



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative Walt Blackman (R-7)

Representative Lisa Fink (R-27)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Reps. Blackman, Fink to Lead Special Government Committee Hearing on DCS Oversight and Reform Bills

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – Representative Walt Blackman, Chairman of the Arizona House Committee on Government, and Representative Lisa Fink, Vice Chairman, will convene a [special hearing](#) this Thursday, February 19, 2026, focused on oversight of the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) and legislation to strengthen accountability, child safety, and placement stability.

The hearing will include testimony and discussion on reforms addressing kinship placement, standards in group settings, DCS response to credible abuse and neglect reports, independent oversight, and related legal authorities.

“Arizona’s child safety system exists for one reason: to protect children,” said Chairman Walt Blackman. **“When the state takes custody, there is no room for excuses. This hearing is about accountability and enforceable change. We will put facts on the record, press for answers, and advance reforms that put child safety ahead of bureaucracy.”**

“Families and taxpayers deserve a child welfare agency that acts with urgency, follows the law, and does the basics right every time,” said Vice Chairman Lisa Fink. **“This committee is taking a hard look at how DCS responds, how placements are chosen and supervised, and why preventable failures keep reoccurring. We are advancing reforms that strengthen kinship care, raise standards in group settings, and require action when credible abuse is reported.”**

The Committee will hear the following reform measures:

[HB 2035](#) (Fink): Strengthens kinship placement by expanding who can qualify, requiring timely identification and notice to relatives and significant connections, and requiring greater transparency when a kinship placement is denied.

[HB 2041](#) (Fink): Clarifies that a parent’s inability to provide basic necessities solely due to a lack of financial resources is not treated as neglect.

[HB 2611](#) (Blackman): Establishes stronger safety requirements for congregate care, including employee screening and training standards and protections focused on youth safety and continuity of care.

[HB 2860](#) (Blackman): Establishes an independent oversight committee to review DCS performance and critical incidents, with reporting requirements and dedicated funding for oversight operations.

[HB 4004](#) (Keshel): Requires DCS to respond to credible abuse or neglect reports and prohibits screen-outs when an alleged abusive parent has parenting time or legal decision-making authority.

[HB 4049](#) (Fink): Adds DCS to the list of agencies exempt from the restriction on employing legal counsel outside the Attorney General.

The hearing begins at 1:00 p.m. (or upon recess or adjournment of Floor) in House Hearing Room 5. Members of the public and media may attend in person or watch live here:

<https://www.azleg.gov/videoplayer/?clientID=6361162879&eventID=2026021117>

Representative Walt Blackman is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 7. Follow him on X at @BlackmanForAZ.

Lisa Fink is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 27, which includes areas of Glendale, Peoria, and Phoenix. Follow her on X at @LisaFink4AZ.

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