



2023-2024 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Thank your legislators for passing the Parentage Act and explain why it's so important for them to push more priorities to pass for vulnerable children and families in the Commonwealth before the 2023-2024 session ends.

PASSED

An Act relative to parentage to promote children's security

[S.947](#) / [H.1713](#) - New Drafts: [H.4750](#); [S.2906](#) (Sen. Cyr; Rep. Peake & Rep. Kane)

Updates Massachusetts' outdated parentage law so that it is clear, equitable, and provides legal protection for all families, including LGBTQ+ families. [Fact Sheet](#).

PRIORITY BILLS

An Act Enhancing Child Welfare Protections (Child Welfare Omnibus)

[S.124](#) / [H.165](#) - New Draft: [S.2804](#) (Sen. Oliveira; Rep. Finn)

Enhances reporting requirements for disproportionality disparities and transition age youth outcomes, adds examination of disproportionality to the Child Advocate's duties, and codifies more timely notifications to children and youth attorneys.

Bill of Rights for Children in Foster Care

[S.68](#) / [H.164](#) - New Draft: [S.2803](#) (Sen. Comerford; Rep. Finn)

Codifies and creates rights for children in care, such as promoting connection to family, community, and identity, prioritizing families first with placements, and promoting siblings' connections.

Protecting benefits owed to foster children

[S.65](#) / [H.157](#) - New Draft: [H.4704](#) (Sen. Comerford; Rep. Farley-Bouvier)

Ensures kids eligible for benefits get them. Makes sure benefits aren't being used for things DCF purchases for other children in care; providing financial literacy training. [Fact Sheet](#).

An Act to provide identification to youth and adults experiencing homelessness

[S.2251](#) / [H.3360](#) / [H.3388](#) (Sen. Kennedy; Rep. Khan; Rep. O'Day)

Creates a process for a person who is homeless or an unaccompanied homeless youth to apply for a state identification card and waive fees. [Fact Sheet](#).

Resolve Providing for an Investigation and Study by a Special Commission Relative to Children and Adolescents with Intensive Behavioral Health Needs

[S.88](#) / [H.193](#) (Sen. Gomez; Rep. Kushmerek)

Brings together stakeholders to assess needs of behavioral health intensive kids and recommend service design.

See Endorsed Bills on Next Pages

ENDORSED BILLS



Welfare/Equity

An Act Providing Affordable and Accessible High Quality Early Education and Care to Promote Child Development and Well-being and Support the Economy in the Commonwealth

[S.301](#) / [H.489](#) - New Draft: [S.2707](#) (Sen. Lewis; Reps. Gordon & Rep. Madaro)

Provides structure to deliver more affordable care options for families, better pay/benefits for early educators, stable source of funding for providers, high-quality programs/services for children, and relief for businesses/our economy. Fact Sheets: [H.489](#) & [S.301](#)

An Act Addressing the Racial Wealth Gap

[S.1999](#) / [H.1157](#) (Sen. Feeney; Rep. Vargas)

Provides framework to establish a Baby Bonds program to help address the ever-growing wealth gap.

An Act Regarding families and children in need of assistance

[S.101](#) / [H.134](#) (Sen. Kennedy; Rep. Blais)

Expands Family Resource Centers to support children and families outside of court, changes CRA filing process so court is “last resort” and raises age of filings from 6 to 12.

An Act relative to language access and inclusion

[S.1990](#) / [H.3084](#) (Sen. DiDomenico; Rep. Madaro & Rep. González)

Builds capacity of key public-facing state agencies to meet language access needs of an increasingly diverse population by standardizing and enforcing language access protocols/practices. [Fact Sheet](#).

An Act relative to safer schools

[S.300](#) / [H.517](#) (Sen. Kennedy; Rep. Khan); now attached to [S.290](#)

Clarifies conduct requiring disciplinary or law enforcement responses; creates grant program to transition to police-free schools; increases data on school policing; prohibits school resource officers from assignments that aren't publicly reported. [Fact Sheet](#).

An Act promoting diversion of juveniles to community supervision and services

[S.940](#) / [H.1495](#) - New Draft: [S.2756](#) (Sen. Creem; Rep. Fluker Oakley)

Expands list of offenses eligible for diversion but still prohibits diversion for offenses for which adults would be subject to a mandatory incarceration of five years or more. [Fact Sheet](#).

An Act minimizing trauma to court-involved children and families

[S.71](#) / [H.204](#) - New Draft: [S.2804](#) (Sen. Creem; Rep. Meschino)

Improves emergency removal procedures, such as to enhance communications and protections.

An Act to Eliminate Disproportionality and Inequities for At-Risk Children

[S.120](#) / [H.153](#) - New Draft: [S.2804](#) (Sen. Susan L. Moran; Rep. Paul J. Donato)

Requires child-serving state agencies to report on disproportionality in services and create corrective action plans with oversight/support from the Office of the Child Advocate. [Fact Sheet](#).

An Act to Establish a Massachusetts Children's Cabinet

[S.79](#) / [H.189](#) (Sen. DiDomenico; Rep. Khan & Rep. Cabral)



Promotes interdepartmental collaboration (with lots of government agencies) and program implementation and includes an advisory committee.

An Act to Lift Kids Out of Deep Poverty

[S.75](#) / [H.144](#) (Sen. DiDomenico; Rep. Decker)

Raises the Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) benefit available to very low-income families. Sets a floor for financial assistance at 50% of the federal poverty level -- \$960 a month for a family of three in 2022. The bill also increases financial assistance by 20% a year until grants reach 50% of the federal poverty level. [Facts](#).

Healthcare

An Act increasing access to postpartum home visiting services

[S.672](#) / [H.985](#) (Sen. Lovely; Rep. Decker & Rep. Tyler)

Calls for the Department of Public Health to establish and administer statewide programs providing universal postpartum home visiting services. Led by [CHAC](#) (Children's Health Access Coalition). See Health Care for All Massachusetts' [Fact Sheet](#).

An Act to ensure equitable health coverage for children (Cover All Kids)

[S.740](#) / [H.1237](#) (Sen. DiDomenico; Rep. Rogers)

Extends MassHealth benefits to children/young adults despite immigration status. [Fact Sheet](#).

Workforce

An Act establishing a behavioral health workforce center of excellence

[S.829](#) / [H.1275](#) (Sen. Kennan; Rep. Khan & Rep. Donaghue)

Establishes a center to assess the behavioral health workforce on a longitudinal basis and recommend strategies to meet needs.

An Act establishing a loan repayment program for direct care human service workers

[S.77](#) / [H.214](#) (Sen. DiDomenico; Rep. Roy & Rep. Pignatelli)

This bill would create an education loan repayment program for certain eligible human service workers. [Fact Sheet](#).

See Bills Sent to Study on Next Page

Bills Sent to Study

An Act Clarifying Insurance Liability for Foster Care Providers

[S.1134](#) / [H.1600](#) (Sen. John C. Velis; Rep. Sally P. Karens) - Study Order: S2612

Providers of foster care services for children and/or youth contracted by the state's Department of Children and Families shall not be held liable for injury to persons or damage to property caused by negligence or other action(s)/inaction(s) of the state, its employees or other third parties.



An Act to strengthen justice and safety for sex trade survivors

[S.983](#) / [H.1597](#) (Sen. Friedman; Rep. Keefe & Rep. Farley-Bouvier) - Study Order: S2753

Decriminalizes individuals bought and sold in the sex trade (overwhelmingly women and girls and disproportionately BIPOC and LGBTQIA individuals). Expands access to critical resources for the estimated 89% who want to exit the sex trade. [Bill Overview](#).

An Act improving juvenile justice data collection

[S.931](#) / [H.1802](#) (Sen. Creem; Rep. Vargas) - Study Order: S2612

Authorizes the Office of the Child Advocate to gather/report key demographic data at major decision points to better identify and evaluate policies or practices of the juvenile justice system. [Fact Sheet](#).

An Act Establishing the Massachusetts Foster Care Review Office

[S.66](#) / [H.158](#) (Sen. Comerford; Rep. Farley-Bouvier) - Study Order: S2764

Creates a Foster Care Review Board independent of the Dept. of Children and Families to address challenges both at the individual case level and at the systems level.

An act relative to livable wage for human services workers

[S.84](#) / [H.191](#) (Sen. Friedman; Rep. Khan) - Study Order: S2765

Eliminates pay disparity between the salaries of human services workers employed by community-based human service providers and state employees performing similar work. [Fact Sheet](#).

An Act to Ensure Educational Rights are Upheld for Incarcerated Youth

[S.1542](#) / [H.515](#) (Sen. Miranda; Rep. Keefe) - Study Order: H4584

Proposes systemic reforms, modeled after the Department of Youth Services' educational services, to ensure that youth are regularly engaged in education, including high school, special education, higher education, or vocational educational programs. [Fact Sheet](#).

An Act Relative to Expungement of Juvenile and Young Adult Records

[S.936](#) / [H.1451](#) (Sen. Creem; Rep. Decker; Rep. Khan) - Study Order: S2851

Expands the list of offenses eligible for expungement, such as non-convictions/non-adjudications; incentivizes not re-offending; prohibits dissemination of juvenile arrest fingerprints to FBI to prevent public availability; and requires annual reports. [Fact Sheet](#).

List Last Updated: July 3, 2024