

Minutes
Senate Interim Committee on Children and Youth
House Interim Committee on
Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs
Meeting Jointly
Tuesday, August 15, 2017

The Senate Interim Committee on Children and Youth and the House Interim Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs met jointly on Tuesday, August 15, 2017, at 10:00 a.m., at the State Capitol, Room 171, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Committee members present: **Senators** Stephanie Flowers, Chair; Will Bond, Alan Clark and Missy Irvin; **Representatives** Charlene Fite, Chair; David Meeks, Vice Chair; LeAnne Burch, Frances Cavanaugh, Bruce Coleman, Mickey Gates, Monte Hodges, Steve Hollowell, Milton Nicks, Jr., Rebecca Petty, John Walker, Danny Watson and Carlton Wing

Non-committee members present: **Senators** Eddie Cheatham and Jane English; **Representatives** David Hillman and Fredrick Love.

Representative Fite called the meeting to order.

Consideration to Approve Minutes of June 7, 2017 [Exhibit C]

Without objection, the minutes of the June 7, 2017, meeting were approved.

Consideration to adopt Interim Study Proposals (ISP) [Exhibits D1-D3]

Representative Meeks made a motion to adopt ISP 2017-017, ISP 2017-015 and ISP 2017-070; without objection, the ISPs were adopted.

Arkansas Court Appointed Special Advocate Program

Representative Fite recognized Ms. Mary Beth Luibel, Director, Arkansas Court Appointed Special Advocate Association (CASA). CASA has 23 local programs across the state that recruit, train and support the work of volunteers appointed by juvenile court judges to advocate for youth who have been removed from their homes and placed in state care/custody due to abuse and neglect. For the last fiscal year there were 1,387 volunteers who advocated for 4,621 kids that were in state custody. All volunteers are required to go through 30-hours of training before being appointed to support and serve any child. Upon completion of the 30-hours of training, an additional 12-hours of in-service training is required. With the assistance of CASA, 42% of the kids were able to return home.

Senator Flowers requested a map of the different CASA locations across the state.

Department of Youth Services (DYS) Action Plan, Strengthening Services, Treatment Centers, Arkansas Department of Human Services [Handout #1]

Representative Fite recognized Ms. Betty Guhman, Director, DYS. Ms. Guhman discussed the press conference held with the Governor during which he expressed his approval of the DYS Action Plan. She provided a brief review of the action plan and plans to provide updates to the committee on a

regular basis.

After performing a thorough investigation in January, DYS discovered that several of the residential treatment centers were having problems in the areas of behavioral health, education services, finance (over 85% of DYS funding is state general revenue), family engagement and community based services. Plans have been implemented for each of the areas mentioned to correct any challenges and provide the necessary tools to bring the facilities up to national standards.

Ms. Guhman also mentioned the \$50,000 that was provided to the judicial system in an effort to assist judges and providers with addressing areas they feel will provide the resources for some of the challenges they see on a regular basis.

Senator Flowers requested that DYS provide a copy of their annual report to the committee.

Representative Hodges requested a map of the seven residential treatment centers around the state.

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:20 p.m.