



2022 – 2023 MHLAC Legislative Priorities

Protect Disabled Parents from Discrimination

[An Act Prohibiting Discrimination Against Adults with Disabilities in Family and Juvenile Court Proceedings, SD.679 \(Sen. Lovely\)/HD.2670 \(Rep. Khan and Rep. Livingstone\)](#)

Requires Courts to determine if a parent's disability causes actual harm to a child based on evidence, and not assumptions, before making a negative custody or parenting time decision. Judges would be required to produce written findings as to the connection between a parent's disability and actual harm to a child, and would also need to determine what supports, services or adaptive equipment or aides might alleviate that harm.

End the School-to-Prison Pipeline

[An Act Relative to Safer Schools, SD.2056 \(Sen. Kennedy\)/HD.2273 \(Rep. Khan\)](#)

Limits the use of police powers in school, collects more data on student/police interactions, requires public reporting of that data to have SROs, and creates a grant program for schools seeking to implement safety practices that do not rely on school-based policing.

[An Act Relative to the Location of School Resource Officers, HD.124 \(Rep. Sabadosa\)](#)

Removes SROs from schools, locates them at the nearest police station, and tasks them with responding to school-based emergencies.

Promote Alternatives to Mental Health Crisis Response

[Budget Line Item 4512-2020: Equitable Approaches to Public Health and Safety](#)

Continues a matching grant program for municipalities to develop and implement alternative crisis response teams, with priority to teams of non-law enforcement community members who can respond particularly to mental health calls for service.

[An Act Establishing Peer Respite Centers Throughout the Commonwealth, SD.1413 \(Sen. Comerford\)/HD.1612 \(Rep. Sabadosa and Rep. Pignatelli\)](#)

Establishes a peer respite center in each county of the Commonwealth, with two specific LGBTQIA+ focused respite centers.

Provide Language Accessibility in Schools

[An Act Relative to Language Access and Inclusion, SD.1066 \(Sen. DiDomenico\)/HD.3616 \(Rep. Madaro and Rep. González\)](#)

Ensures that all state agencies offer interpretation services and translation of vital documents, as well as standardizing language access action plans and providing other services for non-English speaking residents.

An Act Relative to the Training, Assessment, and Assignment of Qualified School Interpreters in Educational Settings, SD.461(Sen. Crighton)/HD.1915 (Rep. Cabral)

Directs DESE to increase access to qualified school interpreters by developing a system for training, assessing, and determining qualifications of interpreters in educational settings.

Secure Equity in Insurance

An Act Relative to the Continuity of Care of Mental Health, SD.1164 (Sen. Keenan)/HD.1222 (Rep. Balser and Rep. Farley-Bouvier)

Treatment would require that an insurer continue coverage of treatment through an out-of-network option for any insured who is engaged in a continuing course of treatment with a licensed mental health provider who was eligible for payment under the plan.

An Act Requiring Mental Health Parity for Disability Policies, HD.2438 (Rep. Balser)/SD.247 (Sen. Lovely)

Prevents insurance companies from limiting disability benefits ONLY for those with behavioral health diagnoses.

Make Parole Equitable

An Act to Promote Equitable Access to Parole, HD.1984 (Rep. Sabadosa)/SD.1048 (Sen. Miranda)

Of note, expands Parole Board composition requirements to include at least 4 members with background in behavioral health, mental health, and substance abuse, as well as at least one formerly incarcerated person. Establishes clearer guidelines on parole hearings and standards for consideration of release, including increased transparency throughout the process. Requires at least three evaluations regarding necessary accommodation for those with disabilities prior to their hearing date.

An Act Establishing Presumptive Parole, HD.3307 (Rep. Rogers)

Establishes the presumption of a positive parole grant at an individual's first parole eligibility hearing, expands requirements for evaluations for those with disabilities, and affirms the responsibility for establishing a suitable release lies with the Parole Board.



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