



General Assembly

January Session, 2019

**Committee Bill No. 452**

LCO No. 3761



Referred to Committee on COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN

Introduced by:  
(KID)

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE STATE OVERSIGHT COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2019*) (a) There shall be a State  
2 Oversight Council on Children and Families which shall consist of the  
3 following members: (1) Six members appointed by the Governor,  
4 including two persons who are child care professionals, two persons  
5 eighteen to twenty-five years of age, inclusive, served by the  
6 Department of Children and Families, one person who is a child  
7 psychiatrist licensed to practice medicine in this state and one person  
8 who is an attorney who has expertise in legal issues related to children  
9 and youth; (2) one member appointed by the speaker of the House of  
10 Representatives, who has expertise in providing services to children  
11 and youths; (3) one member appointed by the president pro tempore  
12 of the Senate, who has expertise in providing behavioral health  
13 services to children and youths served by the Department of Children  
14 and Families; (4) one member appointed by the majority leader of the  
15 House of Representatives, who is a parent, foster parent or family  
16 member of a child or youth who has received or is receiving behavioral

17 health services, child welfare services or juvenile services; (5) one  
18 member appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, who is a  
19 parent, foster parent or family member of a child or youth who has  
20 received or is receiving behavioral health services, child welfare  
21 services or juvenile services; (6) one member appointed by the  
22 minority leader of the House of Representatives, who is a parent, foster  
23 parent or family member of a child or youth who has received or is  
24 receiving behavioral health services, child welfare services or juvenile  
25 services; (7) one member appointed by the minority leader of the  
26 Senate, who is an advocate for children and youths; and (8) six  
27 members representing the regional advisory councils established  
28 pursuant to section 17a-30 of the general statutes, appointed one each  
29 by the members of each council. No more than half the members of the  
30 council shall be persons who receive income from a private practice or  
31 any public or private agency that delivers mental health, substance  
32 abuse, child abuse prevention and treatment or child welfare services.  
33 Members of the council shall serve without compensation, except for  
34 necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. The  
35 Department of Children and Families shall provide the council with  
36 funding to facilitate the participation of those members representing  
37 families and youth, as well as for other administrative support  
38 services. Members shall serve on the council for terms of two years  
39 each and no member shall serve for more than three consecutive terms.  
40 The commissioner shall be an ex-officio member of the council without  
41 vote and shall attend its meetings. Any member who fails to attend  
42 three consecutive meetings or fifty per cent of all meetings during any  
43 calendar year shall be deemed to have resigned. Any vacancy shall be  
44 filled by the appointing authority. The council shall elect two  
45 chairpersons from among its members.

46 (b) The State Oversight Council on Children and Families shall meet  
47 quarterly, and more often upon the call of the chairpersons or a  
48 majority of the members. The council's meetings shall be held at  
49 locations that facilitate participation by members of the public, and its  
50 agenda and minutes shall be posted on the Internet web site of the

51 Department of Children and Families. A majority of the members  
52 present shall constitute a quorum. The council shall have complete  
53 access to all records of the institutions and facilities of the department  
54 in furtherance of its duties, while at all times protecting the right of  
55 privacy of all individuals involved, as provided in section 17a-28 of the  
56 general statutes.

57 (c) The duties of the State Oversight Council on Children and  
58 Families shall be to: (1) Recommend to the commissioner and the joint  
59 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
60 matters relating to children programs, legislation or other matters that  
61 will improve services for children and youths, including behavioral  
62 health services; (2) annually review and advise the commissioner  
63 regarding the proposed budget; (3) interpret to the community at large  
64 the policies, duties and programs of the department; (4) issue any  
65 reports it deems necessary to the Governor, the Commissioner of  
66 Children and Families and, in accordance with the provisions of  
67 section 11-4a of the general statutes, the joint standing committee of  
68 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to  
69 children; (5) assist in the development of and review and comment on  
70 the strategic plan developed by the department pursuant to subsection  
71 (b) of section 17a-3 of the general statutes, as amended by this act; (6)  
72 receive on a quarterly basis from the commissioner a status report on  
73 the department's progress in carrying out the strategic plan; (7)  
74 independently monitor the department's progress in achieving its  
75 goals as expressed in the strategic plan; and (8) offer assistance and  
76 provide an outside perspective to the department so that it may be able  
77 to achieve the goals expressed in the strategic plan.

78 (d) (1) Not later than July 1, 2020, and annually thereafter, the State  
79 Oversight Council on Children and Families shall submit a report, in  
80 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes,  
81 to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having  
82 cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and children. Such  
83 report shall include, but not be limited to, (A) findings and

84 recommendations regarding the policies and practices of the  
85 Department of Children and Families; (B) information regarding the  
86 impact of such policies on safety, permanency and well-being  
87 outcomes for children and youths; and (C) any recommendations for  
88 legislation.

89 (2) Not later than thirty days after the receipt of the report  
90 submitted pursuant to this subsection, the chairpersons of the State  
91 Oversight Council on Children and Families shall appear before the  
92 joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance  
93 of matters relating to appropriations and children to discuss said  
94 report.

95 Sec. 2. Subdivision (2) of section 17a-1 of the general statutes is  
96 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
97 *1, 2019*):

98 (2) "Council" means the State [Advisory] Oversight Council on  
99 Children and Families;

100 Sec. 3. Subsection (b) of section 17a-3 of the general statutes is  
101 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
102 *1, 2019*):

103 (b) (1) The department, with the assistance of the State [Advisory]  
104 Oversight Council on Children and Families, and in consultation with  
105 representatives of the children and families served by the department,  
106 providers of services to children and families, advocates, and others  
107 interested in the well-being of children and families in this state, shall  
108 develop and regularly update a single, comprehensive strategic plan  
109 for meeting the needs of children and families served by the  
110 department. In developing and updating the strategic plan, the  
111 department shall identify and define agency goals and indicators of  
112 progress, including benchmarks, in achieving such goals. The strategic  
113 plan shall include, but not be limited to: (A) The department's mission  
114 statement; (B) the expected results for the department and each of its

115 mandated areas of responsibility; (C) a schedule of action steps and a  
116 time frame for achieving such results and fulfilling the department's  
117 mission that includes strategies for working with other state agencies  
118 to leverage resources and coordinate service delivery; (D) strategies,  
119 informed by data on referrals, substantiations, removal, placements  
120 and retention, by which the department shall identify racial and ethnic  
121 disparities within child welfare practice and work to eliminate such  
122 disparities; (E) priorities for services and estimates of the funding and  
123 other resources necessary to carry them out; (F) standards for  
124 programs and services that are based on research-based best practices,  
125 when available; and (G) relevant measures of performance.

126 (2) The department shall begin the strategic planning process on  
127 July 1, 2009. The department shall hold regional meetings on the plan  
128 to ensure public input and shall post the plan and the plan's updates  
129 and progress reports on the department's web site. The department  
130 shall submit the strategic plan to the State [Advisory] Oversight  
131 Council on Children and Families for review and comment prior to its  
132 final submission to the General Assembly and the Governor. On or  
133 before July 1, 2010, the department shall submit the strategic plan, in  
134 accordance with section 11-4a, to the General Assembly and the  
135 Governor.

136 (3) The commissioner shall track and report on progress in  
137 achieving the strategic plan's goals not later than October 1, 2010, and  
138 quarterly thereafter, to [said State Advisory Council] the State  
139 Oversight Council on Children and Families. The commissioner shall  
140 submit a status report on progress in achieving the results in the  
141 strategic plan, in accordance with section 11-4a, not later than July 1,  
142 2011, and annually thereafter to the General Assembly, the joint  
143 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
144 matters relating to children and the Governor.

145 Sec. 4. Subsections (e) and (f) of section 17a-4a of the general statutes  
146 are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*

147 *July 1, 2019):*

148 (e) Not later than October first of each year, the advisory committee  
149 shall submit a status report on local systems of care and practice  
150 standards for state-funded behavioral health programs to the  
151 Commissioner of Children and Families and the State [Advisory]  
152 Oversight Council on Children and Families.

153 (f) Not later than October first of each odd-numbered year, the  
154 advisory committee shall submit recommendations concerning the  
155 provision of behavioral health services for all children in the state to  
156 the Commissioner of Children and Families and the State [Advisory]  
157 Oversight Council on Children and Families. The recommendations  
158 shall address, but shall not be limited to, the following: (1) The target  
159 population for children with behavioral health needs, and assessment  
160 and benefit options for children with such needs; (2) the  
161 appropriateness and quality of care for children with behavioral health  
162 needs; (3) the coordination of behavioral health services provided  
163 under the HUSKY Health program with services provided by other  
164 publicly-funded programs; (4) performance standards for preventive  
165 services, family supports and emergency service training programs; (5)  
166 assessments of community-based and residential care programs; (6)  
167 outcome measurements by reviewing provider practice; and (7) a  
168 medication protocol and standards for the monitoring of medication  
169 and after-care programs.

170 Sec. 5. Subsection (l) of section 17a-6 of the general statutes is  
171 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
172 *1, 2019):*

173 (l) Submit to the [state advisory council] State Oversight Council on  
174 Children and Families for its comment proposals for new policies or  
175 programs and the proposed budget for the department;

176 Sec. 6. Section 17a-9 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
177 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2019):*

178 (a) The commissioner shall appoint, after consultation with the  
179 [state advisory council] State Oversight Council on Children and  
180 Families, and may remove in a like manner, two deputy  
181 commissioners who shall be in the unclassified service. The deputy  
182 commissioner for program services shall be a clinically competent  
183 professional person experienced in one or more fields of children's  
184 services and in the administration of such services, and shall be  
185 responsible for the supervision of all clinical treatment and program  
186 services of the department. The deputy commissioner of  
187 administrative services shall have experience in business or  
188 institutional administration and shall be responsible for the  
189 organizational and general administrative services of the department.

190 (b) The commissioner shall appoint, after consultation with the  
191 [state advisory council] State Oversight Council on Children and  
192 Families, and may remove in like manner, not more than two program  
193 directors who shall be in the unclassified service, provided the title or  
194 duties of any director appointed pursuant to this subsection may be  
195 changed as the commissioner deems necessary after consultation with  
196 the [state advisory council] State Oversight Council on Children and  
197 Families. Such directors may oversee community programs and  
198 services and the operation of institutions and facilities.

199 (c) The commissioner shall, in accordance with chapter 67 and after  
200 consultation with the [state advisory council] State Oversight Council  
201 on Children and Families, appoint the administrative heads of all of  
202 the institutions and facilities transferred to the department and such  
203 other institutions and facilities as now are or hereafter may be  
204 established by or transferred to the department. Such administrative  
205 heads shall have skill and experience in the administration of  
206 children's services and shall manage their institutions and facilities in  
207 accordance with the regulations and orders of the commissioner.

208 (d) The commissioner shall, after consultation with the [state  
209 advisory council] State Oversight Council on Children and Families,

210 appoint and may remove in a like manner, up to six regional directors  
 211 who shall be in the unclassified service. Each regional director shall  
 212 have skill and experience in the field of children's services and in the  
 213 administration of such services. Each regional director shall be subject  
 214 to the direction of the commissioner and shall be responsible for the  
 215 operation and administration of services provided or funded by the  
 216 department in the regions created by the commissioner pursuant to  
 217 subsection (a) of section 17a-30.

218 Sec. 7. Subsection (a) of section 17a-32a of the general statutes is  
 219 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
 220 *1, 2019*):

221 (a) The facilities that come under the jurisdiction of the Department  
 222 of Children and Families, as enumerated in section 17a-32, shall submit  
 223 an annual report to the State [Advisory] Oversight Council on  
 224 Children and Families and to their respective advisory groups,  
 225 established pursuant to subsection (b) of section 17a-6. The report shall  
 226 include, but not be limited to: (1) Aggregate profiles of the residents;  
 227 (2) a description of and update on major initiatives; (3) key outcome  
 228 indicators and results; (4) costs associated with operating the facility;  
 229 and (5) a description of educational, vocational and literacy programs,  
 230 and behavioral, treatment and other services available to the residents  
 231 and their outcomes. Each report submitted pursuant to this subsection  
 232 shall be posted on the department's web site.

233 Sec. 8. Section 17a-4 of the general statutes is repealed. (*Effective July*  
 234 *1, 2019*)

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2019</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2019</i>	17a-1(2)
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2019</i>	17a-3(b)
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2019</i>	17a-4a(e) and (f)
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2019</i>	17a-6(l)



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Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2019</i>	17a-9
Sec. 7	<i>July 1, 2019</i>	17a-32a(a)
Sec. 8	<i>July 1, 2019</i>	Repealer section

**Statement of Purpose:**

To establish a State Oversight Council on Children and Families in place of the State Advisory Council on Children and Families, and require the State Oversight Council on Children and Families to report annually to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and children.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*

Co-Sponsors: SEN. FASANO, 34th Dist.; SEN. WITKOS, 8th Dist.  
SEN. SOMERS, 18th Dist.

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