



SWAN Legal Services Initiative

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(No state child welfare cases were published in October)

Legislative Updates

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Act 115 of 2016 was signed by Governor Wolf on October 28, 2016, and makes many changes to our Pennsylvania child welfare laws. This law:

- Amends the Adoption Act, 23 Pa.C.S.A. §2511, by adding two grounds for involuntary termination of parental rights. Under this act, grounds for termination exist when:
 - (10) the parent has a “founded report” of sexual abuse against the child or another child of the parent, or
 - (11) the parent is required to register as a sexual offender.
- Amends the definitions section of the Child Protective Services Law, 23 Pa.C.S.A. §6303, by adding to the definition of perpetrator and child abuse. Under this act, the definitions are amended as follows:
 - “Perpetrator” — An individual 18 years of age or older who engages a child in severe forms of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking.
 - “Child Abuse” — Intentionally, knowingly or recklessly engaging a child in a severe form of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking.
- Amends the Juvenile Act, 42 Pa.C.S.A. §6302, by adding a ground for aggravated circumstances. Under this act, aggravated circumstances exist when:
 - (6) The parent of the child is required to register as a sexual offender.

All provisions of Act 115 are effective immediately, and it can be found in its entirety on the Pennsylvania General Assembly’s [website](#).