

# EXHIBIT B

**Minutes**  
**Senate Committee on Children and Youth and the House Committee on**  
**Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs**  
**Meeting Jointly**  
**Wednesday, October 14, 2015**

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The Senate Committee on Children and Youth and the House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs met jointly on Wednesday, October 14, 2015 at 10:00 a.m., in Room 171 of the State Capitol Building in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Committee members present: **Senators** Stephanie Flowers, Chair; Bart Hester, Vice Chair; Alan Clark, Bobby J. Pierce and Greg Standridge. **Representatives** George B. McGill, Chair; Charlene Fite, Vice Chair; Mary Broadaway, Karilyn Brown, Vivian Flowers, Justin T. Harris, Julie Mayberry, David Meeks, Rebecca Petty, Marcus E. Richmond, Laurie Rushing and Sue Scott.

Non-committee members present: **Senator** Bruce Maloch and Gary Stubblefield. **Representatives** John Baine, Scott Baltz, R. Trevor Drown, Kenneth Ferguson, Mary (Prissy) Hickerson, David Hillman, Kelley Linck, Mark McElroy, James Ratliff, James Sorvillo and Nelda Speaks

**DHS, Division of Youth Services (DYS), 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Report, SFY 2015, April 1, 2015 – June 30, 2015** [EXHIBIT D]

Mr. Marcus Devine gave a brief overview of the quarterly report and indicated that Appendix 2 lists all of the Juvenile Detention Centers (JDC) around the state of Arkansas, as requested. He discussed some of the services DYS provides in maintaining the residents and services to youth that have been adjudicated through the DYS system. He recognized Ms. Madelyn Keith and Mr. Scott Tanner, members of the Youth Justice Reform Board. The board's first meeting was held on September 30<sup>th</sup>. The board hopes to have issues outlined for consideration during the 2017 legislative session.

Mr. Devine discussed the 2014-2015 DYS Annual Report to the Legislature. He highlighted the partnership between DYS and Shorter College which is aimed at assisting youth with college courses and earning college hours that are transferrable to other universities around the state.

**Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Quarterly Performance Report, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, SFY 2015, April 1, 2015 – June 30, 2015**

[EXHIBIT C]

Ms. Cecile Blucker pointed out the increase of more than 1,000 maltreatment cases than in the previous quarter noting that the increase did not affect the timeliness of initiating and completing investigations. DCFS has 98 fulltime employees and 38 part time employees on staff that handle investigations and cases on a day-to-day basis. Cases this quarter increased by 386, a large increase from the last quarter. At the end of August, 2015 the average case load per worker was at 30.5 largely due to high turnover and inexperienced workers. The agency is experiencing challenges in filling 21 vacant positions across the state due to the lack of qualified applicants.

There was a noticeable increase in the number of kids entering foster care from the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter to 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. As of today 4,565 kids are in care. Neglect, substance abuse and parent incarceration are the top three reasons kids enter foster care. There are currently 586 kids available for adoption. Ms. Blucker reminded the committee that November is "National Adoption Month" and that 711 adoptions

were finalized during the fiscal year.

Senator Flowers shared her concerns about the role of Ad Litem and DCFS staff. Particularly, sharing responsibilities for such things as face to face visits with foster children and court hearings. This is something that needs to be addressed during the interim. She recommended that the committee or a subcommittee assist DCFS in presenting proposed legislation to address some of the issues DCFS is experiencing along with issues within the juvenile justice system.

Ms. Blucker is concerned about maintaining manageable case loads and getting competitive wages. She spoke briefly on working with the Court Improvement Project as well as the upcoming third round of the Child and Family Services Review, which is the Federal Report Card that examines the Child Welfare System. The report will consist of an evaluation on court related issues and data will be provided by jurisdiction and by judge as it pertains to performance. **Senator Flowers asked that the committee be provided a copy of that report.**

Representative Baine asked, what is the total number of case workers that is currently needed? Ms. Blucker replied that she would provide that information to staff.

**DHS – DCFS, Review of Rules, Ms. Christin Harper, DCFS Policy Unit Manager**

[EXHIBITS F – F1]

Ms. Harper reviewed the rule on “Maintaining Family Ties in Out-of-Home Placement”, and stated this rule was updated to comply with Act 1017 of 2015. She also presented the rule on “Division Contact with Children in Out-of-Home Placement”, and stated this rule was also updated.

Representative Meeks expressed concern about transportation issues related to foster children, noting that perhaps allowing the foster parent to take on some of the responsibility and implementing a waiver that would allow the foster parent to assist in transporting a child might be helpful in easing the caseworkers case load. Ms. Harper stated that DCFS will look into this and see if changes can be implemented.

Ms. Harper continued with the Child Near Fatalities and Fatalities Policy, noting this revision is needed to comply with Act 1245 of 2015. This act establishes the Child Death and Near Fatality Multi-disciplinary Review Committee.

Senator Flowers made a motion to recommend approval, without objections the motion was approved.

**Administrative Office of the Court (AOC), Court Case Management System, Tim Holthoff, Court Information Systems (CIS) Division Director, AOC** [EXHIBITS G1,G2,G3]

Mr. Holthoff provided background information on the court’s case management system. In 1990 the Supreme Court recognized technology was changing and created a Supreme Court committee on automation. It took more than a decade for the courts to adjust to the change in technology and in 2001 the courts presented a proposal to select a court case management system. Since that time the system has been improving around the state. Participation in the court case management system is voluntary.

He noted that AOC has implemented an interface with the Arkansas Crime Information Center (ACIC), so that when a person is found guilty of a felony their information is entered into the ACIC database system and is shared with AOC. AOC is also working with the Department of Correction and the Department of Community Correction so that data enter into those systems also goes directly into

the system without anyone having to re-enter the data. AOC is currently exploring ways to improve the quality of justice by enhancing technology and by working together with the courts and other agencies.

Senator Flowers asked what information is AOC able to provide pertaining to juveniles in the system. Mr. Holthoff stated the ability to provide information is improving because of automation being implemented around the state. In the past, information was very limited due to the courts limited ability to ascertain information. At that time the only information the courts had was the information provided on the case management cover sheet. AOC is now in a position to analyze the data on the cover sheets and look at the data entered into the system and identify the gaps, so they are able to address more issues. Senator Flowers asked if AOC is able to generate a report for juveniles in terms of what is being filed as well as which schools are filing petitions and what are the related costs. He stated that Dr. Diane Robinson is directing the new Office of Research and Justice Statistics and will be able to provide the committee with aggregate data related to juveniles.

There being no further business the committee adjourned the meeting at 12:22 p.m.