



Center for Public Policy Priorities

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NEWS RELEASE

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CPPP STATEMENT ON HHSC CPS RECOMMENDATIONS

AUSTIN, TX– Today, the Governor and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission released a long-awaited report on changes that should be made to child protective services (CPS) to safeguard the state’s six million children from abuse or neglect.

Scott McCown, Executive Director of the Center for Public Policy Priorities, issued the following statement:

“We applaud the Governor for directing a thoughtful plan that addresses our child protection system and commend the Commissioner for making comprehensive recommendations that address all stages of service.

“But this plan is just a starting point. The key problem is that the plan calls for too little money and caseloads that are too large.

“In 1998, Governor Bush declared the foster care system in ‘crisis,’ calling for the hiring of more caseworkers. Investigator caseloads at that time averaged 24.

“Today, monthly caseloads are at 74, the highest in the nation, and the Governor wants to reduce them to 45, almost double what they were when Governor Bush called the system broken. To meet national accreditation standards, the monthly investigative caseload should be 12 to 15.

“CPS needs additional funds to increase and retain staff, reduce workloads, and address Texas’s rapidly growing child population. Texas already has the second largest child population and second highest birth rate in the country.

“In addition, we have reservations about privatizing certain kinds of work currently performed by CPS caseworkers, such as placement and related case management services. Many questions need to be answered about how privatization would work, such as how to ensure accountability for spending of taxpayer dollars and how to prevent any conflicts of interest among service providers.”

The Center for Public Policy Priorities is a 501 (c)(3), non-partisan, non-profit policy research organization committed to improving public policies and private practices to better the economic and social conditions of low- and moderate-income Texans.