

# State Representative Pamela A. DeLissio

## Minority Chair / Children and Youth Committee



**Dear Colleagues,**

As minority chair of the House Children & 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.

FYI (for members and staff only) - The House Children & Youth Committee's SharePoint site is frequently updated with helpful information regarding the committee. On the SharePoint site one can view: bill analyses, testimony from public and information hearings, documents related to voting meetings, letters of support and opposition to legislation, and all past Children & Youth monthly newsletters. In addition, check out the 'News' section of the SharePoint site that includes interesting articles relating to the work of the committee.

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## COMMITTEE NEWS RECAP



## February 24, 2022 Press Conference with the Governor

I had the privilege of hosting a press conference with Gov. Tom Wolf at North Light Community Center to discuss child care and the need for immediate action to allocate \$1.7 billion in federal American Rescue Plan Act funding to help Pennsylvanians.

Wolf's plan for allocating the funds includes \$500 million for the PA Opportunity Program, which would provide needed relief to workers and families from the high cost of child care and household expenses and opportunities to complete a degree, credential, or license that will strengthen their skills and increase income — all leading to a better quality of life.

As minority chair of the Children and Youth Committee, I applaud and support the governor's proposal to ensure that families who were particularly hard hit over the past two years due to the pandemic have access to additional financial resources to help their families recover and stabilize. The need for high quality child care both in terms of availability and affordability were highlighted in particular during the past two years of the pandemic.

Infant child care costs families an average of \$11,560 a year in Pennsylvania – about \$3,000 less than the average college tuition. Recruiting and retaining child care staff is an additional barrier and there is a need to pay them a sustainable wage and ensure that child care subsidies are sufficient for providers to recruit and retain qualified staff.

While there is a need for long term economic stability in the child care sector, there are also many Pennsylvanians in need of relief right now. We could wait to invest the \$500 million proposed by this plan and see what happens next year or the year after. Or we could be responsible and help these families and children move forward now and allow these children to enjoy the benefits of high quality child care while allowing their parents to go back to work and invest in their families and stimulate the economy of our state.

The Governor and I were joined at the news conference by Sen. Vincent Hughes, North Light Executive Director Krista Wieder, Department of Human Services Acting Secretary Meg Snead and others.

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## National Social Work Month– March



March is National Social Work month. National Social Work Month recognizes the dedication and empathy social workers across the country deliver while providing services to children and adults in need. Social workers are advocates, advisors, counselors, and facilitators in schools, clinics, businesses, and government offices.

The need for social workers is great. There are nearly 720,000 social workers in our nation. That number is expected to grow by 12 percent by the end of the decade, making social work one of the fastest growing professions in the nation, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Social workers have been an integral part of our nation for decades. They played key roles in the Civil Rights and Women's Rights movements and pushed for social programs we now take for granted, including the minimum wage, a 40-hour work week, Social Security and Medicare.

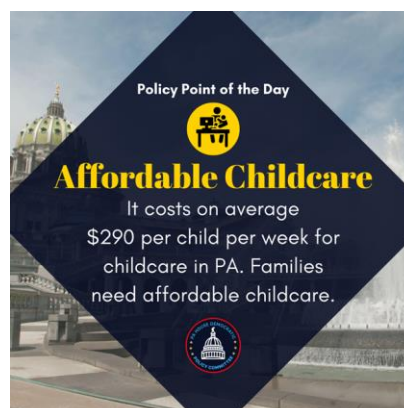
Social workers play a critical role in child welfare systems nationwide by protecting the well-being of children, youth, and supporting families in need. A qualified and stable child welfare workforce is the foundation of child welfare service delivery. Each day, social workers face critical decisions about the lives of these vulnerable children and youth while working in stressful environments that include high caseloads and workloads, inadequate supervision, safety concerns, and limited training and resources (for example, access to emerging technology). All of these conditions, coupled with low salaries and administrative burdens, can affect the recruitment and retention of qualified staff.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) will help lead the 2022 Social Work Month celebration in March with the theme "The Time is Right for Social Work," which underscores the contributions social workers have made to this nation for more than a century and how the services they provide are needed more than ever as our nation addresses economic inequality, systemic racism, the need for improved health and mental health care, and COVID-19.

Social workers continue to work on the frontlines throughout the pandemic, helping clients get the health care they need and helping loved ones overcome grief and loss. Each day, social workers empower millions of Americans so they can live life to their fullest potential. During Social Work Month learn more about the profession, thank the social workers in your lives, and help support the profession.

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## POLICY POINT



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## BILLS & RESOLUTIONS CURRENTLY IN THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH COMMITTEE

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

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[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

[H.B. 1687: Autism Screening for Children Aged 18 Months to 4 Years](#) – Rep. Brian Smith

[H.B. 1731: Establishes the Pennsylvania Advisory Committee on Greater Father Involvement](#) – Rep. Lori A. Mizgorski

[H.B. 1769: Adding Nurses to County Children & Youth Agency Staff](#) – Rep. Karen Boback

[HB 1843: Protecting Children in Foster Care/Adoption - Grace Packer](#) – Rep. Christopher B. Quinn

[HB 1844: Protecting Children in Foster Care/Adoption - Grace Packer](#) – Rep. Craig T. Staats

[HB 1845: Protecting Children in Foster Care/Adoption - Grace Packer](#) – Rep. Craig T. Staats

[HB 1863: Updating Definition in Child Protective Services Law](#) - Rep. Sheryl M. Delozier

[HB 1866: Helping Older Foster Youth Find Permanency](#)- Rep. Karen Boback

[HB 2174: Revisiting Entry into ARD as Basis for Founded Child Abuse Report](#)- Rep. Abby Major

[HB 2213 Limitation of Liability for Social Services Providers](#) - Rep. Kate A. Klunk \_

**HB 2214 Making Indemnification Language Unenforceable in Governmental Contracts with Private Children and Youth Social Service Agencies and Children Residential Services** – Rep. Kate A. Klunk

**H.R. 126: Recognizing the Impact of Childhood Emotional Abuse** – Rep. Brian Kirkland

**H.R. 133: Recognizing the Harmful Effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences** – Rep. Stephen Kinsey

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## **GETTING TO KNOW YOU**



Each month, I spotlight members of the Children & Youth Committee so you can get to know them better. This month we chatted with State Rep. Elizabeth Fiedler – D, Philadelphia.

State Rep. Elizabeth Fiedler was elected to the Pennsylvania House on Nov. 8, 2018, representing the 184th Legislative District in Philadelphia. This is her first term serving on the House Children & Youth Committee.

Prior to being elected state representative, Fiedler was a reporter at public radio station WHYY-FM for a decade, covering community affairs and politics. The best part of her job was helping regular folks in her community share their stories of struggle and success. From learning more about the city and specifically her South Philadelphia neighborhood, Fiedler decided to run for state representative.

As a mother of two sons, she is concerned for the future of education. Fiedler is an advocate for strong public schools, so that each child, regardless of race, gender, economic class or location, can attend a fully funded school in their neighborhood.

One aspect that Rep. Fiedler brings to the Children & Youth committee is her “neighborhood approach” to policy. She intends to be a policy advocate for all children and in particular the children of her constituency in South Philadelphia.

Rep. Fiedler would like to see the committee focus on supporting children and families as the Commonwealth moves out of the pandemic. Many families are still suffering adverse effects of the pandemic and it is necessary to provide supports to them for stability.

Rep. Fiedler is the daughter of two union public school teachers and grew up in rural Pennsylvania. She is raising two young boys on a small block in South Philadelphia.

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## HAVE A QUESTION?

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

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cam", is positioned below the "Yours truly," text.