2022 – 2023 MHLAC Legislative Priorities

Protect Disabled Parents from Discrimination

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

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 response particularly to mental health calls for service.

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

Provide Language Accessibility in Schools

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.

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


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.


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

Make Parole Equitable


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.

For more information, please contact:
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