



Georgia Department of Human Services
Office of Legislative Affairs & Outreach

2018 General Assembly

Session Wrap-up Report

Jackie Tate

DHS Director of Legislative Affairs and Outreach

Walter Jones

DFCS Director of Legislative Affairs and Communications



STRONGER FAMILIES FOR A STRONGER GEORGIA



Agenda

- Session Overview
- Departmental impacts
 - Aging Services
 - Child Support Services
 - Department Administrative
 - Family Children and Children Services



Session Overview

The 2017-2018 General Assembly's second year of the biennial concluded March 29, 2018. During the 2018 legislative session, the Legislative Affairs team tracked more than 70 bills that were of interest to the Department of Human Services (DHS).

With the final gavel, numerous legislative proposals impacting DHS had passed and were on the way to the Governor for his approval. Of these, eight of the agency's proposals were included.



Division of Aging Services

SB 444: Georgia Alzheimer's and Related Dementias (GARD) Advisory Council

Sen. Renee Unterman

Effective: July 1, 2018

- Recodifies the GARD Advisory Council and defines its membership and its role
- Primary responsibility will be to advise the Governor, members of the General Assembly, as well as the Commissioner and other state agencies on progressing the GARD State Plan



Division of Aging Services (DAS)

HB 635: Adult Protective Services Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs)

Rep. Sharon Cooper

Effective: July 1, 2018

- Authorizes district attorneys to establish multidisciplinary teams by jurisdiction to assist with coordinating adult protective services investigations
- Includes an agency proposal pertaining to Adult Protective Services (APS) confidentiality statute



Division of Aging Services

HB 803: Adult Protective Services (APS) Exploitation Prevention

Rep. Wendell Willard

Effective: July 1, 2018

- Creates a statute for criminal trafficking of a disabled or older adult through coercion, deception or exploitation to appropriate that person's resources for personal benefit or to benefit another person



Division of Child Support Services

SB 427: Child Support Regulatory Changes

Sen. John Kennedy

Effective: Part 1 – July 1, 2018; Part II – October 1, 2018

- Agency proposal that changes the criteria for what must be considered when establishing or reviewing a child support order for enforcement
- No longer requires the use of multiple worksheets when determining a support order and there is more than one child
- Also raises the administrative fee from \$25 to \$35



Division of Child Support Services

HB 344: Paternity Testing

Rep. Katie Dempsey

Effective: July 1, 2018

- Agency proposal that will allow the Division of Child Support Services to provide paternity testing for individuals named in a child support order when the man is not believed to be the biological father and has not previously refused testing



Departmental Administration

HB 790: Office of State Administrative Hearings Appeals

Sponsored by Rep. Chuck Efstration

Effective: May 8, 2018

- Allows a party to make a direct request for a hearing with the Office of State Administrative Hearings (OSAH) when contesting a decision and the agency fails to forward the request to OSAH



Division of Family & Children Services Legislation

**Walter Jones
Director of Legislative Affairs and Communications**



Division of Family and Children Services

SB 131: Termination of Parental Rights

Sen. Blake Tillery

Effective: July 1, 2018

- Requires that adoption proceedings be stayed while an appeal is pending to terminate parental rights
- Includes a DFCS proposal that eliminates the burden to prove that a child would be harmed by long-term foster care in order to terminate parental rights prior to adoption



Division of Family and Children Services

HB 906: Combines three proposals relative to the foster care system

Rep. Katie Dempsey, Rep. Chad Nimmer, Rep. Wendell Willard

Effective: Part I – July 1, 2020; Parts II & III – July 1, 2018; Part IV – May 8, 2018

- Protects foster parents' private information from public disclosure, including home address and telephone number
- Requires DFCS to provide to caregivers each foster child's educational and medical records and court-scheduling information within 15 days of placement
- Extends foster care services to youth up to the age of 21, allowing DFCS to access federal funds for those services



Division of Family and Children Services

HB 920: Adoption Records

Rep. Katie Dempsey

Effective: July 1, 2018

- When a child adopted through DFCS dies, is seriously injured or is the subject of alleged maltreatment, the DFCS Director or his/her designee can authorize access to sealed adoption records in order to investigate and review agency practice and to share access to those files with the Office of the Child Advocate



Departmental Administration

HB 159: Adoption Code Revision

Rep. Burt Reeves

Effective: Sept. 1, 2018

- This legislation is a comprehensive update of Georgia's adoption code, which deals largely with private adoptions
- The legislation also includes a provision allowing parents to assign the power of attorney over a minor child to another adult who is approved by a child placing agency, nonprofit entity or faith-based organization



Departmental Administration

- **HB 513: Safe Drop-Off Signage**
- *Rep. Pam Dickinson*
- *Effective: July 1, 2018*
 - Requires the Department to develop standards for signs to be posted at medical facilities, fire houses and police stations informing the public that these places are authorized to accept newborns being surrendered



Departmental Administration

SB 336: Background Checks

Sen. Renee Unterman

Effective July 1, 2018:

- Allows the GBI to retain fingerprints for the purpose of records checks for licensing certain facilities, foster homes and other regulatory functions
- Also prohibits internet service providers from notifying their subscribers that the GBI has subpoenaed records related to a child-pornography investigation



Questions

Jacqueline Tate, DHS Director of Legislative Affairs

jackie.tate@dhs.ga.gov

404.783.3461

Walter Jones, DFCS Director of Legislative Affairs

walter.jones@dhs.ga.gov

470.512.0104

