

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY  
OFFICE OF FISCAL AND MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS  
FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**LS 6430**  
**BILL NUMBER: HB 1307**

**NOTE PREPARED: Feb 17, 2026**  
**BILL AMENDED:**

**SUBJECT:** Department of Child Services Ombudsman.

**FIRST AUTHOR:** Rep. Burton  
**FIRST SPONSOR:** Sen. Donato

**BILL STATUS:** As Passed Senate

**FUNDS AFFECTED: X GENERAL**  
**DEDICATED**  
**FEDERAL**

**IMPACT:** State

**Summary of Legislation:** This bill provides that the Office of the Department of Child Services Ombudsman (Ombudsman Office) shall (rather than may, under current law): (1) employ technical experts and other employees to carry out the purposes of the Ombudsman Office; (2) receive, investigate, and attempt to resolve complaints alleging that the Department of Child Services (DCS) failed to protect the physical or mental health or safety of a child or failed to follow specific laws, rules, or written policies; (3) issue recommendations if: (A) the Ombudsman Office determines that a complaint has merit; or (B) an investigation by the Ombudsman Office reveals a problem with an agency, facility, or program; and (4) take other specified actions and undertake other specified initiatives.

The bill also provides that if a local child protection team is involved in the initial investigation of a matter, a different local child protection team shall (rather than may, under current law) assist the Ombudsman Office in the Ombudsman Office's investigation of the matter.

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2026.

**Explanation of State Expenditures:** The bill's changes are not expected to impact DCS Ombudsman workload or expenditures.

*Additional Information* - The DCS Ombudsman's Office currently employs four individuals. The extent to which one of the individuals currently employed meets the technical expertise requirements in the bill are unknown, but expected to be satisfied by existing staff. Additionally, it is assumed the DCS Ombudsman currently operates in such a capacity to satisfy the other requirements in the bill.

**Explanation of State Revenues:**

**Explanation of Local Expenditures:** The bill is not expected to increase the workload of local child protection teams.

**Explanation of Local Revenues:**

**State Agencies Affected:** DCS Ombudsman.

**Local Agencies Affected:** Local child protection teams.

**Information Sources:**

<https://www.in.gov/idoa/ombudsman-bureaus/dcs-ombudsman-bureau/dcs-ombudsman-staff/>; State Staffing Report, November 2025.

**Fiscal Analyst:** Bill Brumbach, 317-232-9559.