

**OPEGA Review Request Summary**  
**Prepared for the Government Oversight Committee**

**Review Request Topic:** DHHS Office of Child and Family Services

**Legislative Sponsor:** Senator Bill Diamond

**Date Presented:** July 14, 2021

**Topic/Program**

- A review of the policies and practices of the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) within Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to ensure child safety in the home.

**Program Description/Background**

- OCFS is responsible for child welfare activities that support child safety, well-being, and permanent homes for children.

**Specific Details**

- Between May 31, 2021 and June 20, 2021, there have been 4 child deaths in Maine involving children 4 years old or younger.

**Possible Areas of Focus Based on Review Request**

- Review of the effectiveness of the steps OCFS takes to evaluate and ensure a child's safety in their home.
- Evaluate steps taken by DHHS to rectify any previously identified systemic shortcomings in this area.

**Past or Current Reviews Relating to this Topic**

- In May of 2018, OPEGA issued a report titled: *Child Protection System: A Study of How the System Functioned in Two Cases of Child Death by Abuse in the Home.*
- In February of 2019, OPEGA issued a report titled: *Frontline Workers in the State Child Protective System.*
- Child Welfare Ombudsman: Annual Report for 2020.  
*These reports are included in the GOC packets*

**Additional Materials**

- Letter from Senator Diamond to the Government Oversight Committee chairs.

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