

**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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**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

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*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:

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

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

[(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.