

Child Welfare Parental Representation Program Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Wayne A. Harper

House Sponsor: Rex P. Shipp

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill addresses the Child Welfare Parental Representation Program.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- allows the Child Welfare Parental Representation Program to:
- provide education and support for all parental representation attorneys;
- support indigent parental defense services through grants; and
- administer the existing Interdisciplinary Parental Representation Program;
removes the requirement for attorneys to be contracted; and
modifies the way the executive director shall prepare the budget.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

78B-22-802, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2021, Chapters 228, 235

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section 78B-22-802 is amended to read:

78B-22-802 . Child Welfare Parental Representation Program -- Creation --

Duties -- Annual report -- Budget.

(1) There is created within the office the Child Welfare Parental Representation Program.

(2)[(a)] The office shall:

[(+)] (a) administer and enforce the program in accordance with this part;

- 29 [(ii)] (b) manage the operation and budget of the program;
- 30 [(iii)] (c) develop and provide educational and training programs for [contracted]parental
- 31 representation attorneys;
- 32 (d) subject to appropriation from the Legislature, provide support for indigent parental
- 33 defense services through the Indigent Defense Commission grant process;
- 34 (e) administer the Interdisciplinary Parental Representation Program, established in
- 35 Section 80-22-805; and
- 36 [(iv)] (f) provide information and advice to assist a [contracted] parental representation
- 37 attorney to comply with the attorney's professional, contractual, and ethical duties.

38 [(b) ~~In administering the program, the office shall contract with:~~]

- 39 [(i) ~~a person who is qualified to perform the program duties under this section; and]~~
- 40 [(ii) ~~an attorney, as an independent contractor, in accordance with Section~~
- 41 ~~78B-22-803.~~]

42 (3)(a) The executive director shall prepare a budget of:

- 43 (i) the administrative expenses for the program; and
- 44 (ii) the amount [estimated] expended in the prior year to fund[-needed] contracts, the
- 45 Interdisciplinary Parental Representation Program, and other parent representation
- 46 program costs.

47 (b) On or before October 1 of each year, the executive director shall report to the
48 governor and the Child Welfare Legislative Oversight Panel regarding the preceding
49 fiscal year on the operations, activities, and goals of the program.

50 Section 2. **Effective Date.**

51 This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.