

Rep. Stephanie T. Bolden, Chair
Rep. Andria L. Bennett
Rep. Gerald L. Brady
Rep. Timothy D. Dukes
Rep. Jeffrey N. Spiegelman



Sen. John J. Walsh, Vice-Chair
Sen. Stephanie L. Hansen
Sen. Brian G. Pettyjohn
Sen. Anthony Delcollo
Sen. David P. Sokola

STATE OF DELAWARE

JOINT LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT AND SUNSET COMMITTEE

Child Protection and Accountability Commission (“CPAC”) Presentation Minutes – 02.13.18

Chair Bolden called the meeting to order at 5:37 pm. Committee members present included Representatives Bennett, Dukes; Senators Delcollo, and Pettyjohn. Entering late were Vice-Chair Walsh and Representative Brady. Staff present included Julie Fedele, Committee Analyst; Holly Vaughn Wagner, Legislative Attorney; Spencer Price, Senior Legislative Analyst, Controller General’s Office; Victoria Cook, Legislative Fellow; and Julia Dumas Wilks, Administrative Specialist. A quorum was met.

Chair Bolden welcomed everyone to the Joint Legislative Oversight and Sunset Committee (“the Committee”) in the 149th General Assembly, Second Session and called for introductions of members present. Attention turned to the representatives from the Child Protection Accountability Commission (“CPAC” or “the Commission”). The Commission was represented by the Executive Director Tania Culley, Esq.; Rosalie Morales, Chief Policy Advisor; and Ginger Ward, Chairperson.

Ms. Culley began the presentation of the Commission by outlining the history of the CPAC. “The Commission was created in 1997 as part of a comprehensive strategy, entitled the Child Abuse Prevention Act of 1997, to improve Delaware’s child protection system following the tragic death of a four year old boy named Bryan Martin.”¹ Also presented was information regarding Commission composition, staffing, and funding.

A detailed description of the Commission’s mission, goals, and objectives were offered. Ms. Culley’s presentation provided the Commission’s responsibilities including, but not limited to: drafting legislation and training the public and public servants to identify child abuse, trauma, and torture. The Commission is also responsible for the review of child abuse, death, and near death cases and coordination with the Division of Family Services (“DFS”), Police, and the Courts. Quarterly and annual reports are published and submitted to the Governor and Delaware General Assembly. An overview of the multidisciplinary team approach and Special Victims Unit were also provided.

The presentation concluded with a review of the Commission’s accomplishments, challenges, and opportunities. A recent accomplishment of the Commission is the pending HB 140 known as “Aidan’s Law,” relating to infants with prenatal substance exposure. The hope is to have this bill passed into law by the end of this General Assembly. Challenges that were highlighted includes

¹ <https://courts.delaware.gov/childadvocate/cpac/>

funding to ensure the on-going training of teachers, healthcare workers, and the public to identify child abuse; train children in PreK-6th grade in personal body safety; rising turnover of caseworkers, and the extremely high case load per case worker.

Committee members raised questions surrounding CPAC's pilot program to build partnerships between DFS caseworkers and hospital workers, and the resources necessary to expand the Special Victims Unit beyond New Castle to Kent and Sussex Counties. Clarification was given and further details were discussed regarding CPAC's goals for the future.

Discussion moved to caseworker caseloads. CPAC advised that DFS is required to have a caseload of 11 cases per investigation caseworker and 18 cases per treatment caseworker, along with an overhire pool. However, Ms. Culley explained that the standard is higher than CPAC would recommend, as smaller caseloads ensure caseworkers are better able to address children's safety.

Chair Bolden thanked CPAC for their service and their presentation to the Committee. The recommendation hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, March 27, 2018 at 12 noon.

No public comment was given.

Representative Dukes motioned to approve the February 6, 2018 minutes, seconded by Senator Pettyjohn. The motion carried 7 (Representatives Bolden, Bennett, Brady, Dukes; Senators Delcollo, Pettyjohn, Walsh); 3 absent (Senators Hansen, Sokola; and Representative Spiegelman).

Representative Pettyjohn motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 pm, seconded by Representative Bennett. The motion carried 7 (Representatives Bolden, Bennett, Brady, Dukes; Senators Delcollo, Pettyjohn, Walsh); 3 absent (Senators Hansen, Sokola; and Representative Spiegelman).

Respectfully prepared by:

Julie Fedele, JLOSC Analyst, Joint Legislative Oversight and Sunset Committee.

Access to the audio recording of this proceeding is available upon request.