



Children's Justice & Advocacy Report

To promote community responsibility so every Pennsylvania child is protected from child abuse, including sexual abuse.

In the March 18th edition:

1. [Prescription drug abuse deemed "the worst public health crisis"](#)
2. [Human trafficking bill stalls in U.S. Senate, trips up AG nomination](#)
3. [Toomey prepared to link Protecting Students from Sexual and Violent Predators Act to trafficking bill](#)
4. [Toomey's student protection bill gets Republican push back](#)
5. [Greenleaf and Leach talk human trafficking with AG Kane](#)
6. [Affordable Care Act and means-tested federal spending targeted in U.S. House Republican budget plan](#)

Prescription drug abuse deemed "the worst public health crisis"

Pennsylvania lawmakers continue to dissect Governor Tom Wolf's proposed 2015-2016 budget this month. Cabinet secretaries and agency heads describe (and defend) the proposed budget to members of the PA House and Senate Appropriations Committees.

Dr. Karen Murphy, the Acting Secretary for the [Department of Health](#), told House

appropriators that the "prescription drug abuse problem plaguing" PA is "the worst public health crisis I have seen in my health care career."

She stressed, as did her counterpart in the [Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs](#) (DDAP), that it is the "number one health issue" facing the Commonwealth.

Murphy, who returns to Pennsylvania after leading efforts at the [Innovation Center](#) within the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), vowed that she and DDAP Secretary Gary Tennis along with everyone in the Wolf Administration are working

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Human trafficking bill stalls in U.S. Senate, trips up AG nomination

The saga playing out in the United States Senate related to [S. 178 - Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015](#) provides a troubling and tangible reminder why average Americans believe Congress is dysfunctional.

S. 178 was introduced by Republican Senator Jon Cornyn (R-Texas) and has more than [30 co-sponsors](#) from both sides of the political aisle, including Pennsylvania [Senators Bob Casey, Jr.](#) and [Pat Toomey](#). In other words, a third of the senators believe in the bill they put their name on it as a co-sponsor.

The legislation didn't circumvent important procedural moves in the Senate. Instead it went through regular order, which means it was vetted by the Senate Judiciary Committee. It came out of that Committee with the full support of Democrats and Republicans.

What could go wrong with such a commitment to follow official Senate procedures on legislation ripe with bipartisan support?

Enter dysfunction and disbelief.

Tuesday, the United States Senate failed to muster the [60 votes needed to overcome a filibuster](#) of the bill (initiated by Democrats). Republicans were joined by four Democrats, including Senator Casey, in supporting the vote to invoke cloture (otherwise known as ending the stall and moving to act on the legislation).

That failed effort to move to debate and vote S. 178 (and its amendments) has led Republican leaders to dig in their heels vowing there will be no immediate vote on Loretta Lynch, who is patiently awaiting a

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Toomey prepared to link Protecting Students from Sexual and Violent Predators Act to trafficking bill

Pennsylvania United States Senator Pat Toomey is deeply invested in the trafficking bill signing on as a co-sponsor and preparing his stand alone [Protecting Students from Sexual and Violent Predators Act \(S. 474\)](#) as an amendment.

Toomey spoke on the Senate floor Tuesday in support of the broader trafficking bill calling it "awfully important." He continued, "What could be more despicable than what we're trying to do after here: trafficking in human

beings. This is a form of modern-day slavery.....some of the most despicable people in the world take the most vulnerable people in our society and they turn them into essentially slaves in the sex industry."

Toomey has struggled to get his stand alone student protection bill through the Senate. Therefore, he strategically prepared an amendment to the bipartisan trafficking legislation recognizing it had quite a bit of momentum.

Toomey's [amendment #291](#) cosponsored by Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) continues the bipartisan pursuit to withhold federal

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Toomey's student protection bill gets Republican push back

Senator Pat Toomey's [Protecting Students from Sexual and Violent Predators Act \(S. 474\)](#), as a stand-alone bill and a prepared amendment to S. 178, has gotten push back not just from Democrats, but also key Republicans.

Republican Senators [Lamar Alexander \(R-TN\)](#), [Mark Kirk \(R-IL\)](#), [Mike Rounds \(R-SD\)](#), and [Thom Tillis \(R-NC\)](#) have readied [amendment #297](#) to S. 178. The amendment – Stop Sexual Abuse by School Personnel Act of 2015 – was cited by Toomey on Tuesday as providing "absolutely no additional protection" to students.

Alexander and company have a philosophical problem with the federal government acting as a de facto school board. Alexander's amendment makes it clear that there is "no federal control" so that no federal office or

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Greenleaf and Leach talk human trafficking with AG Kane

[Pennsylvania Attorney General Kathleen Kane](#) appeared before the Pennsylvania Senate Appropriations Committee Tuesday.

[Senator Stewart Greenleaf \(R-Montgomery\)](#), who used his leadership as Judiciary Chairman to advance significant trafficking legislation in the 2013-2014 legislative session ([Act 105](#)), engaged Kane in a discussion about concurrent jurisdiction. He said he was “amenable” to it.

This provided him a chance to cite the “increased” penalties included in Act 105 saying they make it clear “you don’t want to be a human trafficker in PA.”

He also sought the General’s insight into whether there is a “relationship” between human trafficking and all the children “we see as lost” citing public service announcements

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Affordable Care Act and means-tested federal spending targeted in U.S. House Republican budget plan

Tuesday, U.S. House Republicans led by [Budget Chairman Tom Price \(R-GA\)](#) unveiled their Fiscal Year 2016 Budget. Price termed it “A balanced budget for a stronger America” contrasting it with President Obama’s budget that included “more taxes, more spending, more borrowing, more debt, more stagnant growth”

Review of the [Chairman’s Mark](#) reveals the following policy statements:

- The Affordable Care Act (ACA) cited as the “the President’s health care law” is set to be “fully repealed and real health care reform promoted”

specific to a series of principles including: “Health care reform should enhance affordability, accessibility, quality, innovation, choices and responsiveness in health care coverage for all Americans, putting

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