

By Mrs. Cleven of Chelmsford, petition of Carol C. Cleven, Edward G. Connolly, Mary Jane Simmons, Bruce E. Tarr and Emile J. Goguen for legislation to regulate services for adolescent parents and children of such parents. Human Services and Elderly Affairs.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-Five.

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO ADOLESCENT PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Section 51B(l) of Chapter 119 of the Mass. General Laws is
2 hereby amended by adding, after the first paragraph, the following
3 paragraph: —

4 If the child who is the subject of a report under section 51A of
5 this chapter is the child of a parent(s) under 18 years of age, the
6 Department shall immediately conduct an intensive and extended
7 family assessment, evaluation and home study, in order to develop
8 and implement a service plan, or other appropriate measures,
9 based on the specific needs, special circumstances, and factors
10 contributing to problems that are unique to the family composition
11 and structure.

12 The service plan, or other intermediary measures determined to
13 be required, shall be the first option by the Department, unless
14 emergency conditions exist, and shall be targeted towards family
15 preservation. The Department shall take all appropriate interven-
16 tive measures available within its agency, or shall access needed
17 services from other state agencies or resources, to prevent the
18 removal of the child from the home and subsequent placement in
19 foster care. Such measures or services, or interventive actions,
20 may be extraordinary, given the unique nature of the family com-
21 position and needs.

22 The service plan, or other required actions to be taken by the
23 Department shall include, but not be limited to:

24 effort to access available support and assistance from extended
25 family members, including an absent parent of the child; access to
26 health care or medical assistance, or treatment or counseling that
27 may be needed; access to welfare benefits, housing or other public
28 assistance for which the family may be eligible, access to child
29 care, educational programs, respite care, job training, or other
30 such program; access to parent aide resources, or other in-home
31 services, access to a to support services that would aid in the
32 preservation of the family unit;

33 Nothing in this section shall be construed as preventing the
34 Department from taking actions that may be required for the care
35 and protection of the child, or children, who is the subject of the
36 report.