

EXHIBIT C

Minutes Blake
Senate Interim Committee on Children and Youth
House Interim Committee on
Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs
Meeting Jointly

Thursday, July 9, 2020

1:00 P.M.

Room A, MAC

Little Rock, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senators Bart Hester, Chair; Mathew Pitsch, Vice-Chair; Alan Clark, Breanne Davis and David Wallace **Representatives** Charlene Fite, Chair; LeAnne Burch, Craig Christiansen, Cindy Crawford, Denise Garner, Don Glover, Julie Mayberry, Tippi McCullough, Richard McGrew, Keith Slape, Stu Smith, Joy Springer, Danny Watson and Jim Wooten

Non-committee members present: Senators Linda Chesterfield, Jonathan Dismang, Trent Garner, and Kim Hammer **Representatives** Fred Allen, Stan Berry, Carol Dalby, Jim Dotson, Denise Ennett, Kenneth Ferguson, Vivian Flowers, Grant Hodges, Reginald Murdock, Aaron Pilkington, Marcus Richmond, Johnny Rye, Jamie Scott, Dan Sullivan, Dwight Tosh and Carlton Wing

Representative Fite called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes: June 10, 2020 [Exhibit C]

Representative Burch made a motion for approval of the meeting minutes of June 10, 2020. Senator Hester seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Rule for Review: Private Licensed Placement Agency Resource Homes (PLPA)

[Exhibit D]

Ms. Christin Harper, Assistant Director, Infrastructure & Specialized Programs, DCFS, reviewed the rule on Private Licensed Placement Agency Resource Home, which defines PLPA and how they operate in conjunction with DCFS and their approved resource homes. The rule requires PLPA to ensure that resource homes meet minimum licensing standards and DCFS policies.

Representative Fite stated that without objection the rule stands as reviewed.

Arkansas Department of Human Services, DCFS [Exhibits E1-E3]

Ms. Mischa Martin, Director, DCFS, discussed the High Level Arkansas Child Welfare Process Map. The map details the process and criteria for accepting calls through the hot-line. The Child Maltreatment Act states that calls are determined based upon the criteria of CACD and DCFS's Memorandum of Understanding and Differential Response policy. After which, an investigation is initiated within 24 to 72 hours of receiving the case, and at that time DCFS conducts a safety assessment and later determines the safety risk pertaining to that child. If signs are warranted, then

DCFS or CACD continues their investigation, interviewing collaterals, and collecting evidence, with 45 days to complete the investigation. By the conclusion of the 45 days, if there's evidence to support the case and a true determination is found, the offender will receive a certified notification explaining their rights to appeal through the Office of Appeals. If the offender does not request an appeal within 30 days, then their name will be placed on the Child Maltreatment Registry.

Ms. Martin discussed the key elements of structured decision making, and the risk factors for child abuse. She discussed the difference between safety and risk, stating that the two are not the same. Investigators are trained regarding the level of risk and how to determine if a child is in immediate danger. She addressed the concerns about the protection plan, in which she indicated that DCFS is partnering with the National Council on Crime & Delinquency (NCCD) to implement training on safety and risk assessments.

Ms. Martin reviewed the Family Preservation Services "An Assessment of Recent DCFS Performance and Outcomes State Fiscal Year 2020." This report was enacted in 2001 by the Arkansas legislature requiring that DCFS conduct an annual evaluation of family preservation services. She began by providing a breakdown of the assessment by area of jurisdiction and their strengths and areas for improvements. During calendar year (CY) 2019, Arkansas accepted 28,645 child maltreatment reports; indicating a slight decrease from the previous years. However, there was a slight increase in the initiation rate, and a decrease in the timely completion of investigations.

Recurrence of maltreatment is measured by examining all child victims of maltreatment during a 12-month period and identifying how many were victimized. Arkansas is below the national standard of 6% for CY 2019. There has been a decline in foster care placement in the last two years, however, placement with relatives has risen 33% in CY 2019. The placement stability rate is above the national average with all 75 counties meeting the national standard. Arkansas exceeds the national standard of 40.5% or more for achieving permanency for children within 12 months. Re-entry is at 7.8% above the national standard rate, which is also a strength. Adoptions were finalized for 985 children in CY 2019, up from the previous two years. DCFS's most vulnerable cases are in-home cases; their caseworkers completed 75% of visits to in-home families during CY 2019, an increase of 15% from its visitation rate in CY 2017. DCFS met their monthly goal of 85% in required home visits.

Arkansas State Police (ASP), Crimes Against Children Division (CACD), Quarterly Oversight Report (January – March 2020) [Exhibits F]

Major Jeff Drew, Commander, ASP, reported on the oversight report for January to March 2020. During the quarter, 17,165 calls were received through the hotline and 7,861 calls were accepted. CACD investigated 1,378 during the quarter, and 4,901 were referred to DCFS, and Differential Response was assigned 4,901. There were 1,494 cases opened and 1,633 cases closed, with 552 cases found true with a substantiated rate of 34%. There were a total of 15,199 cases reported by the mandated reporters during the quarter. The prosecuting attorney's office received a total of 261 cases during the quarter, and declined 46, with 167 cases filed and 48 cases pending.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:53 p.m.