

**MINUTES OF THE  
CHILD WELFARE LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT PANEL**  
Thursday, July 17, 2003 – 9:00 a.m. – Room 416 State Capitol

**Members Present:**

Rep. Mike Thompson, House Chair  
Sen. Gene Davis  
Rep. David Litvak  
Rep. Steven R. Mascaro

**Staff Present:**

Ms. Jami Momberger, Policy Analyst  
Ms. Stacey M. Snyder, Associate General Counsel  
Ms. Wendy L. Bangerter, Legislative Secretary

**Members Absent:**

Sen. Dan R. Eastman

**Note:** A list of others present and a copy of materials can be found at <http://www.image.le.state.ut.us/imaging/history.asp> or by contacting the committee secretary, Wendy Bangerter, at 538-1032.

**1. Committee Business**

Chair Thompson called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. He excused Sen. Eastman from the meeting.

**MOTION:** Sen. Davis moved to approve the minutes of the June 19, 2003 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

**2. Impact of 2003 H.B. 308, "Health and Human Services Boards and Commission Amendment"**

Ms. Robin Arnold-Williams, Department of Human Services, reviewed the background on H.B. 308 that prohibits the Department of Human Services divisions and boards from establishing "permanent, ongoing advisory groups, unless otherwise specifically created in federal or state statute." She noted that limits were put in the bill to try to avoid creating a large bureaucracy. She responded to questions regarding the implementation and effects of H.B. 308.

Ms. Heidi Valdez, co-chair, CAN (Child Abuse and Neglect Advisory Council), described the work that the Council, a statutory advisory board, has accomplished during the past two years. She encouraged the continuation of the Board. She referred to a letter from Julie Epperson, outgoing chair of the Family Violence Advisory Council, who expressed concerns about the passage of H.B. 308.

Mr. Jim Anderson, consultant, Christmas Box House, explained that he has had the opportunity to view the advisory council system from several perspectives. He said that good partnerships in the community are what is needed because government cannot meet all child welfare needs by itself. He stated that advisory councils have become cumbersome and spoke in favor of having the opportunity to consider more effective partnerships, including direct linkage with DCFS (Department of Child and Family Services) administration, coalition organizations, and collaborative groups.

Rep. Litvak agreed that advisory councils have become cumbersome and spoke in favor of a more effective system of partnerships. He requested that DCFS report back to the panel in the future regarding their plans for the new system.

### **3. Update on Federal Court Oversight**

Mr. Alain Balmanno, Assistant Attorney General, Litigation Division, Office of the Attorney General, reported on the recent status conference convened by U.S. District Court Judge Tena Campbell. He indicated that there appears to be a new tone in the relationship between the state and the National Center for Youth Law (NCYL) and the Court. He said that the state is now entering negotiations with NCYL and the court monitor to trim the Performance Milestone Plan and make it more manageable. He discussed factors affecting how long it will take for the state to exit Court oversight.

### **4. Foster Care Citizen Review Board**

Ms. Patricia Worthington, director, Foster Care Citizen Review Board, reported on the board's efforts to evaluate and restructure service delivery in light of a 50 percent budget reduction. She reported that efforts have included reducing staff by 50 percent and consolidating offices by closing some of the outlying ones.

Ms. Jackie Howell, State Steering Committee, reported on ongoing plans for the Foster Care Citizen Review Board. She emphasized the necessity of the review process and stated that the services being provided do not duplicate those done by other entities. She stated that Utah Children received a grant to hire an outside person to study the review system. She emphasized that independent reviews provide a safety net for children.

Ms. Katie Gregory, Utah Children, indicated she would be studying the review system and finding out how other stakeholders feel about the effectiveness of the current system and also what other states are doing.

### **5. Other Items / Adjourn**

**MOTION:** Rep. Mascaro moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.  
Chair Thompson adjourned the meeting at 10:21 a.m.