

SB 386 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery

Prepared By: C. Ross, Counsel

Meeting Dates: 2/11

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires that children being interviewed by law enforcement or the Department of Human Services, as potential witnesses or victims, be informed that their parent or guardian can be present.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

A number of factors guide professionals who interview children with regard to best practices, particularly in cases of suspected abuse, such as: the child's safety; any other urgency or threat posed by the given circumstances; the age of the child; whether the child is a potential victim or witness; what relationship the suspect or suspects may have with the child; in what setting suspected abuse may have occurred; in what setting an interview may occur; whether the child is intellectually or developmentally disabled; and what effect the presence or absence of supportive and nonsupportive persons may have on the interview.

Senate Bill 386 requires law enforcement and Department of Human Services (DHS) personnel to inform children being interviewed as potential witnesses or victims in any investigation, that their parent or guardian can be present.