Week Five **April 2, 2010**

Harmful CSC Bill Up in House and Senate Committees Next Week

Children's Services Council (CSCs) supporters continue their intensive work to educate legislators about the value and strengths of the independent CSCs that have served millions of Florida's children for decades. However, the bill that jeopardizes the future of CSCs continues to move. Next week, the Senate Community Affairs Committee will take up CS for SB1216 on Wednesday, April 7. This is the second committee in the Senate.

In the House, with the final agenda still pending, it is anticipated that the Military & Local Affairs Policy Committee will again consider the CSC bill when it meets next Thursday, April 8. Having been amended before adjournment at the last meeting, it is now Proposed Committee Substitute (PCS) for HB1227.

The House PCS largely conforms to the Senate version, Committee Substitute for SB 1216, which removes provisions relative to county commission oversight, but maintains a requirement for CSC reauthorization every six years. Additional amendments were approved by the House Committee last time. The first adopted amendment, sponsored by Rep. Juan Zapata (R-Miami-Dade), moves the August primary requirement to a General election. The second adopted amendment, also by Rep. Zapata, changes the schedule for CSCs established in 1990 or before to go to referendum in 2012 (instead of 2010.) The third amendment, by Rep. Mark Pafford (D-Palm Beach), was under discussion when time ran out. Rep. Pafford's amendment would change the referendum requirement so that all CSCs, except Miami-Dade, would go to ballot on or before the general election in 2016 (instead of 2010). Miami-Dade would remain at 2018 since they just went to referendum in 2008. A fourth amendment, also by Rep. Pafford but not heard, seeks to replace the referendum provision with a requirement that CSCs undergo a comprehensive statutory review of their operations and functions as prescribed in an existing statute for special districts (s. 189.428).

TAKE NOTE

Children's Week

April 11-14

Tallahassee

Rally for Afterschool
April 20
Washington, DC

One Goal Summer Conference
July 21-23
Tampa

Capitol Connection is also available online at the FCSC web site.

CALLS TO ACTION:

- Contact members of the House Military & Local Affairs Committee and urge them to **vote NO** on PCS/HB 1227.
- Contact members of the Senate Community Affairs Committee and urge them to **vote NO** on CS for SB 1216.
- Contact House Speaker Larry Cretul and Senate President Jeff Atwater to urge them to **oppose this measure**.

At a time when funding for children's programs is being cut to levels that will endanger thousands of children, the possibility of additional cuts will make the crisis even worse.This unnecessary proposal impinges on local communities and could not come at a worse time for programs that rely on CSC support. **Download additional talk points**.

House and Senate Pass Budgets, Negotiations to Begin Soon

Passing their respective budgets was the chief order of business in the House and Senate this week, laying the groundwork for an earlier-than-usual appropriations stand-off between the two chambers. The House passed its $67.2 billion spending plan (HB 5001) along partisan lines (77-44), which was $1.8 billion less than the Senate's $70 billion plan (SB 2700). The chief differences are that the Senate included additional revenues from gaming ($435 M) and additional federal Medicaid money ($880 M) that has not technically been approved by Congress yet.

House Speaker Larry Cretul has maintained his position that the House budget will only include revenues it has - not money hoped for such as gaming or federal Medicaid bonuses. "We've anchored it in the realities of the economy and we haven't put in any money that we don't actually have," said the Speaker.

In another major difference, the Senate budget features an expansion of Medicaid managed-care-based reform to 19 counties. It includes a provision requiring that the Agency for Health Care Administration submit an application to the federal agency for a Medicaid rule waiver that essentially transforms the state program to a voucher system that could be used for managed care providers. It also limits state spending to what the legislature appropriates and, for the first time, would institute co-payments and deductibles for some Medicaid patients. The Medicaid changes are not included in the House bill. In any case, the waiver would have to be approved by the Obama administration.

The House also took up a series of implementing and conforming bills. Some of the bills affecting children are:

- HB 5301 on the Medicaid system. The bill reduces eligibility for prenatal services by eliminating optional Medicaid eligibility and coverage for pregnant women with incomes between 150 and 185 percent of the federal poverty level. The bill passed 77-41.
- HB 5305 on child welfare. The measure cuts adoption benefits for state workers and establishes a $675 a month transition fee for 18-year-olds transitioning from the state child welfare system - about half what it is currently. The bill passed 75-44.

The following table highlights Florida CSC funding priorities as reflected in the two versions of the budget. The next step is high-stakes negotiating by the conference committee. The dates have not yet been set.

PROPOSED CHANGES (+/-) COMPARED TO 2009-10 BUDGET AS OF 4/2/10			
ISSUE	**HOUSE**	**SENATE**	**COMMENT**
School Readiness	$0	$0	Sen. Mike Fasano amendment provides $3.1 million in non-recurring funds to restore SR funding. Restores 1,728 program slots.
VPK (Non-admin.)	+ $35.5 M	+ $2.8 M	Despite increase over last year, the Senate budget still represents a nearly 10% cut in VPK. The House has a 1% cut. **Click here for details**.
Healthy Kids (Kid Care)	+ $7.4 M	+ $17.6 M	
Healthy Start Coalitions	- $4 M	$0	House proposes eliminating Healthy Start Coalitions and transferring service dollars to County Health Departments. See Call to Action.
Healthy Families	+ $717,736	$0	Senate budget is contingent on federal FMAP dollars. House is not.
Early Steps	- $1.8 M	- $1.8 M	Uses non-recurring stimulus
Children's Medical Services	+ 23.9 M	+ $24.1 M	
Child Protection Investigation	- $1.4 M	+ $158,091	

Community Based Care (CBC)	+ $5.7 M	- $4.1 M	
Independent Living	$0	$0	House and Senate staff say base budget is covered. House conforming bill cuts monthly stipend to $675, nearly half of what it was.
Maintenance Adoption Subsidies	- $1.8 M	- $920 K	
Juvenile Assessment Centers	- $1 M	$ 0	Learn more about JACs
CINS/FINS	+ $100,869	+ $100,596	

CALLS TO ACTION

- **VPK**-- Contact members of the Senate Committee on Education Pre-K-12 Appropriations and urge them to take the House position on VPK. Also, thank Rep. Kelly Skidmore (D-Palm Beach) for speaking to these cuts affecting children.
- **Healthy Start** -- Contact House leadership (Speaker Cretul), the Chair of the Full Appropriations Council on General Government and Health Care (Rep. Rivera), and the Chair of the Health Care Appropriations Committee (Rep. Grimsley) **to restore funding** for Healthy Start Coalitions during conference negotiations. Please thank Reps. Adam Fetterman (D-St. Lucie), Yolly Roberson (D-Miami-Dade) and Elaine Schwartz (D-Broward) for speaking against the elimination of the coalitions.
- **JACs** - Contact House members and urge them to restore $1 million in JAC funding.

OTHER STATE NEWS

Senate Deal Jeopardizes Millions in DJJ Treatment Programs

In the name of keeping prisons open and maintaining jobs, the Senate transferred $16 million from the Department of Juvenile Justice to the Department of Corrections (DCC). Sadly, that $16-million transfer would result in the elimination of residential treatment programs for troubled children. An amendment was approved that would have restored the $16 million using FMAP dollars. However, a separate amendment moved the funds to DCC.

CALL TO ACTION

Contact your Senators. Tell them to oppose the transfer of residential

treatment dollars for adult prison beds. Ask them to restore the $16 million for residential treatment for troubled youth. • Almost 100% of all DJJ residential beds are currently full. Cuts will increase waiting lists and expand detention. • 95% of DJJ residential beds serve youth with specialized mental health and substance abuse needs. • Programs across the state will close and seriously troubled youth will not receive treatment and rehabilitative services.	