

MINUTES

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGING, CHILDREN AND YOUTH, AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS Meeting Jointly

Monday, June 23, 2025

10:00 AM

Room A, MAC

Little Rock, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senators Ben Gilmore, Chair; Mark Johnson, Dan Sullivan; Representatives Sonia Eubanks Barker, Chair; Mary Bentley, Vice Chair; Glenn Barnes, Lincoln Barnett, Keith Brooks, Paul Childress, Hope Duke, Tony Furman, Diana Gonzales Worthen, Dolly Henley, Rick McClure, Jessie McGruder, Shad Pearce, Joy Springer, and Randy Torres

Other members present: Senators Tyler Dees, Fredrick Love, and Jamie Scott; Representatives Fred Allen, Howard Beaty, Stan Berry, Cameron Cooper, Denise Ennett, Jon Eubanks, Kenneth Ferguson, Zach Gramlich, Aaron Pilkington, David Ray, Tracy Steele, Dwight Tosh, and Jeff Wardlaw

Representative Barker called the meeting to order.

Consideration to Approve the May 28, 2025, Meeting Minutes [Exhibit B]

Representative McClure made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, seconded by Representative Springer, and the motion carried.

Presentation of the Arkansas Children's Fiscal Map [Exhibit C]

Pete Gess, Economic Policy Director, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, presented on the Arkansas Fiscal Map. The map provided data regarding investments in state programs, detailing the amounts allocated, and the specific destinations of these funds.

Children's Advocacy Centers of Arkansas Annual Report [Exhibit D]

Elizabeth Pulley, Executive Director, Children's Advocacy Centers of Arkansas, and Tiffany Wright, Director, Division of Children and Family Services, provided an overview of The Multidisciplinary Team. This team serves as the dedicated child abuse response unit, showcasing its commitment to ensuring that all members are thoroughly trained and equipped to deliver timely and effective services to child victims.

Arkansas Infant and Child Death Review (ICDR) Program Annual Report [Exhibit E]

Laura Taylor, Director, ICDR; Sherry Williamson, State Panel Member, ICDR; and Kevin Cleghorn, State Panel President, ICDR; presented the annual report detailing all unexpected deaths of Arkansas children aged zero to seventeen years, in compliance with Act 1818 of 2005.

Review of Department of Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Biannual Overturned Investigations Report [Exhibit F]

Tiffany Wright, Director, DCFS, presented the biannual report detailing the percentage of child abuse reports that were investigated, overturned, and appealed.

Review of Arkansas State Police, Crimes Against Children Division (CACD), Quarterly Oversight Report, January – March 2025 [Exhibit G]

Major Jeff Drew, Commander, CACD, provided a quarterly report regarding the volume of calls received by the child abuse hotline and the proportion of those calls that were investigated and substantiated.

Adoption of ISP 2025-054 by Representative Randy Torres – An act to create a zoning exemption for childcare family homes; to declare an emergency; and for other purposes [Exhibit H]

Representative Randy Torres, asked for the adoption of the ISP for study, discussing that the proposed legislation extends zoning exemptions for licensed childcare family homes.

Representative Bentley made a motion to adopt ISP 2025-054, seconded by Representative McClure, and the motion carried.

With no other business the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.