

LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON CHILD PROTECTION

STATE OF MINNESOTA

NINTH MEETING: February 25, 2016

MINUTES

Representative Ron Kresha, Co-Chair of the Legislative Task Force on Child Protection, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. on Thursday, February 25, 2016 in the Basement Hearing Room of the State Office Building.

Legislative Assistant Lisa Moriarity noted the roll.

Task Force members present:

Representative Ron Kresha, Co-Chair
Senator Kathy Sheran, Co-Chair
Representative Joe Mullery
Representative Peggy Bennett
Senator Jeff Hayden
Senator Julie Rosen

Task Force members excused: Representative Tom Anzelc and Senator Carla Nelson

Senator Julie Rosen moved to adopt the January 19, 2016 meeting minutes. **THE MOTION PREVAILED.**

The following representatives provided an update on child protective services 24/7 coverage in their organizations: Jodi Wentland, Children and Family Services Division Director, Olmsted County Community Services; Craig Myers, Executive Director, Des Moines Valley Health and Human Services; Sonya Becker, Des Moines Valley Health and Human Services; and Terrance Stark, Hennepin County.

Traci LaLiberte, Ph.D., Executive Director, Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, University of Minnesota and Kristine N. Piescher, Ph.D., Director of Research & Evaluation, Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, School of Social Work, University of Minnesota gave a presentation on an integrated data project related to children in child protective services and their educational outcomes.

Michelle Zehnder Fischer, Nicollet County Attorney, Janet Reiter, Chisago County Attorney, and Erin Johnson, Assistant Washington County Attorney, all from the Minnesota County Attorneys Association, gave a presentation detailing the impact that recent child protection legislation has had on county attorneys and their work with children and families.

Lilia Panteleeva, Esq., Executive Director, The Children's Law Center of Minnesota, gave a presentation on the Children's Law Center's role in providing legal representation to children involved in the child protection system.

Members discussed the Task Force's final report to the Legislature ("Implementation of 2015 Child Protection Laws," dated February 1, 2016). Representative Joe Mullery offered the addition of the following recommendations to the report:

1. Study whether all kids in foster care should receive legal representation, and if so, provide legal representation.
2. Study special circumstances of older children in foster care and their relationships with parents. Such a study needs to be done to assess run-aways leaving shelters and foster homes, with initiatives developed after assessment.

The following people offered public testimony:

McKenna Ahrenholz, former foster care recipient and Kathy Burland, guardian
Tonya Long, Board Chair, American Indian Community Specific Board
Kalis Houstin, Guardian ad Litem, State of Minnesota First Judicial District

The meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

Representative Ron Kresha, Co-Chair

Legislative Assistant, Lisa Moriarity