

Legislative Update for Commission on Improving the Status of Children – 5.20.2015

Parvonay Stover, Department of Child Services (DCS) Legislative Director

House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1001 – Biennial Budget Bill

- DCS received an additional \$15M over the biennium to fund 100 new case manager positions and 17 new supervisors
- DCS received an additional \$22M/biennium to continue funding the State Adoption Subsidy (SAS) for approximately 1,600 children
 - SAS is a per diem payment to parents of children adopted from foster care who meet certain special needs requirements
- Other noteworthy increases:
 - Supreme Court received an additional \$2M/year for the CASA/GAL program
 - Criminal Justice Institute received \$5M in new funding for domestic violence treatment and prevention programs
 - State Department of Health received \$14M in new funding for infant mortality prevention
 - Increase of roughly \$500M for K-12 schools and pre-K programs

HEA 1434 – Department of Child Services (DCS agency bill)

- Annual DCS cleanup bill, the majority of which is language to strengthen DCS older youth programs and help youth successfully transition out of foster care
- Requires DCS and probation departments to collaborate with older youth in foster care to create “case plans,” which are plans that outline the child’s future goals and the child’s rights in terms of education, health, visitation, and court participation
- Requires DCS to run annual credit reports on youth starting at age 14 instead of 16 as currently required, because identity theft can be a huge issue for youth in foster care
- Adds a definition of “successful adulthood” for older youth transitioning out of care, as opposed to the term “independent living.” Older youth are not transitioning to be *independent*, as we want them to maintain healthy and strong relationships with family and friends and mentors. We want them to transition instead to *successful adulthood*.

SEA 324 – Child Support (DCS agency bill)

- Updates the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA) language currently in statute that governs how states and countries send and receive child support cases from one another. Indiana currently uses a version of UIFSA adopted in the late 90s, and this bill replaces the current version with the latest version adopted signed into law by the President in September 2014 (H.R. 4980).
- UIFSA helps ensure that cases are handled consistently, which leads to more money going to children and families

HEA 1004 – Safety PIN (Protecting Indiana’s Newborns) Grant Program

- Creates a grant program administered by State Department of Health for infant mortality prevention. The grants will help benefit programs that improve access to prenatal care, provide services for pregnant mothers, help mothers stop smoking and other risk behaviors, increase coordination among health and service providers, and decrease infant mortality rates.

HEA 1216 – Missing Children and Trafficked Children

- Requires the Indiana State Police (ISP) to develop a pamphlet with information on resources for missing children and trafficked children, including information on the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the National Runaway Safeline. ISP must distribute the pamphlet to law enforcement agencies statewide, and law enforcement officers must provide the pamphlet to anyone reporting a child missing.
- Requires that when law enforcement detain suspected victims of human trafficking under age 18, they must immediately notify DCS that the child was detained and that the child might be a victim of child abuse or neglect.

HEA 1196 – CHINS and Delinquent Child Dual Determination

- Works to increase communication and collaboration between DCS, probation departments, and the juvenile courts to better serve dual status youth – defined as youth who have current or previous involvement in the CHINS system and the juvenile delinquency system
- Provides that during a preliminary assessment, a case manager or probation officer will conduct a review of a child’s status and history through a new “dual status screening tool” and will recommend to the court whether a child should be assessed further by a Dual Status Assessment Team
- Provides that the Dual Status Assessment Team must assess a dual status child’s best interests, need for services, and level of strengths and risks, and make recommendations to the juvenile court about how to proceed with a child’s CHINS and/or delinquency cases
 - The Dual Status Assessment Team is comprised of the child’s case manager, the probation officer, and a facilitator
 - Can also include the child’s attorney, parent or guardian, foster parent, CASA, teacher, service provider, and others
- Provides that for children who are dually involved with DCS and the juvenile justice system, the court will identify either DCS or probation as the “lead agency” to supervise the child and coordinate services

HEA 1016 – Newborn Safety Incubators

- Requires the Commission on Improving the Status of Children, before Jan. 1, 2016, to submit recommendations to the legislature and the Governor’s office regarding:
 - New methods or mechanisms for carrying out policies relating to abandoned children, including the use of newborn safety incubators,
 - The production and distribution of information concerning the laws regarding emergency custody of abandoned children under the Safe Haven law, and
 - The advisability of establishing and posting uniform signs regarding locations at which children may be voluntarily left with an emergency medical services provider.
- Requires the State Department of Health, before Jan. 1, 2016, to submit recommendations to the legislature and the Governor’s office regarding:
 - Health, sanitation, and safety standards/protocols for the installation and operation of newborn safety incubators,
 - Manufacturing/design standards and costs of the incubators,
 - Procedures for facilities to register to install an incubator, and inspection criteria for the unit.
- Adds definitions related to the incubators, such as specifying that an eligible “facility” is defined as a hospital, police station, or fire station staffed 24 hours a day with emergency service providers