

## Department of Planning and Budget 2024 Session Fiscal Impact Statement

**1. Bill Number:** HB1168

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

**2. Patron:** Cordoza

**3. Committee:** Committee Referral Pending

**4. Title:** Office of the Children's Ombudsman; powers.

**5. Summary:** Grants the Children's Ombudsman with regard to children receiving child-protective services, in foster care, or placed for adoption and children who may have died as a result of alleged abuse or neglect the power to directly oversee local departments of social services, reverse the decisions of local departments of social services, and petition a court to reverse any custody or visitation changes made as a result of the error of a local department of social services.

**6. Budget Amendment Necessary:** See Item 8.

**7. Fiscal Impact Estimates:** Indeterminate, see Item 8.

**8. Fiscal Implications:** The fiscal impacts of this legislation are indeterminate but if the powers authorized in the bill were utilized, would likely lead to increased operating costs for the Office of the Children's Ombudsman (OCO). The bill allows the OCO to directly oversee local departments. It is unclear from the bill what direct oversight entails, such as leading operations, reviewing operations, or other different tasks. It is also unclear under what circumstances it would be appropriate for the OCO to engage such oversight. Depending on the number of local departments under such oversight and their size/complexity, the OCO would likely need additional staff with the appropriate backgrounds to perform such duties appropriately and qualify for this level of oversight. The OCO also expects that additional staff would be needed for litigation support, depending on the number and circumstances around the court petitions authorized in the bill. The OCO expects concurring increases in overhead costs for additional office space, travel expenses, and costs related to litigation.

**9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected:** Office of the Children's Ombudsman, local Departments of Social Services

**10. Technical Amendment Necessary:** No.

**11. Other Comments:** None.

Date: January 16, 2024

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