

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 3614  
By: Rose  
Human Services  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

In 2018, children in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) filed a lawsuit claiming that the state's maintenance of its foster care system exposed them to a serious risk of abuse, neglect, and harm to their physical and psychological well-being. H.B. 3614 seeks to help reduce the risk of harm foster children are exposed to while in DFPS conservatorship by requiring DFPS to conduct an in-person meeting with each child in DFPS conservatorship to better monitor the child's welfare and remain up-to-date on what is occurring in the child's life.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

H.B. 3614 amends the Family Code to require the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to conduct an in-person meeting at least once each month with each child in DFPS conservatorship and document the results of the meeting in the child's case file. The bill sets out certain required components of each monthly meeting and requires DFPS to update its automated case tracking and information management system to allow caseworkers to record each meeting. The bill requires DFPS to document a failure to meet with a child during a month in the child's case file and the reason for the failure. If a monthly meeting is not conducted by a primary caseworker assigned to the child protective services case, the bill requires the caseworker to communicate with the child at least once each month by telephone, video conference, or another developmentally appropriate form of communication. The bill requires DFPS to ensure that each caseworker receives training regarding the monthly visitation requirements. The bill requires DFPS, not later than the 30th day following the last day of each calendar quarter, to submit to the lieutenant governor, speaker of the house of representatives, and chairs of the standing committees of the senate and house of representatives having primary jurisdiction over child protection issues a report on certain prescribed statistics regarding the monthly caseworker visits.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2019.