



Georgia Department  
of Human Services

# 2019 Legislative Update

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# stronger families

FOR A STRONGER GEORGIA



# Agenda

## Session Overview

- New Members and Chairmanships
- Legislation
  - Departmental Administration
  - Division of Aging Services
  - Division of Child Support Services
  - Division of Family and Children Services





# Georgia Legislature



# Departmental Administration

## HB 197: Georgia Data Analytic Center

Rep. Katie Dempsey

Effective July 1, 2019

- Establishes the Georgia Data Analytic Center also known as the GDAC Project that will be housed in the Office of Planning and Budget
- Requires the GDAC Project to work with state agencies and departments to get an inventory of what data they have, what data they have the authority to share and how they can share it for the purpose of using the data to improve the public health and the safety, security, and well-being of Georgians



# Division of Aging Services

## HB 70: Guardians and Conservators of Minors and Adults

Rep. Chuck Efstration

Effective: January 1, 2020

- Revises provisions relating to guardians and conservators of minors and adults
- The biggest change is a provision that allows guardianship for up to 90 days (it was previously limited to 60 days)



# Division of Aging Services

## HR 533: House Study Committee on Innovative Financial Options for Senior Living

Rep. John LaHood

Effective July 1, 2019

- Creates a study committee consisting of five members of the House of Representatives to study financial options to assist seniors with affordable independent living with supportive services



# Division of Child Support Services

## HB 239: Georgia Business Court

Rep. Chuck Efstration

Effective July 1, 2019

- Establishes the Georgia Business Court
- Includes a provision of SB 38 that exempts the Attorney General's office from being charged an electronic filing fee charge





# Division of Child Support Services

**HB 381: Child Support; defined terms and terminology, grammar, and punctuation**

Rep. Chuck Efstration

Effective July 1, 2019

- Revises and corrects defined terms and terminology, grammar, and punctuation; and allows other provisions
- Clarifies a provision of the regulatory changes in the federal “Flexibility, Efficiency, and Modernization in Child Support Enforcement Programs” or “Final Rule”



# Division of Child Support Services

## HB 481: Living Infants Fairness and Equality (LIFE) Act

Rep. Ed Setzler

Effective January 1, 2020

- Implements the “LIFE” Act
  - Allows the court to impose limited medical and pregnancy related expenses on the father of an unborn child
  - May also impact child abuse investigations



# Pending legislation

## **SB 229: Parental Accountability Court**

Sen. Randy Robertson

- Seeks to codify Parental Accountability Courts and creates the authority for the implementation of the same or similar provisions as other accountability courts

## **HB 402: Adult Protective Services Mandated Reporting**

Rep. Houston Gaines

- Seeks to clarify that employees of banks and financial institutions are required to report suspicions of abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults

## **HB 578: Criminal Background Checks**

Rep. Katie Dempsey

- Seeks to authorize the Department to obtain conviction data on students, interns and volunteers who have access to our customers and/or their confidential information



# Division of Family & Children Services

## SB 106: “Patients First Act”

Sen. Blake Tillery

Effective March 22, 2019

- Authorizes the governor to request a waiver from the secretaries of the Treasury and Health & Human Services to expand Medicaid





# Division of Family & Children Services

## SB 158: Anti-Human Trafficking Protective Response Act

Sen. Brian Strickland

Effective July 1, 2019

- Provides additional safeguards and protections against human trafficking
- Authorize DFCS to provide care and supervision of children who are victims of trafficking



# Division of Family & Children Services

## SB 167: Foster parent recognition

Sen. Matt Brass

Effective July 1, 2019

- Gives relatives six months to come forward for placement and adoptions after notification from DFCS
- Allows judges to halt placement changes after 12 months in one home when the child has bonded with the foster parents



# Division of Family & Children Services

## SB 225: Federal “housekeeping bill”

Sen. Larry Walker

Effective upon signature

- Aligns state law with federal regulations for serving families who are or may be members of federally recognized Native American tribes
- Restores DHS as the final authority in appeals of federally funded benefits
- Specifies the length of time in foster care that qualifies a youth who ages out for certain vital documents
- Creates a Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) placement and a time limit for judicial review of children placed there as part of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)



# Division of Family & Children Services

## HB 12: Maltreatment hotline signs

Rep. Rick Williams

Effective July 1, 2019

- Requires all schools to post signs with a national toll-free number to report allegations of child abuse and neglect





# Division of Family & Children Services

## HB 64: Military cooperation

Rep. Brian Prince

Effective July 1, 2019

- Requires DFCS to notify the family-support unit of local military bases when a child-welfare care involves a service member



# Division of Family & Children Services

## HB 79: Anti-discrimination

Rep. Carl Gilliard

Effective July 1, 2019

- Prohibits discrimination against the blind in adoptions or the placement of foster children
- Authorizes judges to order supportive services for parents
- This is specific to the blind.



# Division of Family & Children Services

## HB 472: Alternatives to Foster Care

Rep. Bert Reeves

April 18, 2019

- Provides judicial authority to issue temporary orders to safeguard children without the need for removal
- Requires judges to consider alternatives to foster care
- Specifies training for juvenile court intake officers



# Division of Family & Children Services

## HB 478: Child Abuse Registry fixes

Rep. Mandi Ballinger

Effective January 1, 2020

- Children's names will no longer be placed on the registry
- Names would only be added after appeals are exhausted
- Provides for expungement after three years
- Allows prosecutors to request a halt to proceedings until completion of a pending criminal case





# Division of Family & Children Services

## HB 514: Georgia Mental Health Reform and Innovation Commission

Rep. Kevin Tanner

Effective July 1, 2019

- Creates a commission to examine the state's mental-health delivery system and to recommend improvements
- Names the DFCS director as a member



# Division of Family & Children Services

## HB 530: School absences

Rep. Bill Hitchens

Effective July 1, 2019

- Requires schools notify DFCS of absences longer than 45 days which will trigger a home assessment



# Questions?

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