

Texas Public POLICY FOUNDATION

CENTER ON HEALTH AND FAMILIES



HB 2216: KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER, KEEPING KIDS SAFE

HOUSE BILL 2216 IS “FAMILY FIRST” LEGISLATION THAT STRENGTHENS TEXAS’S ABILITY TO PREVENT KIDS FROM ENTERING FOSTER CARE AND PRESERVES FAMILIES.

Over the last several legislative sessions, the Legislature has enacted reforms that have resulted in a historic transformation of the Texas child welfare system. Today, the Department of Family and Protective Services removes fewer children into foster care and protects more children from abuse and neglect than ever before. Texas has become an example for the entire nation of how to successfully prioritize keeping kids with their families while keeping them safe. House Bill 2216 builds on this success by improving the quality of services provided by DFPS to prevent foster care entries and strengthen families.

The standards contained in HB 2216 come directly from the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which was enacted by Congress in 1978. ICWA has long been considered the “gold standard” for child welfare policies and practices. HB 2216 applies these policies and practices to all Texas children so that more have the opportunity to grow up in safe, loving homes.

HB 2216 protects children and strengthens families by:

- Providing the “Gold Standard” of due process for families involved with Child Protective Services.
- Protecting the rights of children who enter foster care to be placed with their own families and kin.
- Requiring DFPS to make “active efforts” to prevent the removal of children into foster care and to reunite children in foster care with their families.
- Guaranteeing the appointment of counsel for all indigent parents involved with DFPS.
- Enhancing the quality of services provided to children and parents involved with DFPS and ensuring that these services are targeted to address the specific issues identified by the department.

READ MORE HERE:

