



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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CONTACT: Molly Woon (503) 986-1074
molly.woon@state.or.us

Senate supports study of disproportionality in child foster care system
SB 630 helps meet Senate Democrats' commitment to fight for vulnerable kids

SALEM – Legislation that directs resources to study the sizable disproportionality of children of certain racial and ethnic backgrounds in the Oregon foster care system passed the Senate this morning. Senate Bill 630 creates a 21-member task force, operating out of the Department of Human Services, to address why some minorities are overrepresented in the system.

“The reality that minorities are more likely to end up in the foster care system isn’t a recent development,” said Senator Margaret Carter (D-Portland), the chief sponsor of the bill. “Even so, we need to question the status quo. We need to understand why some populations in Oregon are ending up in the system more than others.”

According to the Children, Adults and Families Division (CAF) of the Department of Human Services, children of color enter foster care at a higher rate and leave foster care at a slower rate than do white children, resulting in disproportionality relative to the general population. Some examples in Oregon include:

- African American children make up 2.3 percent of Oregon’s child population, but children with an African American racial background make up 7.3 percent of Oregon’s foster care population.
- Children with a Native American racial background are 1.3 percent of Oregon’s child population but 10 percent of Oregon’s foster care population.
- Caucasian children make up 70.6 percent of Oregon’s child population and only 61.1 percent of Oregon’s foster care population.

“It’s time to have a serious conversation about this problem of overrepresentation of minorities in the foster care system,” said Deputy Senate Majority Leader Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham). “Our caucus has made a commitment to protecting the most vulnerable Oregonians and in order to do that we need to better understand why some kids are entering the system at a higher rate.”

SB 630 was voted out of Ways and Means with a unanimous vote. The bill will now go to the House for consideration.

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