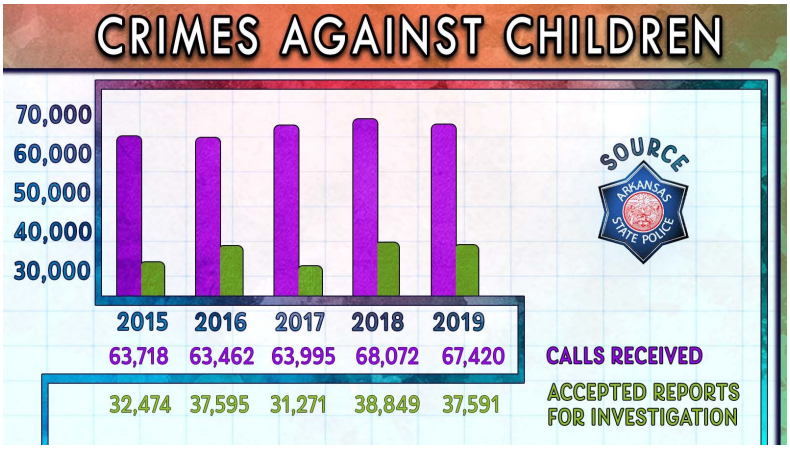
STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Arkansas House Newsletter

June 12, 2020

Committee Reviews Child Abuse Hotline Report



This week, the House Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs Committee reviewed the 2019 Annual Report from Arkansas State Police Crimes Against Children Division.

This report along with the quarterly reports from the Department of Human Services' Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) are difficult to review but necessary in guiding our decisions of where to place resources.

The annual report states Child Abuse Hot Line operators in the Crimes Against Children Division (CACD) of the Arkansas State Police received 67,420 referrals in the year 2019. Of these referrals, 37,591 were accepted as legally valid allegations of abuse or neglect. They were assigned to the CACD investigators or the Arkansas Department of Human Services' Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS). In 2019, the hotline received 652 fewer calls than in 2018.

Calls to the hotline include educational and medical neglect, inadequate food and housing, and physical and sexual abuse. DCFS reports neglect is the most commonly reported allegation among those which are found

to be true.

Major Jeff Drew with the Arkansas State Police testified that calls to the hotline have dropped in recent weeks as many mandated reporters are not in contact with children. The division is noticing anywhere from 400 to 600 fewer calls a week.

DCFS Director Mischa Martin told committee members that teachers have historically been the highest volume of mandated reporters. The decline in calls to the hotline continues to be of concern.

DCFS made a decision early in the health emergency to continue to place a priority on the safety of children. As a result, employees with the agency have and will continue face to face contact with children.

Click here to view the report.

If you or someone you know needs help, you can call the **Arkansas Child Abuse Hotline at 800-482-5964**

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