

Bill Summary
1st Session of the 59th Legislature

Bill No.:	HB 1017
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Bill Analysis

HB 1017 creates the Family Representation and Advocacy Act. The measure creates the Family Representation and Advocacy Program under the Administrative Office of the Courts in order to ensure uniform and high-quality legal representation for children and parents or guardians in deprived child actions. The central office will work statewide with judicial districts and attorneys by contracting with, training, compensating, and supporting legal counsel for children, indigent parents, legal guardians, and Indian custodians appointed by the court. The central office shall be established through a competitive bid process. The program must ensure and contractually require that all counsel have the training, support, and access to provide uniform and high-quality legal representation.

The measure provides for the hiring of an executive director for the program. The program will may contract with a legal entity and social workers as needed. The existing Offices of Public Offender will continue to provide representation for children in deprived children proceedings and may elect to contract with the Program. The program will prioritize judicial districts where attorneys are unavailable for court appointments or are minimally compensated and ensure that counsel and interdisciplinary contractors are adequately compensated.

The Oklahoma Supreme Court may direct the Administrative Office of the Courts to establish an advisory board to exercise oversight over the Family Representation and Advocacy Program and the selected eligible organization, and to make recommendations and take such actions as deemed necessary to ensure proper administration of the Program.

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