



**Georgia Department of Human Services**  
Office of Legislative Affairs & Outreach

# 2018 General Assembly

Session Update

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STRONGER FAMILIES FOR A STRONGER GEORGIA



# Agenda

- Session Overview
- Division of Aging Services proposals
- Division of Child Support proposals
- Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) proposals
- Other legislation that will have a significant impact on DFCS
- Questions



# Session Overview

This year is the second term of the 2017-2018 General Assembly. Legislation that did not pass last year is still eligible for consideration this year.

Legislative Affairs is monitoring many proposals that may impact the Department. Among the new proposals, three proposals are for DHS and six are for DFCS to bring the Department into compliance with federal regulations and/or help with the administration of our programs and services.

We are also monitoring many carryover bills from the last Session to include HB 344, HB 635, and HB 159 (the adoption code rewrite which recently passed and awaits the Governor's signature).



# **Division of Aging Services**

## **Georgia Alzheimer's & Related Dementias Proposal**

*Synopsis:* This proposal would recodify the Georgia Alzheimer's & Related Dementias (GARD) Advisory Council to advise the Governor, General Assembly, and the Department of Human Services in adhering to the GARD State Plan. If passed, the legislation will define the Advisory Council's membership and role, and provide structure for the future.

The previous statute creating a similar advisory council was overwritten during code revisions.



# HB 635

*Rep. Sharon Cooper*

**Synopsis:** This proposal seeks to create multi-disciplinary teams by jurisdiction to assist with the coordination and responses to investigations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older or disabled adults, as well as provide recommendations for improving adult protective services; and allow changes to confidentiality laws pertaining to Adult Protective Services (APS). These changes will allow APS to:

- Share with mandated reporters, upon their request, if the report or reports made have been received, whether an investigation was opened or not, and whether the investigation is still open or closed, requiring the department to respond in writing within 5 business days with this information.
- Allow APS to share records with coroners and medical examiners in death cases where there is suspected abuse or neglect.
- Redact the names of reporters with the exception of records released to law enforcement or district attorneys.



# SB 427

*Sen. John Kennedy*

*Synopsis:* The proposal will bring Georgia into compliance with regulations on state-administered child support programs released by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement.

These regulatory changes require that:

- Consideration must be given to an obligor's ability to pay;
- Incarceration may not be treated as voluntary unemployment;
- The imputation of income must account for the obligor's ability to pay and other economic factors; and
- Public health care must be deemed sufficient to meet the obligor's medical support order.

**Failure to comply prior to July 1, 2018 will place Georgia at risk of losing federal funds for the TANF block grant.**



# House Bill 344

*Rep. Katie Dempsey*

*Synopsis:* This bill is clean up legislation for HB 568 passed in 2015. The bill changes the term “movant” to “individual” to allow a DCSS customer under a current child support order to obtain a paternity test from DHS under certain circumstances.

HB 344 recently passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee and is eligible for a vote in the Senate Chamber. If passed by the Senate, the bill will go back to the House for an agree or disagree vote.





# **Division of Family & Children Services Proposals**

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



# Division of Family & Children Services Proposals

## *Senate Bill 131*

*Synopsis:* A proposal to eliminate the burden to prove that a child would be harmed by long-term foster care in order to terminate parental rights.

*Synopsis:* A proposal to align state law with federal regulations for serving families who are members or who may be members of federally recognized Native American tribes.

*Synopsis:* A proposal to exempt DFCS from the requirement to undergo a competitive-bidding process in the obtainment of services related to child-protective services and foster care.



# Division of Family & Children Services Proposals

## *House Bill 906*

*Synopsis:* A proposal to protect foster parents' private information, including home address and telephone number, from public disclosure.

*Synopsis:* A proposal to extend foster care services to youth up to the age of 21, allowing DFCS to access federal revenues to fund those services.

*Synopsis:* A proposal to allow DFCS to access sealed adoption records, if approved by the Director or his/her designee, in order to investigate reports of maltreatment of adopted children and review agency practice following the death or serious injury of a child adopted from foster care.



# House Bill 655

*Rep. Rick Williams*

*Synopsis:* The bill requires all schools to post signs with a national toll-free number to report allegations of child abuse and neglect.



# Senate Bill 311

*Sen. Josh McKoon*

*Synopsis:* This bill would make public all court documents, including juvenile court and administrative hearings for the Child Abuse Registry.



# Senate Bill 375

*Sen. William Ligon*

*Synopsis:* This bill would allow child-placing agencies to decline foster-care placements on religious grounds.



# Questions

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