

# **WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §49-10-101**

## **§49-10-101. Legislative findings.**

The Legislature finds the State of West Virginia is experiencing a child welfare crisis. From 2016 to 2020, the child protective service vacancy rate has increased from 9.7 percent to 33 percent. This significant lack of staffing has caused a delay in response times to begin investigations. During the same time period, the average hours to start a child protective service investigation after referral went from 119.1 hours in 2016 to now averaging 428.1 hours in 2020. This significant failure to begin the investigation can and has cost lives. The Legislature finds that the Bureau for Social Services is having extreme difficulty recruiting and retaining child protective service workers, youth service workers, adult protective service workers, and other related workers, including necessary casework support personnel and managers at the county level, who assist in the provision of services to vulnerable populations.