



TOP BILLS TO PROMOTE CHILDREN'S HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND SECURITY

The legislative session is in full swing and Children's Action Alliance invites you to join us in supporting these key legislative proposals:

HB 2127, Prevent an Automatic Freeze on KidsCare | Sponsor: Cobb

KidsCare now provides affordable health care coverage to nearly 25,000 children in working families, connecting them with the check-ups, immunizations, treatment and prescriptions they need to grow up healthy. Current state law has a trigger that immediately freezes KidsCare if federal funding dips at all below 100%. HB 2127 removes the automatic freeze and puts control back in the hands of the Arizona legislature. Going forward, it allows the legislature to determine any state funding for KidsCare and to decide whether enrollment should be frozen. *(Passed House 46-12; Ready for Senate)*

SB 1166, Stronger Permanent Guardianships | Sponsor: Brophy-McGee

Abused and neglected children can be connected to lifelong families through an option known as "permanent guardianship," which allows kids to leave foster care and live with people they already know and trust. State policies for permanent guardians are outdated, leaving critical gaps in support. This bill takes two steps to strengthen guardianship policies and connect families with the supports they need for family stability. It allows permanent guardians to continue getting financial support if they choose to adopt the children. It also allows the Department of Child Safety to determine eligibility for a permanent guardianship subsidy before the court decision. This way families won't have a lag in getting the financial support they count on. *(Scheduled for Senate Health & Human Service Committee, Friday 2/16 at 9:00am)*

HB 2482, Foster Care Tuition Waiver | Sponsor: Shope

Youth who have lived in foster care during their adolescence face major challenges as they transition into adulthood, sometimes without a family or adults they can count on. Access to a college education can make that transition much more successful and improve their future work and income opportunities. Arizona has had a successful pilot program to provide these young adults with waivers for tuition at our state universities and community colleges. This bill makes the pilot permanent for youth who were in foster care when they were 13 years old or older. *(Passed House Education Committee 9-0, 2/12)*

HB 2449, Child Care Payments for Higher Quality Care | Sponsor: Udall

Current research shows that children who participate in high quality child care and preschool before they start kindergarten experience lower rates of special education placements, less grade retention, and improved high school graduation rates. Working parents who earn low incomes lose this opportunity because they can't afford high quality care and education. This bill strengthens Arizona's child care assistance program to connect more children with higher quality care. It requires the state to invest a portion of its child care assistance funds to provide higher payments to child care services that meet higher quality standards. *(Passed House Health Committee unanimously, 2/8)*



SB 1445, Dental Care for Pregnant Women | Sponsor: Yee

Good oral health is important for both the mother's overall health and her children's health at birth and beyond, and will result in lower downstream health care costs. This bill provides dental care of up to \$1,000 per year to adult pregnant women covered through AHCCCS. Improving oral health of expectant mothers will improve birth outcomes, reduce the transmission of bacteria, delay the onset of tooth decay among children, and reduce the cost of future dental treatment. *(Scheduled for Senate Health & Human Service Committee, Wednesday 2/14 at 2:00pm)*

HB 2231, TANF Cash Assistance for Children Living with Relatives | Sponsor: Espinoza

Many grandparents and other relatives take children into their homes to raise when their parents can't. This can prevent the cost and trauma of foster care and give children loving families without any involvement of DCS. These kinship families lost financial support due to budget cuts during the Great Recession. This bill restores TANF cash assistance to children living with relatives, based only on the child's income not on the income of the whole family.

HB 2193, No Life Sentence Without Parole for Juvenile Crime | Sponsor: Carter

This bill conforms Arizona law with U.S. Supreme Court decisions that youth must be treated differently than adults in the criminal justice system and should not be subject to natural life sentences without the opportunity for parole. The bill states that youth who commit a crime while under the age of 18 that is punishable by life imprisonment should be eligible for consideration of parole after serving 25 years of imprisonment.

HB 2200, HB 2287, SB 1321, SB 1322, Child Care Funding | Sponsors: Powers Hannley, Alston, Bowie, Mendez

Working families need access to reliable, convenient child care that gives children a strong educational foundation. Unfortunately, the high cost of care results in families sometimes having to choose not working or having to put their children in unsafe situations. During the great recession, \$80 million in state funds to child care assistance were cut and almost none of that funding has been restored. As a result, Arizona is serving half as many children as we were in 2009, despite increases in the number of working families living in poverty. These bills appropriate general fund resources to Arizona's Child Care Assistance Program which will allow more families access to early care and education so that they can remain employed while still assuring the safety of their children.