



CALL-IN DAY KEY BILLS



✓ **BILL OF RIGHTS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE**

[S.2659/H.4599](#) Codifies/creates rights for children in care, e.g., promoting connection to family, community, and identity, prioritizing families and promoting siblings' connections.

✓ **AN ACT ENHANCING CHILD WELFARE PROTECTIONS**

[S.2659/H.4646](#) Enhances reporting/analysis on disproportionality, reporting on transition age youth outcomes, and more timely notifications to kids' attorneys.

✓ **AN ACT TO LIFT KIDS OUT OF DEEP POVERTY**

[S.118/H.214](#) Raises Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children by 20% per year until grants reach 50% of the federal poverty level.

✓ **AN ACT RELATIVE TO EXPUNGEMENT OF JUVENILE AND YOUNG ADULT RECORDS**

[S.1058/H.1657](#) Expands offenses eligible for expungement, e.g., non-convictions/non-adjudications; incentivizes not re-offending; prevents public availability of fingerprints.

✓ **AN ACT AN ACT EXPANDING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION TUITION AND FEE WAIVERS FOR ADOPTED FOSTER CHILDREN**

[S.918/H.1431](#) Closes a loophole that prevented tuition waiver for courses taught at night or by part-time faculty; (2) ensures it applies to adoptees and youth in DCF custody too.

✓ **AN ACT CLARIFYING INSURANCE LIABILITY FOR FOSTER CARE PROVIDERS**

[S.1280/H.197](#) Establishes special commission to study MA DCF-contracted providers of comprehensive foster care's liability insurance, e.g., burdensome costs/requirements.

✓ **AN ACT RELATIVE TO ADOPTIONS**

[S.1046/H.1975](#) Codifies that adoption outside MA is valid per MA law or laws where it was executed. Corrects recent requirement for out-of-state birth parents to sign form in MA.

✓ **AN ACT REGARDING FAMILIES AND CHILDREN IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE**

[S.141/H.4599](#) Expands function of Family Resource Centers to support more children/families outside of the court process; raises the lower age of Juvenile Court jurisdiction for CRA filings from 6 to 12 and changes process so court is true "last resort"



CLM OVERVIEW

About Us

The Children's League of Massachusetts (CLM) is a statewide non-profit advocacy association of 60 human services providers leading the charge on expanding the availability, accessibility, and quality of services for children, youth, and families. This year, CLM is celebrating its 30th year of service.

Priorities

CLM focuses on a wide variety of issues, primarily centered on the child welfare system, affecting vulnerable children, youth, and families, as well as community-based providers of services, such as:

- Promoting **safety and well-being** for children and youth.
- Advancing **equitable policies and practices** for children, youth, and families.
- Providing a **continuum of supports and services** for families.
- Addressing **intersectional issues that impact child welfare**, such as juvenile justice, disproportionality, and racial and LGBTQ equity.
- Supporting **permanency and stability** for youth in the foster care system.
- Strengthening access to health care, including **mental and behavioral health care**, for vulnerable youth.
- Improving **education outcomes** for children in foster care.
- Ensuring **success for youth aging out of state care** without permanency.
- Maintaining a stable, robust, and valued **children's service workforce**.
- Addressing **elements of poverty** that destabilize families, including affordable housing, nutrition, and childcare.



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KEY FACTS

Data Highlighting the Need for Change

Transition Age Youth – At age 21, nearly **50% of young people** who exited state care experienced **homelessness** within the two years prior. 59% exit the foster care system in Massachusetts, or "age out," without permanent, legal connections to family/caregivers.

Mental Health – Up to **80% of children** in foster care experience significant **mental health issues**, compared to 18–22% of the general population. Yet, mental/behavioral health is the largest unmet health need for children/teens in foster care.

Poverty – Increasing annual state investment into public benefit programs by **13.3%** results in a **3x reduction** in child maltreatment-related costs

Disproportionality – Black & Hispanic/Latinx children are 1.6x more likely & Native American children are 2.2x more likely to have out-of-home placements than white children.

Workforce – As of May 2023: 35% total staffing vacancy rate across services; children waiting for critical services increased by 41%