

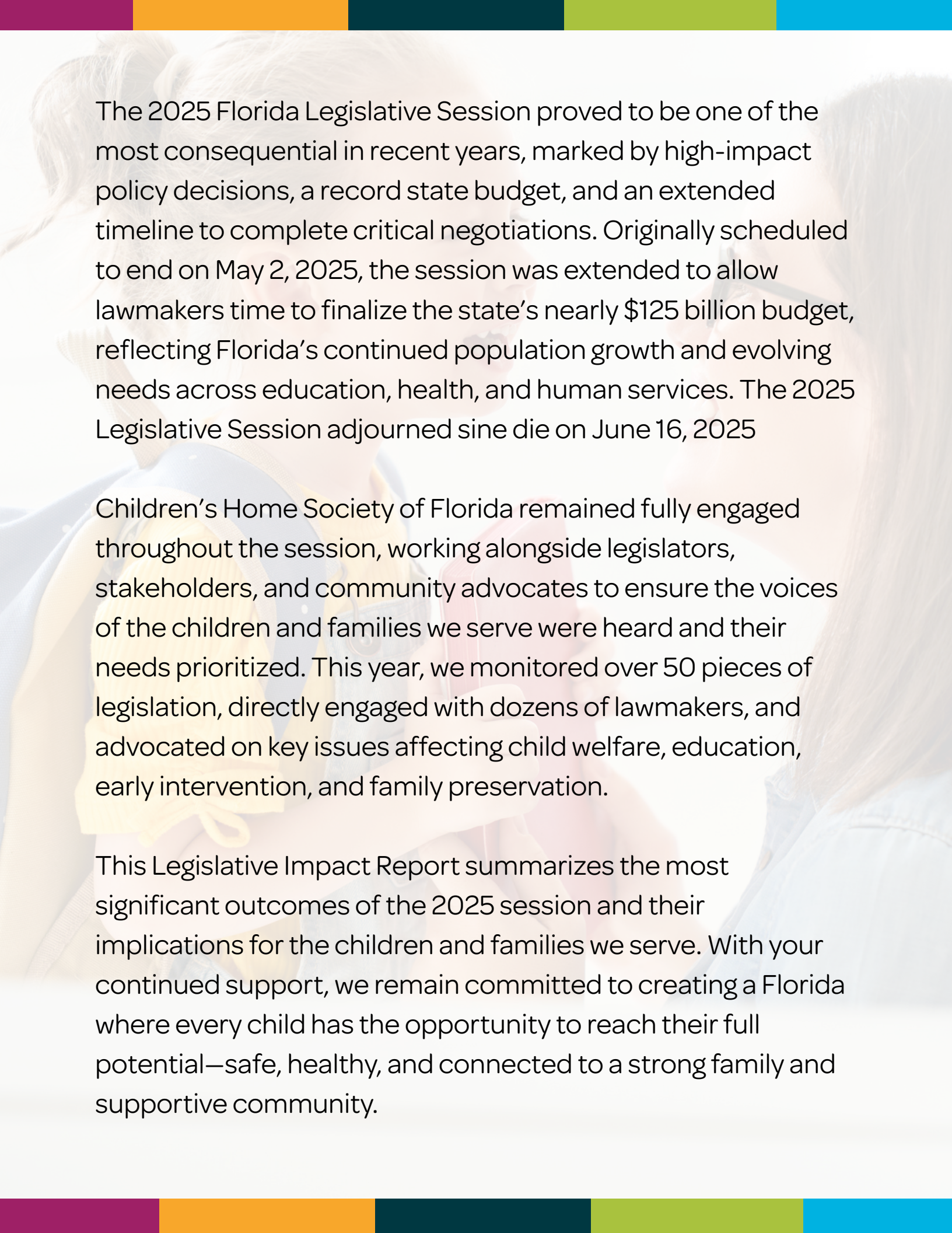
A photograph of the Florida State Capitol building in Tallahassee, Florida, featuring a large dome and classical columns. The image is partially covered by a dark blue semi-transparent overlay containing text and a logo.

**2025
Legislative Session**

IMPACT REPORT



**Children's Home Society
of Florida**



The 2025 Florida Legislative Session proved to be one of the most consequential in recent years, marked by high-impact policy decisions, a record state budget, and an extended timeline to complete critical negotiations. Originally scheduled to end on May 2, 2025, the session was extended to allow lawmakers time to finalize the state's nearly \$125 billion budget, reflecting Florida's continued population growth and evolving needs across education, health, and human services. The 2025 Legislative Session adjourned sine die on June 16, 2025.

Children's Home Society of Florida remained fully engaged throughout the session, working alongside legislators, stakeholders, and community advocates to ensure the voices of the children and families we serve were heard and their needs prioritized. This year, we monitored over 50 pieces of legislation, directly engaged with dozens of lawmakers, and advocated on key issues affecting child welfare, education, early intervention, and family preservation.

This Legislative Impact Report summarizes the most significant outcomes of the 2025 session and their implications for the children and families we serve. With your continued support, we remain committed to creating a Florida where every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential—safe, healthy, and connected to a strong family and supportive community.



Session Recap

1,951

BILLS FILED

243

BILLS PASSED

12.45%

**BILL PASSAGE
RATE**

105

**Days in the
Legislative Session**

CHS Legislative Priorities



Funding Increase for CPS



\$ for Embrace Families Losses



5% increase for Healthy Families Florida



Indemnification Bill Signed Into Law

2025 CHS Senate Pages

Each year, Children's Home Society proudly welcomes students from across Florida to take part in the Florida Legislature's Senate Page Program. This incredible opportunity gives students a front-row seat to the legislative process, helping them gain valuable firsthand experience and a deeper understanding of how our state government operates. This experience would not be possible without the generous support of our donors, the kindness of our host families, and the leadership of Senate President Ben Albritton, who sponsors our students and makes their participation in this impactful program possible.



Students pictured top left to bottom right; Taylor Parrish, Jefferson K-12 CPS; Mark Sumpter, Orange Park CPS High; Lizzy O'Donnell, Jefferson K-12 CPS; Luke Shirkey, Pine Forest High School CPS; Kadie Black, Miami Dade CHS Programs; Madeline Ross, Rutherford High School CPS; Erabelle Conant, Keystone Heights CPS



2025 Community Partnership School Day at the Capitol



Over 100 CPS advocates from around the state came to Tallahassee to advocate on behalf of CPS & the students & families they serve



CHS Board Members **DOING GOOD** in Tallahassee



Bills of Interest

Child Welfare & Child Abuse Prevention

SB 7012 Child Welfare (Passed)



Includes CHS's Proposed Indemnification Language

- Enhances child protective services by requiring the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to maintain assessment records.
- Removes DCF's authority to issue certain work exemptions.
- Creates a statewide recruitment program for child protective investigators and case managers (subject to funding).
- Launches a 4-year pilot for treatment foster care (subject to appropriation).
- Requires DCF to study residential treatment capacity for child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.
- Grants immunity from liability to certain subcontractors for the acts or omissions of the lead agency or DCF starting with contracts entered into or renewed after July 1, 2025.
- Establishes a Case Management Workforce Workgroup and authorizes new flexibilities around domestic violence center certification.

SB 304 - Specific Medical Diagnosis in Child Protective Investigations (Did Not Pass)

- Clarifies circumstances under which alleged criminal conduct is reported, requires reporting preexisting diagnoses, mandates medical consultation in certain neglect investigations, and authorizes requests for additional medical examinations in child protective investigations.
- Exempts immediate referral of certain allegations to law enforcement if the parent or legal custodian reports specific preexisting medical diagnoses or requests an examination for the child.
- Requires parents or legal custodians to report qualifying preexisting diagnoses and provide relevant medical records to the investigator.
- Mandates that Child Protection Teams consult with a physician or advanced practice registered nurse who routinely treats pediatric patients when evaluating reports of medical neglect or certain preexisting conditions.
- Authorizes parents or legal custodians whose child was removed to request additional or second medical examinations at their own expense or as otherwise covered.
- Prohibits requests for further examinations if the sole purpose is to challenge a sexual abuse diagnosis.

SB 618 - Community-based Care Lead Agency and Subcontractor Liability (Did Not Pass)

- Reduces the minimum general liability insurance per occurrence from \$1 million to \$500,000, with a policy aggregate limit reduced from \$3 million to \$1 million for both lead agencies and subcontractors.
- Mandates that staff using personal vehicles for work obtain minimum bodily injury liability insurance, and allows for nonowned automobile coverage by the agency or subcontractor as excess insurance.
- Caps net economic damages in tort actions at \$1 million per claim and \$200,000 per automobile claim, with noneconomic damages capped at \$400,000 per claim.
- Establishes that lead agencies and subcontractors are not liable for claims or judgments exceeding a total of \$1.5 million arising from the same incident when combined with all other related claims.
- Sets a maximum attorney fee of 25% for settlements or judgments in cases involving these agencies and their subcontractors.
- Removes provisions for an annual increase of conditional damage limitations.

SB 1286 - Harming or Neglecting Children (Passed)

- Clarifies definitions of child harm and neglect to specify that certain independent or unsupervised activities do not, by themselves, constitute neglect if they do not endanger a child's health or safety.
- Revises the definition of "harm" in s. 39.01(37), F.S., to specify that leaving a child without adult supervision is not necessarily considered harmful if the child is of sufficient age and maturity and not placed in obvious danger.
- Updates the definition of "neglect" in s. 39.01(37)(f), F.S., and s. 827.03(1)(e), F.S., to exclude certain unsupervised activities—such as traveling to or from school or playing outdoors—from being classified as neglect unless they are recklessly dangerous.

HB 1301 - Child Welfare (Passed)

- Expands DCF's investigatory authority, including agreements with military installations.
- Clarifies custody rights related to unaccompanied immigrant children.
- Updates licensing timelines and reduces regulatory burdens on child-caring agencies.
- Enhances law enforcement authority for recovering missing children.

SB 60 - Child Safety and Custody Compliance Act (Passed)

- Mandates stricter compliance with parenting plans in investigations.
- Prohibits anonymous child abuse reports from receiving presumed good-faith status.
- Strengthens school responsibilities to enforce custody orders.

SB 112 – Children with Developmental Disabilities (Passed)

- Expands support for children with autism and developmental delays by:
- Broadening the Cinotti Grant Program to fund autism screenings, referrals, and related services.
- Updating Early Steps Program grant requirements to align with new provisions.
- Establishing a formal purpose and funding authority for the Early Steps Extended Option, allowing implementation regardless of federal funding.
- Requiring the University of Florida Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment to support specialized summer programs for children with autism spectrum disorder.

Education

SB 7030 – Educational Scholarship Programs (Passed)

- Streamlines administration of school choice programs.
- Expands eligibility and funding flexibility for families using vouchers.

HB 1255 – Education (Passed)

- Improves early literacy programs and data sharing between schools and community organizations.
- Expands workforce-aligned curriculum options in K-12 public schools.

SB 584 – Young Adult Housing Support (Passed)

- Requiring state colleges and universities to prioritize housing placement for homeless and former foster youth.
- Directing DCF, CBC lead agencies, and housing authorities to take necessary steps to implement federal Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) housing vouchers and related programs.
- Tasking OPPAGA with conducting a statewide study on housing barriers faced by homeless and former foster youth, to inform future policy and funding.

HB 171 – Youth Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Pilot Program (Did Not Pass)

- Establishes the Youth Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Pilot Program within the Community School Grant Program to reduce juvenile violence through conflict resolution skills training.
- Mandates the Center for Community Schools at the University of Central Florida to implement and manage the pilot program over three school years, starting no later than the 2026-2027 school year.
- Prioritizes middle and high schools with high rates of juvenile violence for program participation, involving community partners in the implementation.