



News for Immediate Release

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Governor Corbett, Senate President Pro Tempore Scarnati, House Speaker Smith Name Members to Task Force on Child Protection

Harrisburg – Governor Tom Corbett, Senate President Pro Tempore Joe Scarnati and House Speaker Sam Smith today named members of the Task Force on Child Protection, a panel created by the General Assembly to thoroughly review state laws and procedures governing child protection and the reporting of child abuse.

“This task force has a tremendously important job,” Corbett said. “It will provide input to help us strengthen state laws and ensure every Pennsylvania child receives the protection from harm they deserve.”

The four members appointed by the governor are:

- Hon. David W. Heckler, Bucks County District Attorney;
- William Strickland, president and CEO of Manchester Bidwell Corporation;
- Dr. Cindy W. Christian, M.D., director of Safe Place: The Center for Child Protection and Health, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia; and
- Delilah Rumburg, Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape and the National Sexual Violence Resource Center.

Corbett also designated District Attorney Heckler, a former state legislator and county judge, as the task force’s chairman.

“It is my honor to accept the recommendations of my colleagues, Senators Pileggi, Ward, Costa and Washington for three immensely qualified individuals with impressive and diverse qualifications,” said Senate President Pro Tempore Joe Scarnati. “The three Senate appointments collectively have over 80 years of experience dealing with a variety of child abuse issues.”

Members appointed by the Senate are:

- Dr. Rachel Berger, member of Child Protection Team at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh;
- Garrison Ipock Jr., executive director, The Glen Mills Schools, Glen Mills; and
- Carol Hobbs-Picciotto, MHS, Intake Social Worker, City of Philadelphia.

“There is a real need to review how we approach, define, investigate and respond to the issue of child abuse overall,” Speaker of the House, Rep. Sam Smith (R-

Jefferson County) said. "With input from Majority Leader Mike Turzai (R-Allegheny County) and Democratic Leader Frank Dermody (D-Allegheny County), I am appointing three individuals with the background to tackle these issues, but even more importantly, a shared vision to protect our most vulnerable citizens... our children."

Members appointed by the House are:

- Jason Kutalakis, senior partner, Abom & Kutalakis LLP, Carlisle;
- Jackie Bernard, Chief Deputy District Attorney, Blair County; and
- Hon. Arthur Grim, Senior Judge, Court of Common Pleas of Berks County.

Governor Corbett also announced a representative of the Pennsylvania State Police will assist the task force. Lt. Gregg Mrochko of the State Police Bureau of Criminal Investigation will serve as a liaison and resource to the panel.

Department of Public Welfare Secretary Gary Alexander will also serve as an ex-officio member of the task force, Corbett noted.

As called for under House Resolution 522 and Senate Resolution 250, the 11-member task force will:

- Examine and analyze the practices, processes and procedures relating to the response to child abuse.
- Review and analyze law, procedures, practices and rules relating to the reporting of child abuse.
- Hold public hearings, accept and review written comments from individuals and organizations.
- Submit reports which will include recommendations to improve the reporting of child abuse; implement any necessary changes in state laws and practices, policies and procedures relating to child abuse; and train appropriate individuals in the reporting of child abuse.

The task force's final report is due by Nov. 30.

In Pennsylvania, certain types of professionals -- health care workers, educators, and others who come into contact with children -- are required by law to report suspected child abuse. Protecting children from abuse and neglect requires the collaboration of the entire child welfare system, community partners and residents, Corbett said.

To report suspected child abuse in Pennsylvania, contact the Department of Public Welfare's ChildLine and Abuse Registry at 1-800-932-0313.

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