

Minutes

Senate Interim Committee on Children and Youth and the House Interim Committee on
Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs
Meeting Jointly
Wednesday, December 14, 2016

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 Wednesday, December 14, 2016, at 9:00 a.m., at the State Capitol Building, Room 171, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Committee members present: **Senators** Stephanie Flowers, Chair, and Linda Collins-Smith. **Representatives** George McGill, Chair, Justin Harris, Julie Mayberry, Marcus Richmond, Sue Scott, Brandt Smith and Dan Sullivan

Non-committee members present: **Senator** Bryan King; **Representatives** Charles L. Armstrong and John Baine.

Members-Elect present: Representative Danny Watson and Carlton Wing.

Representative McGill called the meeting to order.

Consideration to Approve Minutes of November 30, 2016 [Exhibit C]

Representative Scott made a motion to approve the November 30, 2016 meeting minutes; Representative Richmond second the motion and without objection the minutes were approved.

Arkansas State Police – Crimes Against Children Division (CACD), Oversight Report (July – September 2016) [Exhibit D]

Representative McGill recognized Major Ron Stayton, Division Commander, CACD. Major Stayton provided a brief review of the report. (*See Exhibit D for the full report*)

Senator Flowers asked for an update on a case involving an investigator with CACD. Major Stayton stated the investigation found eight cases entered fraudulently. Upon the investigator's resignation, all of his assigned cases were reviewed and 43 were found to contain false information. The investigator was charged with one count of tampering after it was determined the investigator was entering false information.

Representative Mayberry pointed out that legislation was passed in 2015 to add "Non-Profit Mandated Reporters", which is still not listed in the report. Major Stayton stated he will see that information gets added.

Senator Flowers requested copies of all DCFS contracts that are used for collecting data for reports. Representative McGill suggested that DCFS forward those contracts to staff to distribute to the committee.

“Unfilled Promises, The Reality of FINS in Arkansas”, Disability Rights Arkansas (DRA) and Arkansas Policy Program, Hendrix College [Exhibit E]

Representative McGill recognized Sam Kauffman, DRA, Attorney. Mr. Kauffman briefly discussed the report. (*See Exhibit E for the full report*) The report will show a comprehensive overview of the FINS process, its implementation and impact on Arkansans, particularly those with disabilities.

This system is very much in need of a reform and the report recommends a few reforms that would lead to a more efficient and economical and one that reflects the original purpose of FINS cases; which is coordinating and providing services to families who are truly in need of assistance.

FINS petitions have a disproportionate impact on Arkansans with disabilities and especially upon rural and poor Arkansans. Three primary things lacking in data are race, special education in schools, and a lack of services in rural and poor areas. There is no true data to track the success of FINS. There is a need to increase the ability to provide transportation to families and patients where services are available. Other recommendations are statutory clarifications to increase efforts provide services to rural and poor areas, requiring school districts to adhere to special education requirements before filing a FINS petition, providing legal representation for parents, ending the practice of locking up children, and better data collection.

Adjournment

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 10:22 a.m.