

Action Alert!

Time-sensitive facts regarding legislation affecting Michigan's children and families.

for Child and Family Advocates



December 2020

Bills Protecting Vulnerable Youth and Families Pass Legislature for Governor's Pen

During this Lame Duck, the Michigan Legislature passed with overwhelming support two sets of bills that would help position some of Michigan's most vulnerable youth and families to thrive and contribute to our state's recovery. These bills await the Governor's signature. The state Legislature has yet to announce a supplemental budget plan to support families and students.

Juvenile Record Confidentiality - SB 681 and 682

Michigan is one of only nine states that allows complete public access for most juvenile records. The process for a juvenile record set-aside is arduous, and some traffic offenses are not even eligible, which disproportionately affect youth in foster care who struggle to access a driver's license. These bills would make juvenile records no longer publicly available beginning in 2021, only accessible to "persons having a legitimate interest. The package would also eliminate fees for applying for a set-aside and speed up the timeline for application. The package would automatically set-aside certain juvenile records after a set period of time, excluding the most severe crimes including felonies that would have had life sentences.

*Current Status: Passed the Senate and House with a bi-partisan majority. **Urge the Governor's signature of these bills, and [thank your legislators](#) who supported their passage (search "681" and "682" in the link to find individual vote tallies.)***

Pretrial Incarceration and Jail Task Force Recommendations – Incl. HB 5844, 5846

Michigan's Children has heard from young people who have experienced foster care and their parents that aggressive pre-trial approaches to low-level offences and mandatory minimum jail sentences often create more problems for society than solutions because they create barriers to rehabilitation instead of breaking down whatever barriers caused the situation in the first place.

The bills stemming from the recommendations of the Michigan Jail and Pretrial Incarceration Task Force will prevent the incarceration and future criminalization of many struggling parents and young people while improving public safety and encouraging rehabilitation. These bills would eliminate a requirement for the Secretary of State to revoke, suspend, deny, or refuse to renew the driver's license of an individual for various reasons including low-level drug arrests, failure to pay child support, and failure to comply with parenting time requirements. The package would also eliminate mandatory jail minimums for many low-level offenses.

*Current Status: Passed the House and Senate with unanimous majority. **Urge the Governor's signature of these bills, and thank your legislators who supported their passage.***