

Department of Planning and Budget

2023 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. **Bill Number:** HB1768

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

2. **Patron:** Head

3. **Committee:** Health, Welfare, and Institutions

4. **Title:** Child-protective services; investigations; interview by child advocacy center; time limits.

5. **Summary:** Requires local departments of social services (local department), when determined necessary by the local multidisciplinary team during the local department's investigation of a report of child abuse or neglect, to facilitate within 14 days an interview of the child by a child advocacy center that is recognized by the National Children's Alliance and located in the locality served by the local department. The bill allows, in cases in which the investigation is being conducted in cooperation with a law-enforcement agency, such interview to be conducted within 21 days.

6. **Budget Amendment Necessary:** Yes. Item 342.

7. **Fiscal Impact Estimates:**

7a. Expenditure Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Positions</i>	<i>Fund</i>
2024	\$3,437,485	-	general
2025	\$3,437,485	-	general
2026	\$3,437,485	-	general
2027	\$3,437,485	-	general
2028	\$3,437,485	-	general
2029	\$3,437,485	-	general
2030	\$3,437,485	-	general

8. **Fiscal Implications:** This legislation requires that a local department of social services (LDSS) facilitate an interview of a child by a child advocacy center (CAC), if determined necessary by the local multidisciplinary team. The time limit is 14 days, or 21 days if the investigation is conducted in cooperation with local law enforcement. Interviews conducted at a CAC reduce the number of times a child victim must be interviewed and can increase the successful prosecution of child maltreatment cases. Children who are interviewed at a CAC

describe themselves as being “not at all” or “not very” scared during the interview when compared to children who are interviewed at alternate locations.

This legislation will require CACs to provide services to additional children and their families. In state fiscal year (FY) 2022, local departments conducted 9,311 child protective services (CPS) investigations and the CACs provided 5,890 interviews. Currently, a local department does not have to facilitate an interview with a CAC at the behest of a local multidisciplinary team; however, it is best practice. This bill codifies current best practice and does not provide an option for a local department to unilaterally choose not to facilitate a CAC interview, if the multidisciplinary team has determined a need for one.

Currently, there are 18 CACs and five satellite centers across the state. It is not necessary to conduct an interview at a CAC for every CPS investigation. Therefore, assuming 75 percent of all FY 2022 child protective services (CPS) investigations were assessed to need an interview at a CAC, that would result in the need for at least 1,093 additional interviews ($9,311 \times .75 = 6,983$ less 5,890 interviews already delivered), depending on the number of children in each case. Child Advocacy Centers of Virginia reported the average cost in FY 2020 of serving a child at a CAC was \$3,145. Assuming each investigation has only one child that needs to be served by the CAC, annual costs for the additional CAC interviews are estimated at \$3,437,485 general fund annually ($1,093 \times \$3,145$ average cost of interview).

In addition to the increased costs to cover the additional CAC interviews, there will likely be a fiscal impact on LDSS and local law enforcement for administrative costs to travel to and from a CAC outside of the locality, such as: staff time, gas, mileage, wear and tear on agency vehicles, the need to purchase transportation for clients, etc. These unknown variables prevent an accurate estimation of administrative costs bore by a LDSS or a local law enforcement agency.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Department of Social Services, local departments of social services.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No.

11. Other Comments: None.