



CENTER FOR THE RIGHTS
OF ABUSED CHILDREN

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Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs vetoes bill to establish an independent authority to investigate Arizona's rising number of child abuse deaths

Phoenix, Ariz. - Late yesterday, Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs vetoed SB 1252 which would have established an independent unit to investigate child abuse deaths with the goal of identifying and closing gaps in the child protection system.

According to the 2022 Child Fatality Report, 46 percent of children who were abused to death in Arizona were known to the Department of Child Services. The vetoed bill would have allowed for an independent authority to review the circumstances of those fatality cases and to share that information with lawmakers.

The bill was written after the [unspeakable death of Chaskah Smith](#). Chaskah and his brother were tortured for years. The Department of Child Services reportedly investigated the family multiple times but didn't move the children to safety.

Currently, lawmakers are blocked from the facts and circumstances leading up to and causing each child death, such as:

- Assistance and services that were received by the child or family;
- Specific cause of death and its relation to prior reports to the state; and
- Prior reports involving siblings or other household members.

"Children deserve better collaboration from elected officials and state agencies," said Darcy Olsen, CEO of the Center for the Rights of Abused Children.

"The death of [Chaskah Smith](#) in Arizona is the Gabriel Fernandez story in California and the Zaiden Jovanovich story in Kansas and so many thousands more," said Darcy Olsen, CEO. "We are committed to understanding the failures and breakdowns that led to these deaths and to working with lawmakers to improve the child protection system."

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About the Center for The Rights of Abused Children: The Center for the Rights of Abused Children fights for better futures for America's abused children with a pro bono Children's Law Clinic, common-sense reforms and public interest litigation. Join our life-saving work to end violence against children today, thecenterforchildren.org.

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