

Governor Markell Issues Executive Order on Background Check System to Improve Child Protections

Creates Delaware Criminal Background and Child Protection Registry Checks Task Force

Wilmington, DE – Governor Markell today mandated a thorough review of Delaware laws and regulations that determine when background checks are necessary for individuals who work with children.

[Executive Order 42](#) establishes a task force led by Jennifer Ranji, Secretary of the Department of Services for Children Youth and Their Families, that will issue recommendations on ways to ensure the state's background checks system can most effectively protect children in schools and other settings. As the Executive Order notes, Delaware rules are "sometimes inconsistent with respect to requiring background checks for employees, volunteers, and other individuals who come into contact with children and youth."

"We are committed to ensuring that the appropriate policies and procedures are in place so that our kids are safe from those who would do them harm," said Markell. "We can do more to clarify and create consistency in background check requirements, and we should not wait for a horrible incident or tragedy to occur to look at these issues. Instead, we want to take a proactive approach to ensure the safety of Delaware's children."

Members of the Delaware Criminal Background and Child Protection Registry Checks Task Force will include representatives from: the Departments of Education, Health and

Social Services, and Safety and Homeland Security; the Office of Management and Budget; a Democrat and Republican member of the House and Senate; members of law enforcement; representatives from the legal community; and leaders of community organizations.

They will consider issues involving who must receive background checks as a condition of working with children, which types of background checks should be used, and ways to best address the expense of performing background checks.

“We and our partners have been looking closely at this issue and believe it’s important to bring together all of the groups involved to come up with common recommendations,” said Ranji. “In addition, we hope this process will help parents become more aware of background check policies for situations in which children are left in the care of another adult. We must ensure our citizens are fully engaged in our ongoing battle against child abuse and neglect.”

Among the specific policies the task force will examine include:

- whether criminal background checks and child protection registry checks should be required for camp/holiday/school break employees and volunteers;
- whether criminal background checks and child protection registry checks should be required for employees and volunteers at private and non-state operated schools; and
- whether a consolidated background check system, to include criminal, child protection, sex offender and adult abuse registry is feasible.

The task force must submit its recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by the end of the year.