

1 INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2015-145

2
3 REQUESTING THAT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL REFER TO THE HOUSE
4 COMMITTEE ON AGING, CHILDREN AND YOUTH, LEGISLATIVE AND MILITARY
5 AFFAIRS AN INTERIM STUDY TO CONDUCT A FISCAL AND LEGISLATIVE
6 ANALYSIS REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN
7 THE JULY 6, 2015, REVIEW OF THE DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
8 SERVICES CONDUCTED BY THE CHILD WELFARE POLICY AND PRACTICE GROUP
9 CONCERNING CHILD WELFARE IN ARKANSAS.

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11 WHEREAS, the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group recently made
12 several recommendations to the Division of Children and Family Services to
13 address the challenges present in the Arkansas child welfare system in order
14 to significantly improve outcomes for families and children; and

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16 WHEREAS, the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group made the following
17 recommendations based on the review of division policy and procedure, agency
18 performance and trend data, internal studies, and external stakeholder input:

19 (1) Designate a staff member in the Governor's office to
20 coordinate interagency planning and system collaboration for children, youth,
21 and family services;

22 (2) Build the capacity of the division to partner with
23 stakeholders;

24 (3) Address the placement challenge;

25 (4) Create a county-central office task force to address
26 administrative flexibility;

27 (5) Improve the working relationship between the division and
28 the Administrative Office of Courts;

29 (6) Expedite the process for filling staff vacancies at the
30 division;

31 (7) Develop and implement a principle-based operational model of
32 practice for the division;

33 (8) Strengthen the practice of the division in assessing safety
34 assessment and engagement skills;

35 (9) Expand the availability of intensive home- and community-
36 based mental health services;

1 (10) Develop a three-year plan to reduce the division caseloads
2 to an average of twenty (20); and

3 (11) Determine responsibility for implementing recommendations;
4 and

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6 WHEREAS, the division is at the intersection of a growing foster-care
7 population, worker caseloads of nearly twice the national standard, and an
8 insufficient number of foster-home and relative placements; and

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10 WHEREAS, a fiscal and legislative analysis regarding the implementation
11 of these child welfare recommendations will further our state's goal of
12 protecting children in Arkansas,

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14 NOW THEREFORE,

15 BE IT PROPOSED BY THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE NINETIETH GENERAL
16 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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18 THAT the Legislative Council refer to the House Committee on Aging,
19 Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs an interim study to
20 conduct a fiscal and legislative analysis regarding the implementation of
21 recommendations contained in the July 6, 2015, review of the Division of
22 Children and Family Services conducted by the Child Welfare Policy and
23 Practice Group concerning child welfare in Arkansas.

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25 Respectfully submitted,

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29 Representative David Meeks

30 District 70

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33 By: SRC/BAT