

Bill Summary
1st Session of the 59th Legislature

Bill No.:	SB 19X
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Author:	Sen. R. Thompson
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Bill Analysis

SB 19X creates the Family Representation and Advocacy Act. The measure creates a new program, designated as the Family Representation and Advocacy Program, Administrative Office of the Courts. The new program shall ensure contractually require uniform and high quality legal representation for children and indigent parents, legal guardians, and Indian custodians in deprived child actions brought by the state. The measure directs the Office to issue a request for proposals and contract with an eligible organization to administer the Family Representation and Advocacy Program through the establishment of a central office for the state using funds appropriated or otherwise available for the purpose of implementing the Family Representation and Advocacy Act. The program shall work cooperatively with judicial districts and attorneys as well as contract with, train, compensate, and support legal counsel for children. The measure requires the entity selected to implement the Program to employ an executive director with the requisite expertise outlined in the measure. The director shall serve the program fulltime and shall not be engaged in work outside of the Program. Counsel employed by the program shall be in good standing with the Oklahoma Bar Association. The program shall prioritize judicial districts where attorneys are unavailable for court appointments or are minimally compensated. The measure authorizes the Oklahoma Supreme Court to 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.

Prepared by: Kalen Taylor