



Georgia Department of Human Services

Update from the Office of Legislative Affairs and Communications

Ashley Fielding

Director, Legislative Affairs and Communications

General Assembly Update

House Bill 750

Synopsis: This is the supplemental appropriations bill for FY16

Impact: Bill adds funding to cover the following:

- Appropriate school personnel
- Emergency responders
- Law enforcement personnel
- Private child welfare service providers
- Alumni of the child welfare system
- Mental health care providers, active or retired
- Former foster parents
- Leaders within the faith-based community



General Assembly Update

House Bill 751

Synopsis: This is the appropriations bill for FY17

Impact: Bill adds funding to cover the following

- Appropriate school personnel
- Emergency responders
- Law enforcement personnel
- Private child welfare service providers
- Alumni of the child welfare system
- Mental health care providers, active or retired
- Former foster parents
- Leaders within the faith-based community



General Assembly Update

House Bill 1085 (effective 7/1/2016)

Rep. Katie Dempsey

Synopsis:

Impact: The legislation transfers the administration of the Community Care Services Program (CCSP) waiver from DHS to the Department of Community Health (DCH.)

Implementation: 7/1/2016



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General Assembly Update

House Bill 954 (effective 7/1/2016)

Rep. Chuck Efstration

Synopsis: The bill adds Georgia to the list of numerous states that have implemented a "Uniform Adult Guardianship and Conservatorship Proceedings Jurisdiction Act."

Impact: The bill provides for the registration and recognition of Georgia as a participant in the act among the other states, also provides for the uniformity of international application among the states for communications and cooperation between courts, taking testimony in another state, for jurisdiction and special jurisdiction; for notice of proceedings in more than one state, for the transfer of guardianship or conservatorship to another state, for the acceptance of guardianship or conservatorship transferred from another state, etc.

Implementation: 7/1/2016



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General Assembly Update

House Bill 962 (effective 7/1/2016)

Rep. Stacey Abrams

Synopsis: Bill calls for the creation and appointment of a kinship care enforcement administrator; and requires DHS to provide a separate link on the agency website for kinship caregivers.

Impact: The legislation requires the commissioner to appoint a kinship care administrator to oversee the agency's practice of providing benefits for minor children who are in the care of kinship caregivers. A separate link providing kinship caregivers with information and access to apply for benefits for the children will be implemented through the department's current efforts to update and redesign the agency website.

Implementation: 7/1/2016



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General Assembly Update

House Bill 887 (effective 7/1/2016)

Rep. Chuck Efstration

Synopsis: Bill requires prioritizing placement of a child who comes into foster care with an adult relative or fictive kin.

Impact: The bill will require DFCS case managers to prioritize placement of a child who comes into foster care with relatives or fictive kin when such individual is qualified to care the child and it is in the best interests of the child.



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General Assembly Update

House Bill 1070 (effective 7/1/2016)

Rep. Katie Dempsey

Synopsis: The bill allows limited Agency access to adoption records when considering the placement of a child or when conducting a child abuse investigation.

Impact: The legislation will allow DFCS to access information contained in their records concerning an adopted child and the adopted child's biological parents in connection with the placement of another child in the home of the adoptive parents of the child or in connection with the investigation of a report of child abuse or neglect made concerning the adopted child's biological parents.

Implementation: 7/1/2016



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General Assembly Update

House Bill 905 (effective 7/1/2016)

Rep. Mandi Ballinger

Synopsis: Bill makes changes to state child abuse protocols, removes criminal convictions from the state child abuse registry, adds the term “child endangerment” to the definition of “child abuse”, establishes a protocol committee in each judicial circuit to develop local protocol for child abuse investigation and prosecution cases, provides immunity from criminal liability for possession of child pornography if they immediately report this information to law enforcement for suspected child abuse, or mandated reported who file the report within 72 hours, requires the coordination of multi-agency contract and licensure inspections of child welfare agencies and the publication of a public scorecard for these agencies on a single website.

Impact: Bill eliminates convictions of child abuse crimes from the Child Abuse Registry and adds child endangerment to the list of actions that must be reported to the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS). Child endangerment includes driving while intoxicated with a child in the car and having a child in the home as drugs are manufactured. Requires DFCS to designate a representative to serve on the protocol committee. Bill also provides immunity for individuals who in good faith receive child pornography and make an immediate report to law enforcement, or mandated reporters who file the report within 72 hours.

Implementation: 7/1/2016



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General Assembly Update

House Bill 725 (effective 7/1/2016)

Rep. Wes Cantrell

Synopsis: The purpose of this bill is to protect the records of Child Advocacy Centers from disclosure by making them confidential under O.C.G.A. Section 49-5-40(b), the statute which protects DFCS child abuse and neglect records. Under this legislation, CAC child abuse and neglect records and information may only be disclosed as permitted under O.C.G.A. Section 49-5-41.

Impact: Bill adds uniformity to treatment of records collected in an investigation of child abuse.

Implementation: 7/1/2016



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General Assembly Update

Senate Bill 331 (effective 7/1/2016)

Sen. Bruce Thompson

Synopsis: The bill provides that causing a child to be conceived as a result of rape is an additional ground for losing parental rights and is relevant in certain adoption proceedings.

Impact: Fathers who conceive a child by rape are subject to termination of their parental rights.

Implementation: 7/1/2016



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General Assembly Update

Senate Bill 367 (effective 7/1/2016)

Sen. John Kennedy

Synopsis: The bill is a continuation of Criminal Justice Reform.

Impact: The bill includes a provision for individuals who have felony drug convictions to receive SNAP/food stamp assistance while not incarcerated.

Implementation: 7/1/2016



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General Assembly Update

House Bill 765 (effective 7/1/2016)

Rep. Jay Powell

Synopsis: The proposed bill seeks to increase the types of people eligible for service on local DFCS boards

Impact: Bill adds the qualifying language “active or retired” to each of the approved categories for board service. These include:

- Pediatric health care providers,
- Appropriate school personnel
- Emergency responders
- Law enforcement personnel
- Private child welfare service providers
- Alumni of the child welfare system
- Mental health care providers, active or retired
- Former foster parents
- Leaders within the faith-based community

Implementation: 7/1/2016



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General Assembly Update

Senate Bill 64 (effective 7/1/2016)

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler

Synopsis: The legislation removes the provision for administrative legitimation and requires legitimation to be established by the court for new cases, requires all parties to be notified prior to the hearing, requires hospital staff to explain the difference between paternity and legitimation, requires witnesses for paternity acknowledgement.

Impact: Removes the provision for administrative legitimation and requires legitimation to be established by the court for new cases.

Implementation: 7/1/2016



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General Assembly Update

House Study Committees:

Mental Illness Initiative created to a study initiatives, reforms, public health, and safety concerning mentally ill individuals in Georgia including, but not limited to, a consideration of efforts in treating and supporting mentally ill individuals, community based housing, residential mental health facilities, and examining county and municipality infrastructures inclusive of residential and congregate care housing options.

Reading to the Blind and Visually Impaired created to enhance public awareness of service programs along with study adjustments in the rehabilitation services and identify and study the places and programs which serve the blind and visually impaired and their service delivery area, the scope of the programs or services, the funding sources of the programs or services, and the individual participation rates for the numbers of citizens served annually.



General Assembly Update

Senate Study Committees:

Data Security and Privacy created to understand the state's current approach to addressing both accidental and intentional data breaches and determining the adequacy of existing resources and policies to protect the personal information of citizens stored on government networks.

Higher Education Access and Success for Homeless and Foster Youth created to examine tools and aids that can benefit youth from foster care or homeless situations in pursuing career preparation and degrees from units of the University System of Georgia and branches of the Technical College System of Georgia.

Sexual Offender Registry created to examine ways in which Georgia's approach to monitoring the activities of registered sexual offenders can be enhanced and strengthened.

Hearing Aids for Children created to study the health insurance coverage for hearing aids for children and the components of that coverage and options when considering how to best address the provision of hearing aids to children.

Premium Assistance Program Senate Study Committee created to study premium assistance as an alternative to the expansion of Medicaid that assists individuals with purchasing coverage through private group health plans.

