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Governor Tom Corbett  
225 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Senator Joseph B. Scarnati III  
President Pro Tempore, Pennsylvania Senate  
Senate Box 203025  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3025

Senator Dominic Pileggi  
Majority Leader, Pennsylvania Senate  
Senate Box 203009  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3009

Senator Jay Costa  
Democratic Floor Leader, Pennsylvania Senate  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3043

Representative Sam Smith  
Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
PO Box 202066  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2066

Representative Mike Turzai  
Majority Leader, Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
PO Box 202028  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2028

Representative Frank Dermody  
Democratic Leader, Pennsylvania House of  
Representatives  
PO Box 202033  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2033

Dear Governor Corbett and Leaders of the General Assembly:

Preventing child abuse and protecting children is a shared community responsibility.

Throughout this National Child Abuse Prevention Month, there will be events to reinforce our shared commitment to improved child outcomes, in part, by ensuring that children and society do not suffer from the long-term adverse experiences and costs linked to child abuse.

**Today, we are seeking your leadership to realize an intentional time-limited and interdisciplinary Commission to Improve the Prevention, Identification and Treatment of Child Abuse.**

Included as an attachment are a number of tables that appear to suggest that Pennsylvania is a statistical outlier in when and how it investigates and then substantiates child abuse. The only immediate conclusion we can draw is that as a Commonwealth we must prioritize a greater understanding of and attention to the prevention, identification and treatment of child abuse.

The recent Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice proved that together the Governor, legislative leaders, the courts, and external stakeholders can join together to ask tough questions, tear off the blinders about an issue, and then chart a productive course forward. We think this is an appropriate model to replicate in order to study child abuse and develop any needed action plan.

Included within the analysis required of the interdisciplinary Commission to Improve the Prevention, Identification and Treatment of Child Abuse should be attention to the following questions:

1. How much is the Commonwealth investing in evidence-based or promising child abuse primary prevention strategies? Also, how are funding and outcomes measured and coordinated across departments?
2. What impact, if any, does the state's definition of child abuse have on child health and safety?

3. What public and private education and training strategies are needed to ensure mandated reporters of suspected child abuse fully understand their duties and responsibilities?
4. Are any updates or improvements needed to the state's dual response system (Child Protective Services and General Protective Services) to improve child safety and what performance measurements are tracked to demonstrate effectiveness?
5. How is ChildLine – the state's abuse hotline – functioning?
6. How should child welfare financing strategies, workforce development, and technology aimed at improved decision-making evolve to better promote prevention and ensure child safety?
7. How will the Commonwealth increase transparency within the child welfare system and ensure independent complaint resolution and oversight (e.g., Child Protection Ombudsperson)?

Pennsylvania will make its first application for federal Children's Justice Act (CJA) funds in May. These funds are intended to improve the investigation and treatment of child abuse. The availability of federal discretionary funds both for the prevention of child abuse through the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) as well as CJA provide a unique opportunity and a reasonable source of funding for any costs that would be incurred to convene this time-limited Commission and its required analysis.

The recently proposed Commonwealth Budget illustrates that there is a significant price tag paid when we fail as a society to prevent child abuse. There are unquestionable human costs and there are tangible fiscal costs that cross all departments and funding streams (e.g., child welfare services, remedial education, corrections, health, justice and victim services, etc).

**The bottom line: whether calculating the life-long consequences for children or the tangible public and private costs to combat child abuse, the price is too steep to be ignored.**

We look forward to working with you in the days ahead to ensure a Commission is convened and answers pursued.

Sincerely,

**A Child's Place at Mercy –Allegheny County Children's Advocacy Center**  
Joan Mills, Manager

**Adams County Children's Advocacy Center**  
Joddie Walker, Executive Director

**Alice Paul House**  
Lou Ann Williams, Executive Director

**Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries**  
Patricia Savage, CEO

**American Academy of Pediatrics - PA Chapter**  
Dr. Allen Nussbaum MD, Vice President  
Suzanne Yunghans, Executive Director

**Bucks County Children's Advocacy Center**  
Leslie Slingsby, LSW, Director

**Center for Family Life, Inc./Children's Advocacy Center of Indiana County**  
Kristina Taylor-Porter, Executive Director

**Center for the Prevention of School-Aged Violence at Drexel University**  
Charles A. Williams III, PhD, Director

**Central Susquehanna Valley Children's Advocacy Center**  
Dr. Pat Bruno, M.D., FAAP, Medical Director

**Child Watch of Pittsburgh**  
Christopher P. Smith, Executive Director

**Children's Advocacy Center Of Lawrence County**  
Sue Ascione, Executive Director

**Children's Advocacy Center of Northeastern Pennsylvania**  
MaryAnn LaPorta, Executive Director

**Children's Alliance Center of Berks County**  
April Reed Schmehl, Vice President

**Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC**  
Dr. Rachel P Berger MD,MPH, Child Advocacy Center  
Dr. Janet Squires MD, Child Advocacy Center

**City Church York**  
Rev. Aaron Anderson, Pastor

**Crime Victim Center of Erie County, Inc.**  
Paul A. Lukach, Executive Director

**Crisis Shelter of Lawrence County**  
Dayna Shaw Sear, Executive Director

**Dauphin County Victim Witness Assistance**  
Vikki Palmer, Child Abuse Advocate

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Northwestern PA Synod**

The Rev. Dr. Ralph Jones, Bishop

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Southeastern PA Synod**

The Reverend Claire S. Burkat, Bishop

**Family Design Resources**

Brenda Lawrence, Executive Director

**Family Support Policy Board**

Ruth F. Kolb, JD, MSPPM, Director

**Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research**

Debra Schilling Wolfe, Executive Director

**Fight Crime: Invest in Kids – Pennsylvania**

Bruce Clash, State Director

**Juvenile Law Center**

Robert Schwartz, Executive Director

**KidsVoice**

Scott Hollander, Executive Director

**Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania**

The Rev. Amy Reumann, Director

**Lutheran Congregational Services, Inc.**

The Rev. Dr. Dennis S. Ritter, Executive Director

**Luzerne County Office of Human Services**

Joe DeVizia, Director

**Maternity Care Coalition**

JoAnne Fischer, Executive Director

**Mission Kids – Child Advocacy Center of Montgomery County**

Abbie Newman, RN, JD, Executive Director

**National Association of Social Workers – PA Chapter**

Jenna Mehnert, Executive Director

**Network of Victim Assistance (Bucks County)**

Barbara Clark, Executive Director

**Nurse-Family Partnership National Service Office**

Tara Dechert, Pennsylvania Program Developer

**PathWays PA**

Carol Goertzel, CEO

**Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners**

Karen Flad RN MSN CSN, President

**Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police**

Amy Rosenberry, Executive Director

**Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape**

Delilah Rumburg, CEO

**Pennsylvania Community Providers Association**

Connell O'Brien, Policy Specialist

**Pennsylvania Council of Churches**

The Rev. Sandra L. Strauss, Director of Public Advocacy

**Pennsylvania Court Appointed Special Advocates**

Dennis Hockensmith, Executive Director

**PA Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention & Awareness Program**

Dr. Mark S. Dias, MD, FAANS, FAAP, Director (also Professor of Neurosurgery & Pediatrics, Penn State Hershey Medical Center)

Kelly Cappos RN, BSN, Nurse Coordinator

Marie Killian, RN, BSN, Nurse Coordinator

Carroll Rottmund RN, BSN, Nurse Coordinator

**Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association**

Kathleen Ramper, Executive Director

**Philadelphia Children's Alliance**

Chris Kirchner, Executive Director

**PinnacleHealth Children's Resource Center**

Teresa Smith, Ph.D., LSW, Executive Director

**Pressley Ridge**

Tammy Relken, Senior Director

**Prevent Child Abuse PA**

Dr. Maria D. McColgan, M.D, Advisory Board Chair

**Protect Our Children Committee**

Cathleen Palm, Co-Founder and Executive Director

**SEIU Local 668**

Kathy Jellison, President

**Sexual Assault Resource and Counseling Center**

Jenny Murphy-Shifflet, President/CEO

**South Central Citizen Review Panel**

Christina Mortensen, LSW, Vice Chair

**Strategic Health Institute**

Dr. Wanda Filer, Founder

**Support Center for Child Advocates**

Frank Cervone, Executive Director

**The Foundation to Abolish Child Sex Abuse**

Tammy Lerner, Co-Founder and State Director

**Women Organized Against Rape**

Carole Johnson, Executive Director

**York County Children's Advocacy Center**

Deborah Harrison, Executive Director

**York Hospital**

Dr. David Turkewitz, M.D., Chairman Pediatrics (and Medical Director York County Children's Advocacy Center)

**York County Cribs for Kids Program**

Dr. Michael H. Goodstein, MD, FAAP, Director (and Attending Neonatologist at York Hospital)

**Individuals**

Mary Achilles (Cumberland County)

Deb Beck (Dauphin County)

Beth Docherty (Allegheny County)

David Fair (Philadelphia)

Patti Gilbert (Cumberland County)

The Rev. Karl Jones (Schuylkill County)

Nancy Kaminski (Allegheny County)

Terry Kane (Montgomery County)

Charles Lockwood (Butler County)

Lisa L. Pawlowski (Lehigh County)

Sheldon Schwartz (Franklin County)

Patricia Sonne (Lehigh County)

Gary Shuey (Cumberland County)

Clay Yeager (York County)

# TABLE 1: Rate of Child Abuse Reports Triggering Investigation<sup>1</sup>

Table developed from [data prepared](#) by the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Children's Bureau research on child abuse and neglect including the annual Child Maltreatment reports

STATES	2009 Rate of Children Receiving CPS Response <sup>2</sup>	Investigation Rate 2008	Investigation Rate 2007	Investigation Rate 2006	Investigation Rate 2005	Investigation Rate 2004
<b>NATIONAL</b>	40.3	27.1	26.0	26.0	26.3	26.2
<b>CALIFORNIA</b>	39.1	26.1	24.8	24.0	24.2	24.8
<b>FLORIDA</b>	67.6	43.3	38.5	37.8	37.3	37.4
<b>IOWA</b>	43.3	30.4	32.5	35.2	34.6	34.3
<b>KENTUCKY</b>	59.3	49.6	48.4	48.6	48.2	47.3
<b>LOUISIANA</b>	29.4	19.3	17.5	24.0	23.1	20.4
<b>MINNESOTA</b>	17.9	14.8	15.1	15.8	14.9	13.8
<b>MISSOURI</b>	40.9	34.6	34.7	33.4	38.9	38.3
<b>NEVADA</b>	31.4	21.5	24.8	23.4	23.6	22.6
<b>NEW JERSEY</b>	34.6	26.3	21.6	13.5	16.6	20.9
<b>NEW MEXICO</b>	38.7	28.8	29.7	33.2	40.7	33.1
<b>NEW YORK</b>	50.8	36.2	34.9	33.5	30.9	32.3
<b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>	51.8	30.9	30.3	31.4	31.6	31.9
<b>NORTH DAKOTA</b>	---	28.0	25.0	26.4	27.2	26.6
<b>OHIO</b>	36.8	30.7	28.1	26.4	25.7	25.0
<b>OKLAHOMA</b>	48.4	38.6	39.9	41.2	41.9	41.0
<b>PENNSYLVANIA</b>	8.3 <sup>3</sup>	9.1	8.4	8.2	8.2	8.4
<b>SOUTH DAKOTA</b>	32.0	18.1	18.4	19.9	22.7	23.6
<b>TENNESSEE</b>	50.6	41.5	42.3	42.4	41.7	34.1
<b>VERMONT</b>	27.8	18.3	19.5	17.3	18.4	19.4
<b>VIRGINIA</b>	31.7	15.9	14.5	16.0	15.4	15.6
<b>WASHINGTON</b>	24.0	23.2	23.0	23.4	22.6	21.3
<b>WISCONSIN</b>	23.9	20.1	20.4	21.9	22.3	30.0
<b>WYOMING</b>	36.0	18.7	19.4	19.8	16.5	16.5

<sup>1</sup> Since not all reports of suspected child abuse trigger a response or investigation, this chart depicts the rate at which child abuse investigations are generated. In 2009, nationally 3,002,979 unduplicated children were the subject of a report of suspected child abuse generating a response/investigation by the Child Protective Services system at a rate of 40.3 percent. Pennsylvania recorded 23,100 children who were the subject of a report triggering an investigation - a rate of 8.3 percent. The specific source for this data was Table 3-2 within Child Maltreatment 2009. According to the Child Maltreatment 2009 document, the rate was computed by dividing the number of children who received a CPS response by the child population and multiplying by 1,000.

<sup>2</sup> The Duplicate Children Count was 9.3 for Pennsylvania and 48.1 nationally.

<sup>3</sup> The tables represent an attempt to better understand PA's statistical rates in relationship to national data and states with an identified differential response to child abuse reports and investigations. The National Quality Improvement Center on Differential Response in Child Protective Services has identified 11 states with a statewide implementation of Alternative Response (AR) including Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Wyoming. States with regional or pilot ARs include Florida, Nevada, New York, Ohio and Wisconsin. They also include California, Iowa, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota and South Dakota in a category of "implemented other innovative response systems."

## TABLE 2: Substantiated Child Abuse Rate

Table developed from [data prepared](#) by the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Children's Bureau research on child abuse and neglect including the annual Child Maltreatment reports. This is the substantiation/child victim rate per 1,000 children.

STATE	<u>Total Rate 2009</u>	<u>Total Rate 2008</u>	<u>Total Rate 2007</u>	<u>Total Rate 2006</u>	<u>Total Rate 2005</u>	<u>Total Rate 2004</u>	<u>Total Rate 2000</u>
<b>NATIONAL</b>	9.3	10.3	10.6	12.1	12.1	12.0	12.2
CALIFORNIA	7.8	9.1	9.4	9.5	10.1	10.4	14.0
FLORIDA	11.3	12.8	13.3	33.5	33.0	33.4	26.3
IOWA	16.3	15.7	19.7	20.5	19.8	19.4	14.8
KENTUCKY	16.0	18.1	18.7	19.8	19.6	19.3	18.7
LOUISIANA	8.1	9.2	8.6	11.7	10.6	9.3	8.7
MINNESOTA	3.7	4.6	5.4	6.1	6.7	6.5	9.2
MISSOURI	3.7	3.9	5.0	5.0	6.3	6.8	8.2
NEVADA	6.5	7.3	8.2	8.4	8.5	7.5	11.3
NEW JERSEY	4.3	4.4	3.7	5.6	4.7	3.9	4.2
NEW MEXICO	9.6	11.3	12.1	11.9	14.7	12.8	12.4
NEW YORK	17.5	19.1	18.8	17.8	15.6	16.2	15.8
NORTH CAROLINA	9.8	11.0	11.8	13.2	15.7	16.3	18.4
NORTH DAKOTA	---	9.0	9.0	10.2	10.6	11.4	0
OHIO	11.5	13.2	14.0	15.0	15.2	15.3	18.7
OKLAHOMA	7.8	12.3	14.6	15.1	15.8	14.2	15.5
<b>PENNSYLVANIA</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.7</b>
SOUTH DAKOTA	7.2	7.0	7.5	7.8	8.3	9.8	15.2
TENNESSEE	5.9	7.8	10.9	7.8	8.3	9.8	11.8
VERMONT	5.5	5.3	6.6	6.4	7.9	8.2	9.1
VIRGINIA	3.2	3.2	3.4	3.8	3.6	3.9	4.3
WASHINGTON	3.9	4.4	4.6	4.8	5.2	4.4	4.7
WISCONSIN	3.6	4.4	5.9	6.5	7.3	7.0	8.8
WYOMING	5.4	5.7	6.1	6.4	7.0	5.5	10.3

## TABLE 3: Substantiated Child Abuse by Type

Table developed from [data prepared](#) using the annual Child Maltreatment reports. When abuse was substantiated, this table represents the type of abuse (e.g., neglect, physical or sexual). A child may have been the victim of more than one type of maltreatment, and therefore, the total percent may equal more than 100.

STATE	<u>NEGLECT</u> <u>2009</u>	<u>NEGLECT</u> <u>2008</u>	<u>NEGLECT</u> <u>2007</u>	<u>NEGLECT</u> <u>2006</u>	<u>NEGLECT</u> <u>2005</u>	<u>NEGLECT</u> <u>2004</u>	<u>NEGLECT</u> <u>2000</u>
NATIONAL	78.3	71.1	59.0	64.1	62.8	62.4	59.8
FLORIDA	52.7	49.4	36.0	32.4	30.2	29.8	35.9
KENTUCKY	95.3	87.9	85.0	87.2	85.0	82.8	67.5
LOUISIANA	82.8	77.5	68.0	78.9	76.2	75.0	76.5
MINNESOTA	75.2	71.7	68.9	75.8	76.4	75.4	73.6
MISSOURI	53.5	52.6	39.6	51.7	51.7	50.5	45.2
NEVADA	75.8	80.0	66.1	84.8	82.8	82.2	42.8
NEW YORK	107.0	91.8	57.3	91.5	91.5	90.8	89.5
NORTH CAROLINA	87.4	79.0	78.5	52.1	64.3	88.0	89.9
OHIO	47.7	46.1	50.5	54.3	55.0	56.0	52.7
OKLAHOMA	89.0	83.4	58.2	83.1	82.4	88.0	80.0
PENNSYLVANIA	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>3.6</b>
TENNESSEE	59.0	49.2	41.1	53.1	53.3	51.9	42.9
VERMONT	4.0	4.1	1.6	4.9	5.6	5.7	38.2
VIRGINIA	63.1	59.5	56.8	61.6	59.8	61.8	58.6
WASHINGTON	82.7	77.7	76.3	81.9	83.1	80.1	71.0
WISCONSIN	55.4	49.0	31.0	29.9	28.4	28.2	27.8
WYOMING	70.7	74.1	71.0	70.9	71.0	62.8	63.1
	<u>PHYSICAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2009</u>	<u>PHYSICAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2008</u>	<u>PHYSICAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2007</u>	<u>PHYSICAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2006</u>	<u>PHYSICAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2005</u>	<u>PHYSICAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2004</u>	<u>PHYSICAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2000</u>
NATIONAL	17.8	16.1	10.8	16.0	16.6	17.5	19.3
FLORIDA	10.5	9.7	6.5	11.3	12.0	13.2	16.0
KENTUCKY	10.0	10.3	8.1	11.0	12.4	14.9	27.2
LOUISIANA	28.0	26.4	16.3	25.5	27.7	29.6	23.0
MINNESOTA	20.5	17.7	12.6	15.7	16.9	17.9	21.9
MISSOURI	33.1	29.1	20.2	31.2	27.5	28.8	27.4
NEVADA	29.6	19.2	9.3	17.8	17.8	18.0	18.0
NEW YORK	11.4	10.1	1.5	10.6	11.2	12.1	13.9
NORTH CAROLINA	10.7	9.4	9.8	6.4	3.5	4.0	3.9
OHIO	37.5	31.6	24.0	22.2	20.9	21.3	27.7
OKLAHOMA	19.0	16.9	5.6	17.9	18.3	19.0	19.9
PENNSYLVANIA	<b>34.0</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>33.1</b>	<b>34.0</b>	<b>32.4</b>	<b>34.3</b>	<b>37.6</b>
TENNESSEE	15.3	23.8	24.7	34.1	33.3	31.6	20.0
VERMONT	52.3	46.1	44.7	51.3	48.4	49.4	22.1
VIRGINIA	27.9	27.6	21.6	27.9	27.4	24.6	28.5
WASHINGTON	24.7	20.7	14.0	17.3	16.5	18.9	21.7
WISCONSIN	22.2	19.3	11.6	14.2	12.7	14.0	15.3
WYOMING	8.1	6.3	7.0	6.4	7.0	8.3	27.3
	<u>SEXUAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2009</u>	<u>SEXUAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2008</u>	<u>SEXUAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2007</u>	<u>SEXUAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2006</u>	<u>SEXUAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2005</u>	<u>SEXUAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2004</u>	<u>SEXUAL</u> <u>ABUSE-</u> <u>2000</u>
NATIONAL	9.5	9.1	7.6	8.8	9.3	9.7	10.1
FLORIDA	4.7	4.6	3.4	3.4	4.0	4.1	5.7
KENTUCKY	4.5	4.1	4.0	4.0	5.1	4.8	7.8
LOUISIANA	7.8	7.3	4.0	7.2	7.2	7.1	6.7
MINNESOTA	16.9	16.1	11.3	12.1	10.7	10.4	7.4
MISSOURI	28.5	27.6	22.7	28.7	26.2	27.2	28.3
NEVADA	8.3	4.9	3.7	3.7	4.3	3.9	4.5
NEW YORK	3.6	3.3	0.7	3.4	3.9	3.8	4.1
NORTH CAROLINA	8.2	8.0	7.5	4.8	3.8	4.1	3.5
OHIO	19.4	17.5	16.5	17.6	18.6	17.5	14.0
OKLAHOMA	7.8	6.3	2.5	6.6	6.4	6.9	7.8
PENNSYLVANIA	<b>64.2</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>59.9</b>	<b>60.5</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>60.7</b>	<b>49.9</b>

<b>TENNESSEE</b>	31.2	31.2	22.9	20.4	20.4	24.1	21.0
<b>VERMONT</b>	52.9	48.4	46.8	43.2	46.5	45.7	40.8
<b>VIRGINIA</b>	15.8	16.4	13.5	13.9	15.0	15.8	11.0
<b>WASHINGTON</b>	7.4	7.3	4.5	6.0	6.0	6.9	7.0
<b>WISCONSIN</b>	29.9	28.4	24.2	35.0	37.8	43.3	40.1
<b>WYOMING</b>	12.6	10.6	9.2	7.9	7.4	10.6	10.3