

SB 480

PA 833

1971

Corrections, Welfare & Humane Inst. 45, 51, 67-70

House 5921-5923

Senate 2819

**JOINT  
STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
HEARINGS**

**CORRECTIONS,  
WELFARE  
AND  
HUMANE  
INSTITUTIONS**

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Chairman Brown: Proceed Commissioner.

Commissioner White: #7051 — another G. A. bill — again lumped with the rest.

#95 — I believe we spoke to that — reasonable visits — and we're already doing that.

Chairman Brown: You're making reference to S. B. #95 Commissioner?

Commissioner White: Yes, I am.

On #202 and #203 we've spoken.

#387 — we're very strongly in favor of INAUDABLE. We have a statement and we will submit it to the committee. If there are any questions I will certainly be glad to answer them. We are strongly in favor of this bill. We urge its adoption.

Chairman Brown: Members of the committee — I'll subsidize the adoption to the Commissioner???? Proceed.

Commissioner White: S. B. #427 — This was spoken to — It's incentive earnings — we discussed that under H. B. #5260 and we have reference to that — this bill in the statement.

S. B. #480 — basically we're definitely in favor of this bill. We can do what we feel with our present set up but we would urge passage of this bill. We have a statement to that effect.

S. B. #483 — Actually on #483 we have an interpretation from the Attorney General that makes it possible to live with the situation so therefore really we're not submitting a statement. We support the bill.

Chairman Brown: Very well.

Commissioner White: We've referenced this bill — Senator Finney's bill under #5260. (S. B. #523)

S. B. #729 — I'd like to have Mr. Morastica to comment on this. I'm not with it.

Mr. Morastica: Well, we're recommending the rejection of this bill. We have prepared a statement for the committee. We feel essentially that foster parents act as agents for the department providing the day to day care of the child. The department however is the who has the legal responsibility for the child rather than foster parents.

Commissioner White: Okay S. B. #730 is another general assistance bill. We ask that this be lumped with the others.

S. B. #735 — is — I'd like Mr. James Morrison, Director of our Medical Administration to speak to that.

Lucy Hammer, Senator from the 12th District:

I want to speak very briefly Mr. Chairman on two bills -- Senate Bill #480 which incidentally was introduced by Senator Lieberman and myself and is so printed on the bill. I don't know what happened in the bulletin. It shows other people.

I want to speak in support of this bill -- strong support -- you will hear some more expert people on it and this bill revolves around the problem of disturbed children who are placed in foster homes where the foster parents cannot cope with them. They go from one home to another. The child is obviously marred and usually ends in an institution. I've had some personal experience with this and it is a tragic and traumatic experience for the child and for everyone concerned. The proposal here is to train a small number of foster parents and pay them a small salary so that hopefully the child could remain in one home and receiving understanding and effective care. It could be a very practical and economical program and I hope you will give it consideration. It represents savings to the state and savings, most especially, to these children.

I would like to speak also with great feeling about S. B. #523 which would restore the age limit under which a child can receive help under Aid to Dependent Children Program -- would restore to 21 -- if he's still full-time in school or college, rather than the 18 years of age which he -- which is called for now. I have had experience with this situation a number of time with my own constituents , and let me tell you that if a child whocis on welfare program awards manages to stay in school after 18 and particularly if that child manages to go to college, it represents a terrific struggle for that family and he should be helped for the sake of the child. But, there's more to it than that, for the sake of the state too and society. It is our policy to try to move welfare clients off the welfare rolls. This is the very best chance for a young person who has this much determination to try to get an education -- we should certainly help him for this two-fold good -- the child and society.

While I'm on my feet I want to speak very briefly about Bill #5262 which has to do with stepfathers. You know there's something quite wrong here in my opinion. Under the common law the stepparent is not responsible for the stepchildren and I can't quite see how we can write special law and say that because the children are on welfare he then becomes responsible. I do hope you will-- give serious consideration for this point of view. Thank you.

Chairman Brown: Senator Lieberman - any comments you have to make this morning?

Senator Lieberman: Thank you and I want to be brief -- in spite of the pile of papers that I have in front of me because I think that this morning is really the opportunity for the public to be heard by your committee, but, let me make a few general comments. I was not in the legislature as you know and perhaps it's unfair of me to criticize of

Julius Newman (cont'd):

We are in opposition to bill #5259 - for many of the reasons that have been stated before. It's not adequate. We need a flexible plan to meet the needs of people who might be in need and it doesn't take into account the cost of living. Therefore, we are against that bill. However, we are in favor of the principle of the flat grant. If many contingencies were met such as raising people to standards, giving them an adequate income, etc..

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Brown: We have approximately fifteen minutes. I understand that there is a possibility that we will break for a commercial at 12:30 and retire to room 408 so that we can continue our rap session.

Mrs. Henry Towers of Essex (substituting for Mrs. Johnson) Director of Child and Family Services of Connecticut and Chairman of the Family Service Committee of the Board and I'm testifying today on behalf of the Board of Directors:

Child and Family Services of Connecticut is a state-wide -- nonsectarian voluntarily supported agency providing child welfare and service, mental health programs and adoption service to children of families of Connecticut. We have the support of twenty five auxiliaries throughout the state of approximately 2500 members, four district committees with 200 members, and a Board of Directors of 38 members and a staff of 156 members. We strongly support S. B. #387 concerning subsidized adoption and do ourselves have an active policy of providing subsidy in the adoptions if need be. We favor this bill because adoption involves emotional security to the child giving him family bonds and gives him a name to clearly identify him as the member of a family. Adoption provides legal protection for the child who otherwise is in legal limbo. And third subsidized adoption would provide financial savings for the state particularly in administrative costs. The Child and Family Services of Connecticut urge favorable action on Bill #387.

Mrs. N. LeRoy from Madison: I would like to speak in favor of Bill #480.

I am concerned about where my tax dollars these days are being spent. The Connecticut Child Welfare Association is a citizens' volunteer organization concerned with the welfare of all of Connecticut's children. The findings of a year long study by a Chapter subcommittee into the problems of the state foster children resulted in the bill before you. Today's foster children are much more complex than those of 25 or even 15 years ago. These children are more aware at an earlier age of their surroundings....the drug scene, the environment than ever before. The current child support rate of \$19.00 and fifty cents a week per child is grossly inadequate, to pay for a child's physical needs let alone his emotional wants. One cannot ask or expect foster parents to come to instructional classes to learn how they can better help the foster child in need. However, if the state were to pay a realistic sum, employs parents as quasiprofessionals it could require training and give the foster parent in meeting the emotional needs of the child. In our

Mrs. N. LeRoy from Madison (cont'd):

study we have consulted with several members of the Welfare Department, both in Connecticut and in other states, and both foster parents, psychologists and other professionals. We have studied the reports of other pilot projects. All reports and conversation substantiate our findings and most back this proposed bill. It is CCWA's help and the voice of Connecticut's children that salaried foster parents can be approved. Thank you.

Chairman Brown: We will have J. Cook and then Representative Beck.

Jean Cook, Middletown, Connecticut and I am prepared to speak in support of Bill #480.

As a member of the Federal Connecticut Chapter of CCWA and a taxpayer in the State of Connecticut who is mindful both of our current fiscal crisis and burgeoning welfare costs I urge you to seriously consider the bill before you. With natural families unable to care for them and foster families whose own experiences often do not equip them to handle the traumatic emotional experiences of the children in their care, today's foster children often find themselves in a hopeless situation. These foster children are desperately in need of foster parents who are selected to meet their individual needs, two - tain them in many areas of child development with emphasis on the needs of foster children and three adequately remunerated for the highly skilled job for which they are expected to do. Even this -- even though this pilot project calls for operating on a higher pay scale, it is still possible to save many thousands of dollars simply by keeping children out of institutions which are frequently non-curing, expensive ways of coping with the problem child, and placing them into homes designed to meet their needs. We believe that it is possible to substantially improve the quality of the services rendered to the foster child while at the same time reducing the long term cost of this care to the state. Thank you.

Chairman Brown: If you have a statement be sure that the secretary gets it. Representative Beck.

Representative Beck: Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I very much appreciate your taking time just before your break and too in the public portion where the legislators are not supposed to speak. I have several bills. I'll summarize the statements with the committee.

Mrs. Janet Billy -

First and perhaps one of the most crucial bills the Connecticut Child Welfare bills is interested in is S. B. #523. Let me make one statement for all of these bills and say that I am Mrs. Janet Billy testifying before you today as the Connecticut Director of the Connecticut Child Welfare Association, a nonprofit statewide citizens committee whose sole concern for 52 years has been updating of services of all children of Connecticut. We owe allegiance to no state department, no agencies, inaudable ---

Combine S. B. INAUDABLE --- 203 and 523. These bills have been studied by the citizens of our association and I have authorized by the Board of Directors to make the following statement:

Mrs. Janet Billy (cont'd):

INAUDABLE -- Item #1 -- the continued eligibility under 21 years of age of a child under AFDC family if he is full time in school. Education is one of the only proven methods of breaking up the cycle of poverty. Children in AFDC families must be not only permitted but encouraged to attend school through high school and beyond if possible. To deny education to these children is to encourage yet another family to become a welfare family. Further it makes a mockery of our community colleges and the technical schools in the State of Connecticut that we're so proud of.

Now in my public speaking engagements I have been pretty frequently asked why the ineligibility of the child 19-21 would make him drop out of school. I'm prepared to answer questions on that -- they are technical questions and I presume the committee has that information at hand. If they do not I will be happy either at this time or at a later date to answer them.

The second item -- Reinstatement of the Unemployed Parent Program-- We feel it is essential to reinstate this program to arbitrarily set up a situation to which a man can better feed and clothe his family by deserting them is indeed a very expensive program. If he chooses not to desert under the very -- current law then his family will apply to their town of residence for general assistance which receives seventy five per cent in state funds and no Federal matching funds at all. At the risk of encouraging your displeasure I am going to tell you a very short story which vividly describes the situation we find ourselves in with the unemployed parent program.

It was described in a book by ??? in the early 1940's called the Triumph of Willy Pond. Willy was an undereducated, unemployed, husband and father of several children -- a no good. The family was destitute. They lived in a shack, frequently going through garbage pails for food, stealing and the children rarely attended school because they had no clothing. But one day it was discovered that Willy had tuberculosis. He was sent to a sanatorium. Then his family became eligible for public welfare. Suitable quarters were found, food was available and the children were clothed and they attended school. In about two years Willy recovered and welcomed home with great joy. Immediately Public Welfare was discontinued and shortly we find the family in its old shack, destitute, returning to the garbage pails, the children no longer attended the school. Now Connecticut changed that story to a happy ending in 1965. Rewrote the Willy Pond story-- INAUDABLE

And now in 1971 once again has the opportunity to make a happy end for that story.

In conclusion permit me to remind you that both of these items receive fifty to seventy five per cent matching funds. The continued eligibility of AFDC children in school full time and the aid to families of unemployed parents are fiscally sound, contributes to the development of healthy children whose chances of becoming productive adults are enhanced. We urge a favorable report on 202, 203, embodied in 523.

Mrs. Janet Billy (cont'd):

Bill #480 -- You have heard members from the citizens who have studied -- citizens from the Connecticut Child Welfare Association -- who have studied the matter of salaried foster parents. You have heard their research and their analysis and that is the bill before you #480.

As the executive director I feel it is my responsibility to add to their comments from my experience with public child welfare worker and my eight years of working with the Connecticut State Welfare Department and I should to address myself briefly to these aspects.

Why, in a time of financial crisis are we asking for money for a demonstration program? The answer is simple. We believe that in adopting the project we will save money. Two -- why were CCWA proposed and allowed to do this when administratively it already lies within the power of the Welfare Commissioner? This answer is not simple. Because it is rooted in attitudes -- for some reason the general public feels that it is wrong and sinful to make money by parents of children in their own homes. The same public seems to feel its okay to pay social workers, institutional aids, or cottage parents eighty to one hundred fifty dollars a week to work a 35 to 48 hour week. Those people have all the fringe benefits. They have sick leave and insurance. Foster parents work a 168 hours week at nineteen fifty a week and I'd have to pay twenty one dollars a week to board my dog in a kennel.

At that rate the Welfare Department cannot compel foster parents to attend training sessions or to invest themselves in the learning experience in order to give the informed love to troubled children, because current practices are frequently blurred and uneven regarding the supervision of foster homes. This bill requires orientation, training and regular experienced supervision. With this project the Welfare Commissioner can introduce a totally new concept in Connecticut. The training and salaried foster homes.

I'm convinced that there are many women in the labor market today who are working primarily to put money aside for their children's education and supplement their husband's income. I'm further convinced that many of these women who are educated would rather earn money while being a wife and mother than any other way. Our study shows that recruitment of salaried foster parents is not difficult and with the specialized training they truly can help these emotionally scarred children. These foster parents would be prepared professional employees, trained with job expectation. I'd like to remind you of one last thing.

Because protective services is more successful in this state than ever before, because we are able to lead children into homes longer than ever before and actually rehabilitate a home while a child is there, those children who are finally removed frequently are more troubled and more scarred than ever we placed when I began my career. I don't want to tell you how long ago that's been.

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that the Secretary of State's Office has found in determining what the contributions are, who the treasurers are. This would facilitate matters and it's a very commendable bill. I urge its passage.

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THE SPEAKER:

Further remarks on the bill as amended? If not, all those in favor indicate by saying aye. Opposed? The bill is PASSED.

MR. PAPANDREA (78th):

Mr. Speaker, may we then proceed to the first item on page 7, Calendar No. 1528?

THE CLERK:

On page 7, Calendar No. 1528, substitute for S.B. No. 480, An Act Concerning the Care of Certain Children by the Welfare Commissioner, File No. 1530.

MR. BROWN (148th):

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I move for acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the Senate.

THE SPEAKER:

Will you remark?

MR. BROWN (148th):

Mr. Speaker, this bill would allow for a pilot project conducted by the Department of Welfare for the training and recruitment of twenty foster parents on a two year basis. The purpose of this training and recruitment and this pilot project is to provide services for troubled children who, they have to place them in homes where they can get special care. These would be children of twelve years old or less and these are children, Mr. Speaker, are those who cannot be cared for in a regular foster home. The rationale here

is that if there is special training given to these twenty foster parents and subsequently with these troubled children being placed in their homes, not more than two children to a family, the department hopes to be able to find out as to whether this may be the solution of a very serious problem that now is upon us. At the end of the two years, there will be an evaluation by the department. The department sorely needs this bill. The State of Connecticut needs this bill. I move its adoption.

THE SPEAKER:

Further remarks on the bill?

MR. FABRIZIO (147th):

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill. I think the more that we can do for emotionally disturbed children and adopted children, the better off we are. I wholeheartedly support this bill.

MR. LOWELL (38th):

Mr. Speaker, I think this is an important bill to pass because the Welfare Commissioner ends up with many disturbed children. The reason he has them is the fact that the home is disturbed and he acquires them and the question is, where should they go, and presently we don't have adequately trained foster homes to take on the disturbed children who probably don't have to go to a formal mental institution and that if we can have this type of home care, we may be able to save a great deal of money in the long run. I think it's an excellent bill and should pass.

MR. ARGAZZI (25th):

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to rise and comment that this is an excellent bill. One of the real problems in the Welfare department is that there are not enough foster families around. I've talked to many people who

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work in the Welfare Department, my own wife is a worker for many years, and I hope this bill will help alleviate the situation somewhat.

THE SPEAKER:

Further remarks on the bill?

MRS. CURTIS (164th):

Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this bill. There is a great need to help the children that are emotionally disturbed in the State of Connecticut. We do not have places for them. We don't have regular foster homes for them and in this way, with an experimental group of twenty foster parents, we hope that this will help these children to fit into a normal home and normal living so that they may go back into the world as normal people. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER:

Further remarks on the bill? If not, all those in favor indicate by saying aye. Opposed? The bill is PASSED.

MR. PAPANDREA (78th):

Mr. Speaker, may the Clerk call the remainder of the items on page 7?

THE SPEAKER:

The Clerk would be happy to call the remainder of the items on page 7.

THE CLERK :

Calendar No. 1529, substitute for S.B. No. 528, An Act Concerning the Procedure for Bidding on Construction, Alteration, Repairs or Additions to State Real Assets and to Real Assets Financed by State Funds.

MR. DOOLEY (47th):

Mr. Speaker, I move for acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable

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HOUSE BILL: 8441. File No. 1221; Substitute House Bill 9075. File No. 1228' Substitute House Bill 5027. File No. 1235; Substitute House Bill 5559; File No. 1527; House Bill 5991, File No. 1296. ;

SENATOR HOULEY:

Mr. President, with the consent of the Senate Majority Leader may we pass and retain Cal. 1044, File 1540?

SENATOR CALDWELL:

In agreement. I withdraw the motion to that effect.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered. It is understood.

SENATOR CALDWELL:

CAL. NO. 1045. File 1537; Sub. Senate Bill 1317; page 14, Cal No. 1060 File 1530; Substitute Senate Bill 480; page 17, Cal. 1084, File No. 1235. Substitute House Bill 5027; page 18, Cal. 1086, File No. 1257; Substitute House Bill 5559; Cal. No. 1087. File No. 1296; House Bill 5991; Cal. No. 1088; File No. 1298, House Bill 5993; Cal. No. 1089, File No. 1291; House Bill 6097.; Cal. No. 1090, File No. 1322; Substitute House Bill 6321 Cal. No. 1091, File No. 1304, House Bill 6432; page 19, Cal. No. 1092, File No. 1287; Substitute House Bill 6433; Cal. No. 1093, File No. 1317, Substitute House Bill 6436; Cal. No. 1094, File No. 1286, House Bill 6437; Cal. No. 1095; File No. 1318, House Bill 6438; Cal. No. 1096, File No. 1285, Substitute House Bill 6439; Cal. No. 1097. File No. 1324, House Bill 6441; Cal. No. 1098, File No. 1239, Substitute House Bill 6443; page 20, Cal. No. 1103; File No. 1283; Substitute House Bill 8286; page 21, Cal. No. 1108; File No. 1549, Substitute Senate Bill 1067; page 29, Cal. No. 111 Senate Bill 383; page 30, Cal. 179, Senate Bill 384; page 34, Cal. 605. File 868 House Bill 8764