

# State Representative Pamela A. DeLissio

Minority Chair / Children and Youth Committee



Dear Colleagues,

As minority chair of the House Children and Youth Committee, I want to keep you in the loop regarding the work of the committee. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or my staff if we can be of assistance. Our focus includes childcare as we endeavor to come out of this pandemic better and stronger.

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## COMMITTEE NEWS RECAP



### PCN Call-In Program – April 27, 2021

Chairs DeLozier and DeLissio participated in a recent PCN Call-In Program, where they discussed the various issues within the Children and Youth Committee.

Major topics of interest included:

- **The Child Care Collapse:** As of late December, about 480 childcare centers have permanently closed due to low attendance as the result of COVID-19. Some providers, however, believe that number is

higher because smaller centers that accept only private pay can be harder to track than those that accept public funding. DHS states that about 300 centers have also opened; although it is not known at this time if the closures and openings are in the same geography.

- **Child Abuse Reporting:** There has been an overall reduction in the number of child abuse cases that have been reported during the COVID-19 pandemic. This reduction may be due to a decrease in the time mandated reporters (teachers, camp counselors, church officials, etc.) have spent with children, as teachers are one of the biggest identifiers and reporters of suspected child abuse. During a time in which children are continuing to attend school virtually, Chairs DeLissio and Delozier stressed the importance of individuals calling the Childline hotline (1-800-932-0313) to report suspected abuse or neglect. Please consider publishing this hotline number periodically on your social media.

### **Voting Meeting – May 4, 2021**

During the second voting meeting of 2021, the committee considered two bills:

- **H.B. 253:** establishes a task force to focus on the opioid abuse epidemic's impact on children in Pennsylvania. The task force would focus on improving the safety, wellbeing and permanency of substance-exposed infants and other young children affected by their parents' substance abuse disorders. The prime sponsor is Rep. Clint Owlett. Rep. Owlett and I worked together to introduce an amendment at the committee level and an additional amendment on the floor to ensure that consumers are included on the task force and that the minority leaders can make an appointment to the committee.
- Passed the committee (25-0)
- **H.B. 764:** amends the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) to allow employers to hire an employee on a provisional basis on par with the 45-day provisional hiring window that is currently authorized for child-care providers. Under this legislation an employee hired under such circumstances is not allowed to work alone with children until all clearances are received.
- Passed the committee (25-0) The prime sponsor is Rep. Brett Miller and I am working with him to determine if DHS can obtain FBI clearance results within 48 hours on par with PDE. Currently it takes DHS up to 3 weeks to process FBI clearance results.

You can find committee updates and resources, including hearing testimony, [online here](#).

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## NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH



May is national foster care month – a reminder to take time to acknowledge resource (foster) parents, family members, volunteers, mentors, policymakers, child welfare professionals, and other members of the community who help children and youth in foster care find permanent homes and connections. We use this time to renew our commitment to ensuring a bright future for the 13,000 – 15,000 children and youth in foster

care in Pennsylvania, and celebrate those who make a meaningful difference in their lives. Today more than ever we are in need of more families that can care and nurture our children. If you are interested or know someone who is interested in fostering a child please contact the SWAN Helpline at 1-800-585-7926 or via email at: [swanhelpline@diakon-swan.org](mailto:swanhelpline@diakon-swan.org)

Here are resources that are available to help promote National Foster Care Month:

- [Sample Social Media Posts](#)
- [Shareable Graphics](#)
- [Sample Proclamations](#)

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## Child Care and Development Fund State Plan



In May, the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) completed Pennsylvania's Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2022-24 Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Draft State Plan. To view the State Plan, please visit the Department of Human Service's website [here](#).

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is a federal and state partnership program (over \$5 billion in federal funding) authorized under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG) and administered by states, territories, and tribes with funding and support from the Administration for Children and Families' Office. States use CCDF to provide financial assistance to low-income families to access child care so they can work or attend a job training or educational program.

In Pennsylvania:

- CCDF is the primary source of federal funding for Pennsylvania's subsidized childcare program, Child Care Works (CCW) and its quality rating improvement system (QRIS) Keystone STARS.
- Pennsylvania's annual federal allocation is one of the largest among all U.S. states and territories.
- CCW currently serves about 74,000 children each month.

- Families must meet work or job training requirements and have income below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG) to enter the program and income below 235 percent of the FPIG to remain in the program.
- Foster children, children who are enrolled in PA Pre-K Counts, Head Start, Early Head Start, newborn siblings of children who are already enrolled, children of teen parents and children experiencing homelessness are placed prioritized on the wait list. Families qualifying under the low-income program are placed on a waiting list if funds are not immediately available. There is no waiting list for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) families and former TANF families.

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## QUALITY CHILDCARE



The House Democratic Policy Committee hosted a virtual roundtable discussion in April, focusing on how the conditions of Pennsylvania schools are impacting students and educators, and the legislative solutions to address health and safety concerns.

The conversation brought together educators from across the state, healthcare and legal professionals, and labor experts to discuss the implications of inaction and benefits of investment in school safety.

[You can watch a video of the discussion here](#) and [read testimony from participants here](#).

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## BILLS CURRENTLY IN THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH COMMITTEE

[H.B. 159: Child Abuse Reporting and Military Personnel](#) – Rep. F. Todd Polinchock

[H.B. 193: COVID-19 Childcare Assistance](#) – Rep. Liz Hanbidge

[H.B. 194: COVID-19 Childcare Assistance](#) – Rep. Liz Hanbidge

[H.B. 369: COVID-19: Support for Frontline Workers](#) – Rep. Austin Davis

[H.B. 628: Student Loan Forgiveness for Child Welfare Workers](#) – Rep. Tarah Toohil

[H.B. 631: Keys to Independence for Foster Youth Age 16-21](#) – Rep. Tarah Toohil

[H.B. 1155: Exempts public preschool recreation programs from the requirement to be certified by the Department of Human Services as child care facilities by specifically excluding such programs from the definition of child day care center.](#) – Rep. Barry Jozwiak

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## GETTING TO KNOW YOU



Each month, I will spotlight members of the Children and Youth Committee so you can get to know them better. This month we highlight Committee Executive Director Camila Horst, and Research Analyst Angie Seitz.

Camila has worked for the Caucus since she graduated from Penn State University in 2012. She has worked for former Auditor General and State Representative Eugene DePasquale in his District Office as a Legislative Assistant helping constituents with an array of issues. In 2013, she started working for former State Representative Florindo J. Fabrizio and later for Representative Dan Frankel as a Research Analyst for the House Health Committee. She has been the Executive Director of the Children and Youth Committee since July of 2019 and she is eager to continue helping the Caucus and Committee Chair to advance meaningful legislation that will help the children, youth and families of the Commonwealth.

Angie worked in the Insurance field for seven years before transferring to the York County Judicial Center where she worked as a Chief Clerk for the Juvenile Court system. After gaining experience working with judges, attorneys, and Children and Youth advocates, Angie began working in the Legislative Research and Policy Office (LPRO) in the Democratic Caucus in 2019 and joined my staff in April of 2021. In her spare time, Angie enjoys spending time with her dog (a boxer named Hunter), participating in CrossFit style workouts, and reading books on engineering disasters.

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## HAVE A QUESTION?

If you have any questions or would like to share ideas for the Children and Youth Committee, feel free to email our executive director Camila Horst at [chorst@pahouse.net](mailto:chorst@pahouse.net).

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pam".

