

OPEGA Review Request Summary
Prepared for the Government Oversight Committee

Review Request Topic: DHHS Office of Child and Family Services

Legislative Sponsor: Senator Chip Curry

Date Presented: July 14, 2021

Topic/Program

- A review of the policies and practices of the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) within Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to ensure child safety in the home.

Program Description/Background

- OCFS is responsible for child welfare activities that support child safety, well-being, and permanent homes for children.

Specific Details

- Between May 31, 2021 and June 20, 2021, there have been 4 child deaths in Maine involving children 4 years old or younger.

Possible Areas of Focus Based on Review Request

- Identify any barriers to organizational change in the child protective system and strategies to overcome them.
- Identify and consider more effective ways for the Legislature to provide oversight of the child protection system and assistance to families.

Past or Current Reviews Relating to this Topic

- In May of 2018, OPEGA issued a report titled: *Child Protection System: A Study of How the System Functioned in Two Cases of Child Death by Abuse in the Home.*
- In February of 2019, OPEGA issued a report titled: *Frontline Workers in the State Child Protective System.*
- Child Welfare Ombudsman: Annual Report for 2020.
These reports are included in the GOC packets

Additional Materials

- Letter from Senator Curry to the Government Oversight Committee.

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