

PA 11-166

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**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**SELECT
COMMITTEE
ON CHILDREN
PART 2
308 - 621**

2011

THE HON. PAUL J. KNIERIM: Thank you.

REP. URBAN: And next on our list to testify will be Commissioner Katz, DCF. Welcome, Commissioner.

SENATOR MUSTO: Hi, Commissioner. Did you submit, did your Department submit written testimony?

COMMISSIONER JOETTE KATZ: (Inaudible).

SENATOR MUSTO: A little late? Okay. And thank you so much for waiting. As you know, things get a little crazy around here, so I did want to hear what you have to say and I was stuck in another meeting, so I do appreciate the Courtesy. Please go on.

A VOICE: Commissioner, could you just put on your microphone, please, so we can hear you? Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOETTE KATZ: Thank you. Good morning, Senator Musto, Representative Urban, Representative Wood and members of the Select Committee on Children. I am Joette Katz, Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families and am pleased to appear before you today to provide testimony on several bills.

First, I'd like to thank the Committee for raising two bills in particular, House Bill 6352 and Senate Bill 980 that are on today's public hearing agenda.

The first bill, which is House Bill 6352 entitled AN ACT CONCERNING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND MODIFICATIONS TO STATUTES CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

The first section of the bill modifies the composition of the State Advisory Council on

HB 6336
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SB 320
SB 322
SB 323

Children and Families to resolve a conflict in the language of the current statute by expanding the membership of the Advisory Council by two members and it also provides that foster parents should be included on the Council.

The other sections repeal a planning requirement regarding youth at the Connecticut Juvenile Training School and a requirement for the adoption of regulations that relate to procedures for dealing with high risk, newborns and birthing hospitals.

DC has also submitted, DCF has also submitted Senate Bill 980, which is entitled AN ACT CONCERNING PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL STUDY FOSTER PARENTS.

That bill eliminates the age restriction for special study foster homes. As you know, special study foster homes are foster parents not related by birth or marriage but who have had a significant and positive relationship with the child.

Such individuals may include Godparents, parents, previous step-parents, clergy, close family friends and others with an established relationship with the child. This will provide additional placement resources for children that are both appropriate to, and in the best interest of our children.

Similar to our support of Senate Bill 980 AN ACT CONCERNING PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL STUDY FOSTER PARENTS, DCF also supports House Bill 6336 entitled AN ACT CONCERNING KINSHIP CARE.

This bill encourages the placement of children who are in the care and custody of DCF with

COMMISSIONER JOETTE KATZ: Yes. Thank you.

SENATOR MUSTO: If anyone, by the way if the Committee has any questions while I'm moving through this, I'd like to just feel free to, you know, jump in. Yeah, that's fine.

You introduced 980, so I guess you're okay with that one.

981 concerning the placement of young children in congregate care facilities, again, you're supporting the intent. Sometimes that doesn't give us much to work with. Can you sort of expand on that a little bit?

COMMISSIONER JOETTE KATZ: That's probably one of the more controversial bills involving the Agency that you have, and I see a lot of friends in the audience, and I call them friends because I really do think everybody here in regard to this has the best interest of the children, but people take different positions.

I do support the intent of it. I'm familiar with the studies that support the notion that congregate care can be damaging to children under a particular age, and so I do support it.

I just want to point out, however that, and because again, congregate care is not appropriate for younger children. But I want to point out that there are certain quality programs in Connecticut, and I'm happy to give a plug to one, Kids in Crisis and the representatives are here today, in Greenwich, and they do a fantastic job with our young children.

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Public Hearing Testimony
Select Committee on Children
February 22, 2011



**S.B. No. 320 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN UNDER THE CARE OF
THE COMMISSIONER OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

The Department of Children and Families **supports the intent behind SB 320**, An Act Concerning Children under the Care of the Commissioner of Children and Families. This bill would require DCF staff to visit children in foster homes at least once every ten days and to visit children with behavioral health needs not later than thirty days after they are placed in the care and custody of the Commissioner of Children and Families.

Visitation standards for both out-of-home cases and in-home cases are a requirement of the *Juan F. Exit Plan*. Outcome Measure 16 requires DCF to visit at least 85% of all out-of-home children at least once a month, except for probate, interstate or voluntary cases. All children must be seen by their DCF social worker at least quarterly. For the most recent evaluation period (4th Quarter 2010), the Department met this measure 98.9% of the time. Outcome Measure 17 requires the Department to visit at least 85% of all in-home family cases at least twice a month, except for probate, interstate or voluntary cases. This measure was met 89.7% of the time during the most recent evaluation period (4th Quarter 2010).

The Department fully appreciates the benefits of increased visitation by our staff and is committed to making this a priority for our case-carrying, front-line staff.

**S.B. No. 322 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING THE QUALIFICATIONS OF
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES EMPLOYEES**

The Department of Children and Families is **opposed to SB 322**, An Act Concerning the Qualifications of Department of Children and Families Employees. This bill would require that each applicant for a Social Worker and Social Work Supervisor to possess, at a minimum, a master's degree in social work or a closely related field on and after January 1, 2012 and that on and after January 1, 2017, to require that all employees have such degrees. Further, the bill requires the individuals in these positions be licensed as a master or clinical social worker on and after January 1, 2020.

While we appreciate the intent behind this legislation, we would point out that for the Department only hires individuals into the Social Work career series with a minimum of a Bachelors Degree in Social Work or a closely-related field. In addition, a significant percentage of our staff already hold a Masters in Social Work or closely-related field. While we don't have updated information available at this time, a 2005 survey of revealed the following educational information for DCF social work staff.

SB 323 SB 324
SB 980 SB 981
HB 6336 HB 6340
HB 6352

S.B. No. 980 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL STUDY FOSTER PARENTS

The Department of Children and Families has submitted SB 980, An Act Concerning Placement of Children with Special Study Foster Parents to the Select Committee on Children for your **favorable consideration** and we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for raising this bill on our behalf.

This bill eliminates the age restriction for special study foster homes. Special Study Foster Homes are foster parents not related by birth or marriage but who have a significant and positive relationship with the child. Such individuals may include godparents, previous step-parents, clergy, close family friends, tribal members and others with an established relationship with the child. This will provide additional placement resources for children that are appropriate to and in the best interest of children.

DCF is required by the *Juan F. Exit Plan* to seek and attract more quality foster homes. The Department is committed to a strategy of conducting child-specific recruitment, in addition to our traditional efforts to attract new foster parents. We intend to actively seek more relative resources but also want to examine others with whom the child has an existing relationship.

S.B. No. 981 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE PLACEMENT OF YOUNG CHILDREN IN CONGREGATE CARE FACILITIES

The Department of Children and Families **supports the intent of SB 981**, An Act Concerning the Placement of Young Children in Congregate Care Facilities, but is concerned that the appropriate alternate resources need to be in place before we could implement this change. This bill would prohibit DCF from placing children under the age of six, or sibling groups with a child under the age of six, in congregate care facilities unless necessary for health reasons.

In most cases, congregate care is not appropriate for young children but there are examples of quality programs in Connecticut effectively serving a younger population. The Department is committed to working with the proponents of this legislation to ensure the needs of children in our care are appropriately addressed in an age-appropriate manner.

H.B. No. 6336 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING KINSHIP CARE

The Department of Children and Families **supports HB 6336**, An Act Concerning Kinship Care. This bill encourages the placement of children who are in the care of custody of DCF with relatives.

Similar to our support of SB 980, An Act Concerning Placement of Children with Special Study Foster Parents, this bill is consistent child-specific foster home recruitment. We are committed to increase the number of relative caregivers and we look forward to working with the Committee as this legislation moves forward.

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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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June 8, 2011

Please proceed, sir.

REP. SHARKEY (88th):

And if I could, I'd like to read you the Calendar
and bill numbers.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Thank you, please proceed.

REP. SHARKEY (88th):

The first is Calendar 99, House Bill 6429.
Calendar 331, Senate Bill 980. Calendar 399, Senate
Bill 883. Calendar 439, House Bill 6632. Calendar
476, House bill 6387. Calendar 503, Senate Bill 1110.
Calendar 524, Senate Bill 1153. Calendar 565, Senate
Bill 1083. Calendar 585, Senate Bill 212. Calendar SB227
586, Senate Bill 38. And Calendar 604, Senate Bill
396.

And, Mr. Speaker, if I -- just as a heads up to
the rest of the Chamber, there will be other bills
added to this Consent Calendar at this point which
require amendments and those amendments will be called
and then added also to the Consent Calendar. Thank
you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Thank you, Representative Sharkey.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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June 8, 2011

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This represents our first Consent Calendar of the evening and I move its adoption.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

Will the Clerk please read through the numbers on the Consent Calendar for the Chamber's edification, please.

THE CLERK:

Calendar 99, House Bill 6429. Calendar 331, Senate Bill 980. Calendar 399, Senate Bill 883. Calendar 439, House Bill 6632. Calendar 503, Senate Bill 1110. Calendar 585, Senate Bill 212. Calendar 586, Senate Bill 227. Calendar 491, Senate Bill 799. Calendar 535, Senate Bill 1116. Calendar 568, Senate Bill Number 1138. Calendar 637, Senate Bill 1160. Calendar 569, Senate Bill 1199. Calendar 616, Senate Bill 973. Calendar 583, Senate Bill 98. And Calendar 517, Senate Bil

SB1062

DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

The question before us is on passage of the bills on today's -- Consent Calendar. Will you remark? If not, staff and guests please come to the Well of the House, members take your seats, the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

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The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the Chamber. The House is voting today's Consent Calendar by roll call. Members to the Chamber.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? If all the members have voted, please check the board to determine if your vote has been properly cast. If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked, Clerk will take a tally. Clerk, please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

On today's Consent Calendar,

Total Number voting 148

Necessary for passage 75

Those voting Yea 148

Those voting Nay 0

Those absent and not voting 3

DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

Consent Calendar is passed.

Representative Sharkey, you have the floor, sir.

Is there business on the Clerk's desk?

THE CLERK:

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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE**

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SENATE

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Bill 828, Mr. President, would move to place that item on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Moving to Calendar page --

THE CHAIR:

Mr. President?

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President. Moving to Calendar page 18, Calendar 204, Senate Bill 980, Mr. President, would move to place -- Madam President, would move to place that item on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, moving to calendar page 19, Calendar 206, Senate Bill 35. Madam President, would mark that item go.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection --

SENATOR LOONEY:

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for a vote on that consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on the second consent calendar. Will all Senators please return to the chamber. Roll call vote has been called on the second consent calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

Madam President, those items placed on Consent Calendar Number 2 begin on Senate Agenda Number 5, House Joint Resolution Number 102; House Joint Resolution Number 103; House Joint Resolution 104; House Joint Resolution 105.

And Senate agenda -- page 2, House joint resolution Number 106. From Senate Agenda Number 7, substitute for House Bill 6292.

Going to the calendar, beginning of calendar page 12, Calendar Number 146, Senate Bill Number 859; Calendar 140, Senate Bill Number 869; Calendar 151, Senate Bill 828; calendar page 18, Calendar Number 204, Senate Bill 980; calendar page 24, Calendar Number 237, Senate Bill Number 714; and calendar page 32, Calendar Number -- correction, that's it.

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No. Sorry. Calendar page 34, Calendar
Number 119, Senate Bill 837.

Madam President, that completes those items
placed on the second consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Would you once again announce the roll call vote.
And the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The Senate is now voting by roll call on the second
consent calendar. Will all Senators please return to
the Chamber. The Senate is now voting by roll call on
the second consent calendar. Will all Senators please
return to the Chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all members voted? Have all members -- no.
They have not.

Okay. Now have all members voted? Have all
members voted? If so, the machine will be locked. And
will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Motion is on adoption of Consent Calendar
Number 2.

Total Number voting

35

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SENATE

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Necessary for adoption	18
Those voting Yea	35
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

The consent calendar is adopted.

Senator Looney, do you have any good news for us,
sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, Madam President.

First of all, would move for suspension for
immediate transmittal to the Governor of Substitute
House Bill 6292.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, that concludes our business for
today. I want to thank all of the members for their
cooperation in moving through the items on the agenda.

First of all, Madam President for a journal
notation.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed sir.