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Senate Bill 995 and 996 (as reported by the Committee of the Whole)(*Senate-passed version*)  
Sponsor: Senator Rick Jones  
Committee: Families, Seniors and Human Services

### **CONTENT**

Senate Bill 996 would amend the juvenile code to require a reasonable effort to be made to place siblings removed from their home in the same placement, or provide for frequent sibling visitation or other ongoing interaction, unless the State documented that either of these would be contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings.

If siblings could not be placed together or not all the siblings were placed outside of the home, a court would have to determine whether visitation or contact would be beneficial to them. If visitation or contact would be beneficial, the court would have to order visitation or contact to the extent reasonable.

The bill also would require a case service plan prepared under the code to include efforts to be made by an agency to provide frequent in-person visitation or other ongoing interaction between siblings, if they were not jointly placed, unless a court determined that the visitation not be beneficial.

Senate Bill 995 would amend the Foster Care and Adoption Services Act to require a supervising agency to make a reasonable effort to place siblings removed from their home in the same placement, or provide for frequent sibling visitation or other ongoing interaction, unless the supervising agency documented that either of these would be contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings.

If siblings could not be placed together or not all the siblings were placed in foster care, the supervising agency would have to make reasonable efforts to facilitate visitation or contact with siblings unless a court determined that visitation or contact would not be beneficial under Section 13a(15) of the juvenile code (as provided in Senate Bill 996).

Senate Bill 995 is tie-barred to Senate Bill 996.

MCL 722.952 & 722.954a (S.B. 995)  
712A.13a & 712A.18f (S.B. 996)

Legislative Analyst: Jeff Mann

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bills would not result in a fiscal impact on the State. Currently, Department of Human Services policy and provisions of the Federal court agreement related to *Duane B. v. Snyder* require the Department to place sibling groups together when feasible and appropriate and also to ensure visitations, when appropriate, between siblings who are not placed together.

The bills could affect some locally operated child placing agencies, depending on the agencies' current policies regarding sibling placements. There are several child placing

agencies that are operated by community mental health agencies, one child placing agency that is operated by county government, and 13 child placing agencies that are operated by circuit courts. These locally operated agencies are not subject to the settlement requirements. To the extent that the bills' requirements would be new among the local agencies, the agencies could realize some additional costs.

Date Completed: 12-3-14

Fiscal Analyst: Frances Carley

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.