

**CHILDREN'S CABINET
SENATOR JOAN HECKAMAN, CHAIR
OCTOBER 14, 2021**

**Lisa Bjergaard, Chair, Presented a report on the activities of the
Commission on Juvenile Justice**

Chair Heckaman and members of the Children's Cabinet, my name is Lisa Bjergaard, and I am the chair of the Commission on Juvenile Justice. I am here to report on behalf of the Commission.

The Commission on Juvenile Justice is a time limited, 16-member working group tasked to gather information, receive reports, and make recommendations regarding effective interventions, resources, and services for children.

Recommendations may include legislative strategies to implement recommendations. The Commission on Juvenile Justice is to report to the Children's Cabinet. This body has received updates regarding the activities of the Commission on Juvenile Justice at each of your meetings, and so today's report will begin where the last report ended.

This body received an update in June, 2021, presented by Representative Kim Koppelman. You received an overview of recently passed juvenile justice legislation, which included an update on HB 1427. This legislation created three planning committees that work under the supervision of the Commission on Juvenile Justice. The committees will assess, identify, and develop opportunities to build a service continuum designed to safely maintain youth under system

supervision in the community. The committees were to begin their work by August 15th, 2021 and will conclude in 12 months. The Children's Cabinet and the Commission on Juvenile Justice are required to review and approve any recommendations made by the committees.

The three committees are:

1. Planning Committee for Alternatives to Juvenile Detention
2. Juvenile Justice Planning Committee
3. Planning Committee for Children in Need of Services

The Commission on Juvenile Justice supervises the three committees, and approves the membership for and names the chair for committee's 1 and 2. The Children's Cabinet appoints the members who serve on committee 3. Committee 3 is specifically directed to report to and be subject to the Children's Cabinet.

Because the Commission on Juvenile Justice is responsible for supervising committee 3, as well as making sure a chair is appointed, the Commission has been receiving reports from committee three as well.

The Commission met in June, July, August, and September. The group is scheduled to meet again on October 28. The three planning committees were established in July and began their work in August. The Commission has set forth the expectation that the committees meet at least monthly, given the significant work they are expected to produce in a short period of time. The Commission has also set the expectation that each group provide a written

summary of their activities, beginning in October, 2021. All three groups are attended by the Council of State Governments Justice Center staff, who are providing technical assistance.

Please refer to the Planning Committee document which is attached as page 6. At your June meeting, you approved an initial membership roster which had been prepared for you by the Commission on Juvenile Justice. The Children in Need of Services planning committee held their first meeting on August 9th, 2021. Since that time, the group has added several people to its membership. Those persons are identified on the attachment. The committee requests that the Cabinet consider approval of this expanded membership at your meeting today.

The Children in Need of Services Planning Committee has formed two sub-committees. One is working on the process for referrals to the Zones, and one is focusing on developing policies and procedures for managing these cases. You will recall that this is a new category of cases created in the 2021 session, and included in Century Code as Chapter 27-20.3, the new Child Welfare chapter. Currently, children alleged to be Child(ren) in Need of Service continue to be referred to the juvenile court. On August 1, 2022, those cases will be referred to the Human Service Zones for processing.

In addition to organizing and planning work, the Children in Need of Services planning group has also begun to explore data gathering capacity with the Department of Human Services.

Planning committee 1, Alternatives to Detention, reports they have heard a presentation from Gina Vincent, an expert in screening and assessment instruments. The group has created sub-committees who will focus on developing three key areas: A. Alternatives to detention, B. the detention screening tool, and C. the process of implementing the detention screening tool.

Planning committee 2, Juvenile Justice Planning, are engaged in working to developing a mechanism to link families and youth to services. They are working with First Link to use the 211 helpline to create a process for assisting with crisis intervention referrals as well as referrals for appropriate services.

The reports from the various committees are being archived, and can be accessed at the following link:

www.ndaco.org/programs_and_services/jj/hb1427_planningcommittees

The Association of Counties has generously agreed to host the archive, as part of their work with the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Group.

In addition to working with the three planning committees, the Commission on Juvenile Justice has featured a presentation on a relevant topic at each of its meetings. In July, Pam Sagness with the Behavioral Health Division reported on the Medicaid 1915i State Plan Amendment. Pam reviewed the eligibility criteria and new services available under the Amendment. In August, the Commission on Juvenile Justice received a report from Karen Kringlie, a Director of Juvenile Court, on the status of the implementation of the new statute, and from Travis Finck, Director of Indigent Defense, on the process of adding new attorneys who

are working on detention hearings. In September, the Commission on Juvenile Justice heard from Mark Heinert, Assistant Director at Youthworks, about a legislative management study being conducted pursuant to SB2258 regarding homeless youth.

In October, the meeting hopes to have a presentation called Collaborating for Change presented by the national Coalition for Juvenile Justice, as well as a presentation by Cory Pedersen, Director of Children and Family Services, on the process of certification for shelter care.

The Commission on Juvenile Justice continues to provide reports to the Interim Judiciary Committee meeting on a regular basis as well. This is an attempt to continue to communicate the work between the Cabinet, the Commission and the Interim Committee.

Thank you for receiving this report.

