

# State Representative Pamela A. DeLissio

Minority Chair / Children and Youth Committee  
November 2022



**Dear Colleagues,**

As minority chair of the House Children & Youth Committee, it has been my pleasure to keep you in the loop regarding the work of the committee. This is the final update under my chairmanship, and I wish the incoming chairs all the best in their endeavors. If you have any needs or questions in the interim, please do not hesitate to reach out to committee staff, Kyle Wagonseller or Jessica Sander.

The House Children & Youth Committee's [SharePoint site](#) (for members and staff only) is frequently updated with helpful information regarding the committee. On the SharePoint site one can view: bill analyses, testimony from informational meetings and hearings, documents related to voting meetings, letters of support and opposition to legislation, and all past Children & Youth monthly newsletters. Please note, as of December 1, all information for the 2021-2022 Legislative Session will be archived and new information for the 2023-2024 Legislative Session will be posted as it becomes available.

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## [COMMITTEE NEWS RECAP](#)



## [Chairs DeLissio/Delozier's House Bill 2437 Signed into Law](#)



Earlier this session, Sheryl and I introduced House Bill 2437 which allows a person to make a \$5 contribution to the Children's Trust Fund when electronically renewing a driver's license, ID card, or vehicle registration on PennDOT's website. This bill was later amended into [House Bill 1486 introduced by Rep. Timothy O'Neal](#), along with other items, which was signed into law as Act 112 of 2022 on November 3, 2022.

## [DHS Identogo Applicants Can Now Receive Fingerprinting Results Electronically Via Email](#)



On February 17, 2022, House Bill 764 by Rep. Brett Miller, R-Lancaster, was signed into law as Act 12 of 2022. This act allows certain employers to provisionally hire an individual for up to 45 days before all required childcare clearances are obtained. The goal of this bill was to address the delay childcare employees were experiencing in receiving their clearances via the US Mail, which often took weeks. This prevented the timely hiring of employees in many instances.

I was concerned about Rep. Miller's bill because I felt it was potentially putting children at risk to permit direct contact with children for any amount of time without the proper clearances. The

solution was to have clearances issued electronically and Rep. Miller was willing to work with me to solve the problem in a bipartisan manner. I then withdraw my amendments that would have sunset his legislation.

Rep. Miller and I worked together for over 18 months with the departments of General Services, Human Services, and the Pennsylvania State Police who in turn needed to coordinate with the FBI. Our efforts involved many meetings, and we were appreciative of the cooperation of all agencies involved.

I am happy to announce that effective October 31, 2022, applicants for certain clearances who register under Identogo for fingerprints and are cleared to work with children can now receive their results electronically via email. This is a huge assist to both applicants and employers to recruit staff.

If any clearance result has a record associated with it, those results will not be electronically available and can only be transmitted by US Mail. Current mailing timelines take at least 7-10 business days to reach the intended destination. All results will still be transmitted by US Mail to all applicants, in addition to any email notification. Full details are available by clicking [here](#).

We encourage the General Assembly to keep building on our efforts and expand this electronic notification system to all sectors that require its employees to have background clearances.

### [Chair DeLissio Introduces House Bill 2913 to Create a Permanent Office of Child Advocate](#)

In 2019, Governor Wolf created the Office of Advocacy and Reform (OAR) through an executive order to provide better protections and services for vulnerable Pennsylvanians. A critical component of the OAR is the Child Advocate who works with communities and state agencies on behalf of our state's children to identify and eliminate policies and procedures that exacerbate trauma, as well as guiding service providers on utilizing trauma-informed practices to reduce and prevent childhood trauma. Simply put, the Child Advocate serves a critical role in our government – ensuring that the children of Pennsylvania have a voice when it comes to the policies that can have lasting effects on their lives.

Since the OAR was created through an executive order, a subsequent administration could dissolve the OAR and the Child Advocate. For this reason, on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, I introduced [House Bill 2913](#) which will create a permanent Office of Child Advocate within the Department of Health. While one would hope that a gubernatorial successor would recognize the undeniable need for trauma-informed policy, we should ensure having the voice of our youngest citizens, our children, be heard through this office. Even though the introduction of this legislation has occurred very late in the session and no action will be taken, this legislation will now be poised for re-introduction early next session by my successor chair for this committee.

Codifying the Office of Child Advocate to ensure that the children of Pennsylvania always have a voice and someone looking out for their best interests will undoubtedly provide an opportunity to reduce trauma and heal, leading to the betterment of lives for both current and future Pennsylvanians.

## [Recap of All Children & Youth Bills Signed into Law in the 2021-2022 Legislative Session](#)

The following Children & Youth bills and resolutions became law during the 2021-2022 Legislative Session:

- [House Bill 253 by Rep. Clint Owlett](#) – Creates a task force to examine the impact of the opioid abuse epidemic on infants and children, and appropriates funds from the COVID-19 Response Restricted Account for the purpose of making payments to hospitals for the recruitment and retention of qualified staff and for the Student Loan Relief for Nurses Program. Signed into law as Act 2 of 2022 on January 26, 2022.
- [House Bill 764 by Rep. Brett Miller](#) – Allows an employer to provisionally hire an individual before all required clearances are obtained for a period not to exceed 45 days if certain conditions are met. Signed into law as Act 12 of 2022 on February 17, 2022.
- [House Bill 954 by Rep. Todd Stephens](#) – Allows a law enforcement agency to share information related to an allegation or instance of child abuse with a Children and Youth Services agency, the Department of Human Services Regional Children, Youth, and Families Offices, a multidisciplinary review team, investigative team, or child fatality or near fatality review team to investigate the allegation or instance of abuse. Signed into law as Act 42 of 2021 on June 30, 2021.
- [House Bill 1731 by Rep. Lori Mizgorski](#) – Creates an advisory committee within the Joint State Government Commission to research best practices, recommend policy, and promote greater involvement by fathers across Pennsylvania. Signed into law as Act 114 of 2022 on November 3, 2022.
- [House Bill 1866 by Rep. Karen Boback](#) – Enhances permanency planning and improve outcomes for older youth in foster care. Signed into law as Act 118 of 2022 on November 3, 2022.
- [House Bill 2214 by Rep. Kate Klunk](#) – Makes indemnification language unenforceable in governmental contracts with county Children and Youth Agencies and certain entities that provide children and youth services. Signed into law as Act 127 of 2022 on November 3, 2022.
- [House Bill 2426 by Rep. David Hickernell](#) – Moves provisions under the Resource Family and Adoption Process Act (Act 68 of 2005) and the Resource Family Care Act (Act 73 of 2005) into Title 67 (Public Welfare) which would require the Department of Human Services to promulgate regulations to ensure compliance. Signed into law as Act 131 of 2022 on November 3, 2022.
- [House Bill 2437 by Chair Pamela A. DeLissio](#) – Allows a person to make a \$5 contribution to the Children's Trust Fund when electronically renewing a driver's license, ID card, or vehicle registration on PennDOT's website. This bill was amended into [House Bill 1486 by Rep. Timothy O'Neal](#), along with other items, which was signed into law as Act 112 of 2022 on November 3, 2022.



- [Senate Bill 522 by Senator Lisa Baker](#) – Encourages blood lead testing of children by two years of age and of pregnant women in accordance with recommendations from the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; and requires health insurance policies to provide coverage for blood lead testing. Signed into law as Act 150 of 2022 on November 3, 2022.
- [House Resolution 119 by Rep. Karen Boback](#) – Directs the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a study and make recommendations concerning the development and implementation of an integrated child welfare information system for child welfare programs overseen by the Department of Human Services and administered by county children and youth agencies. Adopted on November 9, 2021.
- [House Resolution 228 by Chair Pamela A. DeLissio](#) – Directs the Joint State Government Commission, in collaboration with an advisory committee, to study certain child and human service-related statutes and regulations promulgated in the past five years currently in effect in Pennsylvania that have exacerbated trauma in children and families. Adopted on October 25, 2022.

During the 2021-2022 Legislative Session, the Children & Youth Committee received 40 pieces of legislation and reported out 18 pieces of legislation. Of these 18 pieces of legislation, 11 bills, or 61%, have been signed into law.

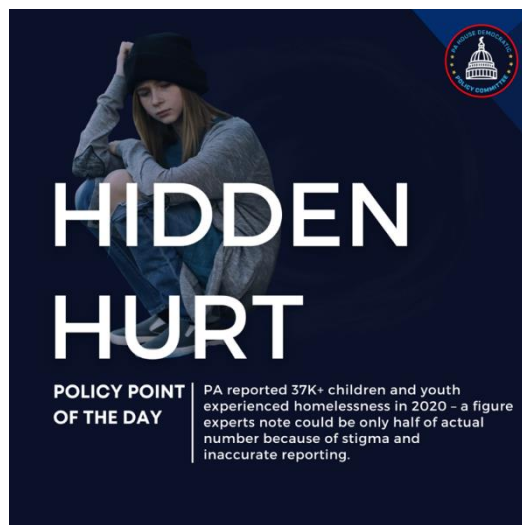
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### [Coats and Toys for Kids Day – December 3, 2022](#)

Coats and Toys for Kids Day (C.T.K.D.) is celebrated on the first Saturday in December every year. This day is about people coming together and creating a positive change. On C.T.K.D., people donate cold-weather gear like coats, boots, gloves, as well as toys to eligible families. This keeps the kids warm and happy during the winter. More information about C.T.K.D. can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

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### [POLICY POINT](#)



**HIDDEN HURT**

**POLICY POINT OF THE DAY** | PA reported 37K+ children and youth experienced homelessness in 2020 – a figure experts note could be only half of actual number because of stigma and inaccurate reporting.

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU



Each month, we have spotlighted members of the Children & Youth Committee so you had the opportunity to get to know them. It has been a pleasure to get to know both Democratic and Republican members of the committee better.

This month, my final newsletter, I want to share with you what it has meant to be the minority chair this session.

The work the committee has achieved has taken place in a cooperative and collaborative manner and for that I thank the majority chair, Rep. Sheryl Delozier. All committees need to function with this degree of cooperation and collaboration. Sheryl and I have regularly talked, telephoned, texted and emailed and met in person. I wish Chair Delozier all the best next session and wish this committee all the best as they meet the needs of our youngest citizens.

A highlight of my six terms in office has been serving as a minority chair this session which has provided me the opportunity to have significant input into the committee hearings, informational meetings and voting meetings. I appreciated the cooperation of my fellow committee members as we worked to incorporate the priorities and concerns of Democratic members into legislation that was voted out of committee.

Last but not least, I learned a lot. Our child welfare system has many moving parts and cares for some of our most vulnerable citizens. Next session it would be most helpful if the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL amended significantly in 2013 and 2014) was reviewed. We should also ensure that our child abuse registry is recording information as fairly as possible. A tiered system has been suggested and should be explored.

Currently, complex cases remain a challenge for most county Children & Youth Agencies where placements and adequate funding are not readily available. The state needs to make more resources available for placements and funding for complex cases.

Many thanks to my stellar staff, Camila Horst and now Kyle Wagonseller and Jessica Sander. Their commitment to good policy and willingness to conduct needed research and interact with the staff of Chair Delozier has ensured a smooth working and productive committee.

I wish the incoming chair all the best and stand ready to help in any way possible.

## HAVE A QUESTION?

If you have questions or would like to share ideas for the Children & Youth Committee, email our Committee Executive Director Kyle Wagonseller at [kwagonse@pahouse.net](mailto:kwagonse@pahouse.net).  
commitment

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pam". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "P" and a trailing "am".