OCG

EXPLAINER · RESEARCH CENTER

The Delinquent-Youth Placement Study Committee

What the law created, who sits on it, and how its schedule compares with the law and its own announcements

OCG Explainer No. 002 · RL-2026-039 · Version 1.0 · November 12, 2026

A 2025 state law created a 20-member study committee to examine how Ohio places children who are alleged or adjudicated delinquent in group homes and other residential facilities. The law required members to be appointed in 2025. The committee held its first meeting in August 2026 and has met twice. This Explainer sets out the committee's legal charge, its membership, what it has heard, and how its timeline compares with the statute and with the schedule announced at its launch.

At a Glance

Created by	Section 16 of Am. Sub. H.B. 315, 135th General Assembly; signed January 2, 2025[1]
Effective	April 3, 2025 (the act's general effective date)[2]
Seats	20, filled by the Senate President, the House Speaker, three agency directors and the State Public Defender[3]
Co-chairs	Sen. Theresa Gavarone (R-Bowling Green) and Rep. Andrea White (R-Kettering)[4]

[1]Am. Sub. H.B. 315, 135th Gen. Assemb., § 16 (Ohio 2025), as reported by the committee of conference, https://search-prod.lis.state.oh.us/api/v2/general_assembly_135/legislation/hb315/07_CR/pdf. Ohio General Assembly, "House Bill 315 —135th General Assembly: Status," accessed November 12, 2026, https://legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/135/hb315/status.

[2]Ohio Legislative Service Commission, Final Analysis, Am. Sub. H.B. 315, 135th General Assembly (February 18, 2025), 1, 66–67, https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/download?key=24612.

[3]Ohio Legislative Service Commission, "Study Committee to Evaluate the Placement of Delinquent Children in Residential Facilities," Boards and Commissions, accessed November 12, 2026, https://lsc.ohio.gov/publications/boards-and-commissions/study-committee-to-evaluate-the-placement-of-delinquent-children-in-residential-facilities/print.

[4]Ohio Senate, "Gavarone Appointed Co-Chair of Delinquent Children Study Committee," press release, August 25, 2026, https://ohiosenate.gov/members/michele-reynolds/news/gavarone-appointed-co-chair-of-delinquent-children-study-committee. Ohio House of Representatives, "Speaker Huffman Appoints Rep. Andrea White as Co-Chair of Committee Studying Ohio's System for Placing

Meetings held	Two: August 24 and September 21, 2026
Next meeting	Monday, November 16, 2026, 9:30 a.m., Statehouse Room 313[5]
Report	Due to the Governor and General Assembly nine months after all members are appointed; none issued as of November 12, 2026
End date	Ceases to exist when it submits its report; LSC lists an expiration date of December 31, 2028[6]

1. What the Committee Is

The statute names the body the Study Committee to Evaluate the Placement of Delinquent Children in Residential Facilities. It draws members from both chambers of the General Assembly and from outside government. The Senate President appoints three senators and five non-legislative members; the House Speaker appoints three representatives and five non-legislative members; three agency directors (or their designees) serve, along with a public defender chosen by the State Public Defender.[7]

The General Assembly's online calendar lists the November 16 meeting under the name "Senate Study Committee."[8] The statute does not make it a committee of either chamber. Its two co-chairs come one from each.[9]

The committee's subject is children who are alleged to be, or have been adjudicated, delinquent and who are in the custody of a public or private child placing agency.[10] Under Ohio law, a "delinquent child" is generally a child who commits an act that would be an offense if committed by an adult.[11] Juvenile judges may place such youth in community-based residential settings rather than commit them to a Department of Youth Services facility, according to the House announcement of the committee.[12]

2. Why It Exists

H.B. 315, sponsored by Reps. Thomas Hall and Bill Seitz, passed the House in June 2024, cleared a conference committee in December 2024 and was signed on January 2, 2025.[13] Its group-home provisions drew on work by Reps. Andrea White (R-Kettering) and Phil Plummer (R-Dayton). The Dayton Daily News reported that the study committee was a compromise: White and Plummer had

Delinquent Children," press release, August 19, 2026, https://ohiohouse.gov/news/republican/speaker-huffman-appoints-rep-andrea-white-as-co-chair-of-committee-studying-ohios-system-for-placing-delinquent-children-147626.

[5] Ohio General Assembly, "Legislative Calendar: Senate Study Committee to Evaluate the Placement of Delinquent Children in Residential Facilities," event of November 16, 2026, accessed November 12, 2026, https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/schedules/calendar/events/cmte_spec_delinquent_children_1_2026-11-16-0800_1491.

[6] Ohio Legislative Service Commission, "Study Committee," Boards and Commissions.

[7] Am. Sub. H.B. 315, § 16.

[8] Ohio General Assembly, "Legislative Calendar," November 16, 2026.

[9] Ohio Legislative Service Commission, Final Analysis, H.B. 315, 66–67.

[10] Ohio Legislative Service Commission, Final Analysis, H.B. 315, 66–67.

[11] Ohio Rev. Code § 2152.02.

[12] Ohio House, "Speaker Huffman Appoints Rep. Andrea White."

[13] Ohio General Assembly, "House Bill 315: Status."

originally sought to separate delinquent and non-delinquent children entirely. The same act requires the agency placing a delinquent child to tell the facility operator what the child was adjudicated for.[14]

The concern was concentrated in the Dayton area. A 2024 Dayton Daily News investigation found that Montgomery County held more than one-third of Ohio's group homes and that Dayton police answered nearly 3,000 calls for service at those homes in 2023.[15] Rep. White said the group-homes work showed gaps in serving court-involved youth placed in the care of children services.[16]

3. What the Law Requires

Section 16 assigns the committee four duties:[17]

1. Evaluate the placement of these children in residential facilities.
2. Evaluate the existing system, resources and services used to support them.
3. Identify gaps in the availability of appropriate residential facilities, resources and services.
4. Recommend changes to meet these children's needs.

Appointments were due "not later than thirty days after the effective date" of the section. A report of findings and recommendations is due to the Governor and the General Assembly within nine months after all members are appointed, and the committee ceases to exist when it files that report. Members serve without pay.[18] The section sets no deadline for a first meeting, no meeting frequency and no staffing arrangement.

4. Who Sits on It

Table 1 lists each statutory seat with the member identified in the records reviewed. "Not found" means no named appointee was located in those records; it does not mean the seat is vacant.

Table 1. Statutory seats and identified members

Seat	Appointed by	Member identified
Director of Children and Youth (or designee)	Statute	Kara Wente, DCY Director[19]
Director of Youth Services (or designee)	Statute	Not found
Director of Mental Health and Addiction Services (or designee)	Statute	Not found
Public defender	State Public Defender	Not found

[14] "Ohio Lawmakers Address Dayton-Area Group Home Issues, Mandate More State Oversight," Dayton Daily News, accessed November 12, 2026, https://www.daytondailynews.com/local/ohio-lawmakers-address-dayton-area-group-home-issues-mandate-more-state-oversight/MHDRGEKIWZE55LLB54DLOKNM74/.

[15] Avery Kreemer, "Local Lawmakers Picked for New Committee to Address Delinquent Youth Group Homes," Dayton Daily News, August 2026, https://www.daytondailynews.com/community/dayton/local-lawmakers-picked-for-new-committee-to-address-delinquent-youth-group-homes/article_5d17112b-7a6e-541d-9da8-6eec794a53db.html.

[16] Ohio House, "Speaker Huffman Appoints Rep. Andrea White."

[17] Am. Sub. H.B. 315, § 16.

[18] Am. Sub. H.B. 315, § 16.

[19] Public Children Services Association of Ohio, "PCSAO Offers Recommendations on Youth Adjudicated Delinquent in Group Homes," August 24, 2026, https://pcsao.org/pcsao-offers-recommendation-to-committee-examining-placement-of-youth-adjudicated-delinquent-in-group-homes/.

Seat	Appointed by	Member identified
Public children services agency director	Senate President	David Merriman, Cuyahoga County Dept. of Health and Human Services[20]
Public children services agency director	House Speaker	Jennifer Ellis-Brunn, Licking County Job and Family Services (reported as a member; appointing authority not stated in source)[21]
Juvenile court judge	Senate President	Judge Larry Heiser[22]
Juvenile court judge	House Speaker	Not found
County commissioner	Senate President	Commissioner Charlie Schilling[23]
City council member or township trustee	House Speaker	Not found
Residential facility serving six or fewer such children	House Speaker	Not found
Residential facility serving more than six such children	Senate President	Jeff Grothouse, The Marsh Foundation[24]
Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio Youth Advisory Board	House Speaker	Member reported; not named[25]
County sheriff or chief of police	Senate President	Sheriff Christopher Clark[26]
Three senators (no more than two of one party)	Senate President	Sens. Theresa Gavarone (R), co-chair; Kyle Koehler (R); Catherine Ingram (D)[27]
Three representatives (no more than two of one party)	House Speaker	Reps. Andrea White (R), co-chair; Phil Plummer (R); Erika White (D)[28]

Seat list: Am. Sub. H.B. 315, § 16(B). The Senate Journal of July 30, 2026, cites division (B)(12) for both the sheriff and the three senators; the senators' seat is division (B)(13). Party labels for senators are not stated in the Journal.

[20]Journal of the Senate, 136th Gen. Assemb. (Ohio), July 30, 2026, 1928, https://search-prod.lis.state.oh.us/api/v2/general_assembly_136/journals/journal_s_20263007/pdf/. PCSAO, "PCSAO Offers Recommendations."

[21]PCSAO, "PCSAO Offers Recommendations."

[22]Senate Journal, July 30, 2026.

[23]Senate Journal, July 30, 2026.

[24]Senate Journal, July 30, 2026. "Grothouse Appointed to State Committee," VW Independent, August 26, 2026, https://thevwindependent.com/news/2026/08/26/grothouse-appointed-to-state-committee/.

[25]PCSAO, "PCSAO Offers Recommendations."

[26]Senate Journal, July 30, 2026.

[27]Senate Journal, July 30, 2026. Ohio Senate, "Gavarone Appointed Co-Chair."

[28]Ohio House, "Speaker Huffman Appoints Rep. Andrea White."

5. The Schedule: Initial vs. Actual

Table 2 compares each milestone set by statute or announced at launch with what had occurred as of November 12, 2026. Projected dates marked "OCG calculation" apply the statute's nine-month rule to the dates shown; they are not official deadlines.

Table 2. Committee milestones, initial schedule vs. actual

Milestone	Initial schedule (statute or announcement)	Actual (as of Nov. 12, 2026)	Difference
Law takes effect	Signed Jan. 2, 2025; general effective date Apr. 3, 2025[29]	Same	None
Member appointments	Within 30 days of effective date: May 3, 2025, per LSC final analysis. LSC's Boards and Commissions listing shows Aug. 1, 2025.[30]	Senate President's appointments read into Senate Journal July 30, 2026. Speaker's legislative appointees and co-chair announced Aug. 19, 2026.[31]	About 15 months after May 3, 2025; about 12 months after Aug. 1, 2025
First meeting	No statutory deadline. Announced Aug. 19 for Aug. 24, 2026.[32]	Held Aug. 24, 2026	As announced
Meeting frequency	No statutory frequency. PCSAO reported on Aug. 24 that the committee would meet monthly for the next few months.[33]	Met Sept. 21, 2026.[34] No October meeting found in sources reviewed. Next meeting Nov. 16.[35]	Eight weeks between second and third meetings
Public input	WHIO reported the November meeting would hear ideas from the public.[36]	Nov. 16 meeting scheduled; agenda posted on legislative calendar	Pending
Recommendations	Dayton Daily News reported the goal of having legislative recommendations ready for action in November and December 2026.[37]	None adopted	Pending
Final report	Nine months after all appointments. On the May 3, 2025, appointment date: about Feb. 3, 2026 (OCG calculation).	Not issued. If appointments were complete by Aug. 24, 2026: about May 24, 2027 (OCG calculation).	About 16 months later than the original track

[29] Ohio General Assembly, "House Bill 315: Status." Ohio Legislative Service Commission, Final Analysis, H.B. 315, 66–67.

[30] Ohio Legislative Service Commission, Final Analysis, H.B. 315, 66–67. Ohio Legislative Service Commission, "Study Committee," Boards and Commissions.

[31] Senate Journal, July 30, 2026. Ohio House, "Speaker Huffman Appoints Rep. Andrea White."

[32] Ohio House, "Speaker Huffman Appoints Rep. Andrea White."

[33] PCSAO, "PCSAO Offers Recommendations."

[34] Ohio Senate, "Senate Committee Schedule for the Week of September 21, 2026," https://www.ohiosenate.gov/assets/organizations/senate/files/committee-schedule.pdf.

[35] Ohio General Assembly, "Legislative Calendar," November 16, 2026.

[36] "State Lawmakers Debate Youth Placement Reform amid Rise in Police Activity," WHIO, September 2026, https://www.whio.com/news/local/state-lawmakers-debate-youth-placement-reform-amid-rise-police-activity/SN27M6EMX5EORHFQV4LRFAWGQI/.

[37] Avery Kreemer, "Montgomery County Epicenter of Youth Group Homes: State Doesn't Know Why," Dayton Daily News, August 25, 2026, https://www.daytondailynews.com/community/montgomery-county/montgomery-county-epicenter-of-youth-group-homes-state-doesn-t-know-why/article_9e2c24e1-9474-584a-8428-96bb5e82793a.html.

Milestone	Initial schedule (statute or announcement)	Actual (as of Nov. 12, 2026)	Difference
Committee ends	On filing the report. LSC listing: Dec. 31, 2028.[38]	Active	—

The date all appointments were completed has not been published. The House Speaker's non-legislative appointees were not located in the records reviewed.

6. What the Committee Has Heard

August 24, 2026: Opening hearing

Witnesses included Department of Children and Youth Director Kara Wente, the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health, Montgomery County Juvenile Court Judge Helen Wallace, and PCSAO Executive Director Angela Sausser and Assistant Director Scott Britton.[39] Reported testimony included the following:

- **Statewide counts.** Wente reported that at the end of June, 1,033 children were in children's residential centers and 1,038 in group homes. The Dayton Daily News reported 297 licensed facilities within the committee's scope: 253 group homes and 44 children's residential centers.[40]
- **Costs.** Wente linked rising placement costs to providers that operate foster care primarily as a business, according to WCMH.[41]
- **Montgomery County.** Wallace reported 87 group homes in the county and a ratio of group homes to residents nearly three times that of any other Ohio county. She said 44 percent of youth charged with delinquency in her court are county residents. Wente said DCY lacks good data on why the Dayton area has drawn so many homes, though low housing prices likely contribute.[42]
- **Children services.** PCSAO offered seven proposals.[43] Sausser reported that in 2025, 3 percent of youth entering children services custody came in for delinquency or unruliness, 8 percent for mental health or substance use disorders and 8 percent as "dependent." She said PCSAO supports less reliance on institutional settings but that children services must follow court orders and cannot refuse a placement.[44]
- **Members.** Co-chair White told the Dayton Daily News after the hearing that "we still have a lot to learn."[45] Rep. Erika White said she wants the committee to examine whether group homes help adjudicated youth at all.[46]

[38] Ohio Legislative Service Commission, "Study Committee," Boards and Commissions.

[39] PCSAO, "PCSAO Offers Recommendations."

[40] Kreemer, "Montgomery County Epicenter."

[41] "How Ohio Lawmakers Are Looking into Juvenile Justice Concerns," WCMH, republished by WKBN, August 25, 2026, https://www.wkbn.com/news/ohio/how-ohio-lawmakers-are-looking-into-juvenile-justice-concerns/.

[42] Kreemer, "Montgomery County Epicenter."

[43] PCSAO, "PCSAO Offers Recommendations."

[44] "How Ohio Lawmakers Are Looking," WKBN.

[45] Kreemer, "Montgomery County Epicenter."

[46] "How Ohio Lawmakers Are Looking," WKBN.

September 21, 2026: Second hearing

The committee met in Statehouse Room 313 with Gavarone and White presiding.[47] A weekly legislative review reported three and a half hours of testimony from Delaware County Probate/Juvenile Judge David Hejmanowski; Dayton Police Chief Eric Henderson; Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael O'Malley and Juvenile Division Chief Brett Kyker; DCY Director Kara Wente; Department of Youth Services Director Amy Ast; and Brooke Burns, managing counsel of the Ohio Public Defender's youth defense department.[48]

- **Police calls.** Henderson reported more than 3,000 calls related to group-home youth in the past year, according to WHIO, which also reported 93 of Ohio's 248 group homes in Montgomery County. These counts differ from the August figures above; each is reported as published.[49]
- **Facility models.** Rep. Plummer contrasted larger community homes that provide wraparound services with small homes of about six children supervised by young staff.[50]

7. What Comes Next

The third meeting is set for Monday, November 16, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. in Statehouse Room 313.[51] The committee has not adopted findings or recommendations. Testimony summarized here reflects what witnesses told the committee, not conclusions of the committee. The statute's nine-month clock runs from the date the last member was appointed; that date has not been published.

About This Explainer

This is a descriptive Research Center publication. It takes no position on the committee's subject and makes no recommendations. Statutory provisions are drawn from the bill text and the Legislative Service Commission's final analysis; appointments from the Senate Journal and official announcements; hearing content from contemporaneous news coverage and stakeholder statements, as noted. Written witness testimony was not reviewed for this version. Projected dates labeled "OCG calculation" are arithmetic applications of the statute, not official deadlines.

Revision History

Version	Date	Changes
1.0	November 12, 2026	Initial release.

[47] Ohio Senate, "Committee Schedule, Week of September 21, 2026."

[48] ZHF Consulting, "Week in Review: September 28, 2026," https://www.zhfconsulting.com/post/week-in-review-september-28-2026.

[49] "State Lawmakers Debate Youth Placement Reform," WHIO.

[50] "State Lawmakers Debate Youth Placement Reform," WHIO.

[51] Ohio General Assembly, "Legislative Calendar," November 16, 2026.