

3/4/20 Submitted by
Rep. Matt Hall

**Auditor General Report Recommendation
by the
House Oversight Committee**

The Committee agrees with the various findings in the Auditor General's report on the Office of Children's Ombudsman (OCO) that was released in April of 2019. The committee conducted two hearings on the audit and took testimony from both the Auditor General's Office and the Office of the Children's Ombudsman. As a result, the House Oversight Committee believes that more can be done to assure that the Office of the OCO can properly fulfill its goal of investigating both child deaths and the child welfare complaints it receives. Additionally, the committee believes that OCO findings should be more public and that the process for child death notifications should be more efficient. Therefore, the House Oversight Committee recommends the following legislative proposals:

- Require or allow the OCO to publicly release its findings and recommendations and an agency's written responses to those findings and recommendations in all child death investigations. Currently, these findings must remain confidential.
- Allow the OCO some discretion with regard to investigations in child death cases. Full investigations may not be necessary in all cases in which the OCO becomes involved. Allowing preliminary investigations in certain circumstances may free up time to allow the OCO to devote more time and resources to investigating other complaints.

The committee also recommends that the system developed to be the successor to the MISACWIS computer program, provides a more efficient way for DHHS to report child deaths to the OCO.

The Oversight Committee has diligently performed its duty under House Rule 36 and submits this report to the Families, Children and Seniors Committee.