

1 **Child Welfare Parental Representation Program Amendments**

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Wayne A. Harper**

House Sponsor: Rex P. Shipp

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2 **LONG TITLE**3 **General Description:**

4 This bill addresses the Child Welfare Parental Representation Program.

5 **Highlighted Provisions:**

6 This bill:

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

14 **Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

15 None

16 **Other Special Clauses:**

17 None

18 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**19 **AMENDS:**20 **78B-22-802**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2021, Chapters 228, 235

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21 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*22 Section 1. Section **78B-22-802** is amended to read:23 **78B-22-802 . Child Welfare Parental Representation Program -- Creation --**24 **Duties -- Annual report -- Budget.**

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

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

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

28 [ (ii) ] (b) manage the operation and budget of the program;

29 [ (iii) ] (c) develop and provide educational and training programs for [e]ncontrated] 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 [eontracted] 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.