



## SUBCOMMITTEE ON RACE POVERTY AND NEGLECT

Katherine Stoehr, Chair

*"In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, notice of this meeting was given by way of notice filed with the Secretary of State, the Trenton Times and the Newark Star Ledger and posted at the Department of State, 125 West State St., 1st Floor, Trenton, New Jersey."*

*\*Please note the meeting was recorded for the transcription of minutes.*

May 28, 2024  
Meeting Minutes

### Attendance:

Katherine Stoehr, Department of Children and Families  
Eleanor Gilliam, Department of Children and Families  
Wendy Yallowitz, Department of Children and Families  
Patricia Risch, Department of Human Services  
Natasha Johnson, Department of Human Services  
Sonia Moticha, Department of Education  
Veronica Ford, Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey  
Lauren Burd, Warren County Social Services  
Mary Coogan, Advocates for Children of New Jersey

### Staff:

Bethany D'Amelio, Department of Children and Families

### 1. Child Poverty Reduction Initiatives

- The discussion delineated strategies to reduce child poverty comprehensively. The focus was on federally advised programs, potentially halving poverty rates through targeted interventions.
- Analysis of ongoing studies and existing federal programs provided insights into public benefits' interplay with poverty-related policies, emphasizing the need to intensify these efforts at the state level.

### 2. Evaluation of Neglect Statutes

- An examination of New Jersey's neglect statutes revealed the state's current definitions and practices around child neglect do not explicitly exclude poverty.
- The committee contemplated whether legislative amendments might better address systemic issues without disproportionately impacting impoverished families.

### 3. Enhancing Support Systems for Families

- The focus shifted to evaluating pathways outside DCPD to provide support to families in need. Discussions involved improving communication with frontline workers, including teachers and law enforcement, who frequently interact with Child Protection Services.
- Options to broaden the availability and clarity of resources and guidelines were proposed to enhance family support mechanisms and ensure effective child welfare supports.

#### **4. Recommendations and Action Plans**

- A roadmap for crafting actionable recommendations was laid out, with emphasis placed on developing specific, achievable goals and milestones tailored to the unique needs and circumstances of New Jersey families.
- The importance of community-focused solutions and broader public engagement was discussed as critical for driving meaningful change.

#### **Conclusion**

The committee remains committed to addressing these critical social challenges through informed, evidence-based strategies. The meeting underscored the complexities involved in tackling child poverty and neglect, while also highlighting the importance of collaborative efforts across state and community lines. Future sessions will delve deeper into proposed action items.

#### **Next Steps**

- Continue gathering insights from state agencies and experts to refine policy recommendations.
- Propose pilot programs based on successful models from other jurisdictions, focusing initially on areas with the most urgent need.
- Schedule subsequent meetings to review progress, engage diverse stakeholder input, and update action plans accordingly.

This memo aims to maintain transparency and provide the public with an overview of the task force's recent deliberations. The committee values community input and engagement as we collectively strive to enhance the welfare of children and families across New Jersey. This meeting report was prepared, in part, with the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

For further information or queries, the public can reach out via the contact channels provided by the Department of Children and Families.