

Public Policy and Advocacy Committee Report

January 25, 2024/ Orlando, Florida Meeting

The Public Policy and Advocacy Committee met yesterday, and we discussed and approved January 5, 2024, minutes and we voted to support the following bills.

SB 1758– Individuals with Disabilities by Brodeur (similar bills SB 1170 by Bradley, HB 1271 by Buchanan and HB 1047 by Melo)

This bill does the following.

- 1) modifies the application process for APD services, requiring the creation of an online application process and streamlines the timeframes APD has to determine eligibility.
- 2) The bill reduces the age requirement of a client's caregiver in pre-enrollment category 4 from 70 years of age to 60 years of age or older. This will allow a higher number of individuals to be included in category 4 of the pre-enrollment prioritization list.
- 3) Individuals may also be eligible for the consumer-directed care (CDC+) program, which is an alternative to the iBudget program. In the CDC+ program, clients are permitted to use a reduced monthly budget allocation to purchase services and service providers that they feel are the best fit for their needs. The bill requires iBudget waiver support coordinators to inform iBudget clients of the option to apply for the CDC+ program when creating family or individual support plans.
- 4) The bill appropriates funding to the Agency for Persons with Disabilities for the 2024-2025 fiscal year that will include Funding of \$16,562,703 in recurring funds from the General Revenue fund and \$22,289,520 in recurring funds from the Operations and Maintenance Trust Fund are appropriated to APD in the Home- and Community-Based Services Waiver category. These funds are appropriated to offer waiver services to the greatest number of individuals permissible under the appropriation from Pre-Enrollment Categories 3, 4, and 5, including individuals whose caregivers are age 60 or older in Category 4.
- 5) This bill includes the availability of Care Navigation services. Within available resources, the agency shall offer to clients and their caregivers, care navigation services for voluntary participation at the time of application and as part of any eligibility or renewal review. The goals of care navigation are to create a seamless network of community resources and supports for the client and the client's family to support a client in daily living, community integration, and achievement of individual goals.
- 6) The Agency for Health Care Administration and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, in consultation with other stakeholders, shall jointly develop a comprehensive plan for the administration, finance, and delivery of home and community-based services through a new home and community-based services Medicaid waiver program. The waiver program shall be for clients transitioning into adulthood and shall be designed to prevent future crisis enrollment into the waiver program.

HB 829 - Autism Spectrum Disorder Training for Law Enforcement Officers by Starke (SB 864 Collins)

This bill provides requirements for training officers for interacting with individuals with autism spectrum disorder. The bill requires the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission to adopt rules requiring such training as part of continued employment training for officers.

HB 439 - Corporal Punishment Bill by Waldron Cosponsors: Beltran, Gottlieb (SB 1318 by Thompson)

This bill requires charter schools to comply with corporal punishment laws and removes provisions authorizing teachers to administer corporal punishment. The bill provides duties and responsibilities for principals relating to corporal punishment. The bill requires notification be provided to parents and prohibits the use of corporal punishment on students with an Individual Education Plan, 504 plan, Exceptional students as defined in s. 1003.01(9), homeless students and students in alternative schools. Finally, the bill specifies reporting requirements.

SB 1578 - Student Elopement by Torres, Jr. (HB 1395 by Eskamani)

The bill requires public schools to create a School Staff Assistance for Emergencies (SAFE) Team and a school elopement plan. The bill specifies the membership and responsibilities of the SAFE Team. The bill would require the SAFE Team to create student-specific elopement quick reference guides for certain students and requires public schools to annually submit their plans to the district school board.

SB 832 - Employment of Individuals with Disabilities by Calatayud (HB 1137 by Redondo) (page 57)

This bill requires the collection and sharing of data between multiple agencies for the interagency cooperative agreement under the Employment First Act and requires the Office of Reimagining Education and Career Help to issue an annual statewide report by a specified date each year.

This bill is important to the Council, because we initiated the Employment First Act and got it into statute.

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day is February 7, 2024!