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March 18, 2014

Child Abuse Legislation on Senate Committee Agenda

The Senate Judiciary Committee will consider two pieces of child abuse legislation. These bills have been carried over from previous committee meetings. The committee is scheduled to meet at 3 p.m., on Tuesday, March 20.

[H 3024](#) adds professions to the list of mandated reporters (college administrators, coaches, firefighters) and increases the fine for not reporting. [H 3124](#) prevents employers from disciplining or terminating a mandated reporter for making a report.

House Judiciary Committee will also meet Tuesday afternoon at 2:30 p.m. to discuss several favorable subcommittee reports, including [H. 4408](#) which will add members to and enhance work of the Statewide Child Fatality Advisory Committee.

Bill to Prevent Medicaid Expansion Could Impact Home Visiting Program

In a failed attempt to set a day and time to vote on [H. 3101](#) and an amendment from Sen. Tom Davis, the Senate is expected to continue debate. [H. 3101](#) seeks to prevent the state from expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. Sen. Tom Davis, R-Beaufort, has proposed a "strike all and insert" amendment that would rewrite the current legislation.

One section of the amendment would require state agencies and others when applying for federal grant funding under the Affordable Care Act to follow a prescribed set of rigorous notifications and procedures. These restrictions could preclude South Carolina from submitting competitive applications. Children's Trust is concerned how this legislation might impact important home visiting work in South Carolina.

As often happens, when a bill is moving quickly through Congress, additional provisions are added, especially when they have bi-partisan support. Home visiting had that bi-partisan support, and it was added to the controversial Affordable Care Act.

Home visiting is a proven, early-intervention strategy that works through a wide variety of program models. Home visiting serves at-risk, low-income families in South Carolina working to create a better future for their children and themselves. These mothers and fathers are working on their positive parenting skills, going back to school, learning how to stay healthy, understanding how to keep their children safe, and connecting to supports in their communities.

As our state legislators talk of nullification and work to reverse the Affordable Care Act, home visiting could be the collateral damage in this fiercely divided debate. The Senate will continue its debate on the bill this week. Several organizations are working to oppose the bill.

Distracted Driving to be Considered by House Committee

With the House completing their budget work, representatives resume work on their calendar. The [agenda](#) for the Education and Public Works Committee is available.

[H. 4386](#), the distracted driving legislation, will be considered after receiving a favorable subcommittee report.

House Approves Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Budget

After two days of floor debate last week, the House gave final passage of a \$24 billion state spending plan. Highlights from the budget include:

- 1.5% pay raise for state employees
- funds for 31 additional State Law Enforcement Division agents.
- \$65 million in support of an education initiative proposed by Gov. Haley in the executive budget
- Permission for counties to purchase short state road with money they current receive for maintenance of state road
- Department of Juvenile Justice was granted permission to assume control of hte John de la Howe School for at risk youth, due to problems reported by the Inspector General
- Investigation was commissioned to examine abnormally high pay raised of state constitutional officers.

The House voted against the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act and

the full funding of education at state recommended levels.

Moving to the Senate, Senate Finance will start their budget work with subcommittee meetings this week. Senate floor debate is expected to begin the week of May 6.

The full text of the [H. 4701 FY 2014-15 Appropriations Bill](#) and [H. 4702 Capital Reserve Fund](#) are available.

Committee on Children to Discuss Annual Report

The [Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children](#) is scheduled to meet 2 p.m., or upon adjournment, Thursday, March 20 in Gressette 209. They will discuss their 2014 Annual Report.

Report Available to Aid Advocacy Work for Home Visiting Reauthorization

Congress to consider Home Visiting Reauthorization

Following a National Day of Action last week, advocates across the country continue to urge members of Congress to reauthorize Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) before September 31. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and CLASP have released a new report -- [Effective, Evidence-Based Home Visiting Programs in Every State at Risk if Congress Does Not Extend Funding](#). The report highlights the effectiveness of the program, and negative consequences of not extending the program. Included are several examples of successful state efforts and the document is designed to be a useful tool for advocates contacting their members of Congress to make sure the program is extended.

U.S. Senate Passes Child Care Reauthorization

Last Thursday, the U.S. Senate passed a child care reauthorization legislation (S 1086) for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG.) The authorization does not provide funding but provides the framework for annual appropriations and child care allocations. Child care funding includes \$2.3 billion in annual appropriations which and includes a mandatory fund written into the TANF law which, currently set at \$2.9 billion. Senators in support of this legislation expressed their hope that this will help to empower parents, strengthen existing state childcare services, and link to federal programs like Healthy Start. The only opposition to the bill came from Sen. Mike Lee, R-UT, and Sen. Tom Colburn, R-OK.

The legislation now moves to the House for consideration.

Child Assessment Snapshot Available

The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) recently published a new brief that examines what child assessment measures are being used in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classrooms across the country. The report explores how that data is being used. [State of the States Policy Snapshot: State Early Childhood Assessment Policies](#) is designed to help states learn from each other as they plan to implement new assessments (e.g. kindergarten entry assessments) and comprehensive early childhood assessment systems.

Legislators Propose Improvements to Florida Child Welfare System

[News report from Tampa Bay Times highlights improvement to "porous" child welfare system](#)

After a year of damaging news reports about child deaths from abuse and neglect, a Florida Senate committee on Tuesday passed a package of proposals intended to improve the quality and quantity of regulation over the state's child welfare system. Proposals include increased educational expertise of the child abuse investigators, the creation of a website to report basic facts about child deaths reported to the child abuse hotline, and the

mobilization of a trained team to analyze the cause of deaths.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month and Children's Trust will Kick-Off 30th Anniversary

Statehouse event scheduled for noon, Thursday, April 3, in first floor lobby

Children's Trust will celebrate our 30th anniversary with a kick-off press conference at the Statehouse. We will also mark the beginning of Child Abuse Prevention Month with Pinwheels for Prevention.

All are encouraged to attend and to stand with us as we work to substantially decrease the number of confirmed cases of child abuse, neglect and unintentional injuries.

Advocacy Resources Available

One-stop resources available at scChildren.org/Advocacy

From KIDS COUNT reports to legislative tracking tools and past issues of our Policy Post to relevant news stories, our [advocacy channel](#) features advocacy resources to help you in your work to improve child well-being in South Carolina.

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[View past issues of Policy Post.](#)

Policy Post is published by Children's Trust of South Carolina.

We invite you to join with us to strengthen and support public and private prevention efforts that keep South Carolina's children safe.

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