

PA 11-240

SB1199

House	9811-9815, 9852-9853	7
Human Services	1795-1802, 1817-1824, 1827-1828	18
<u>Senate</u>	<u>3500-3516</u>	<u>17</u>

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H – 1120

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2011**

**VOL.54
PART 29
9635 – 9973**

pt/tj/lxe/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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June 8, 2011

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Opposed? The Aye's have it. Senate "A" is
adopted. Further on the bill? Further on the bill?
Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I move that this item be
placed on Consent.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Seeing no objection, hearing no objection, so
ordered.

Would the Clerk please call Calendar 569.

THE CLERK:

On page 25, Calendar 569, substitute for Senate
Bill Number 1199, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES' DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE AND
POVERTY EXEMPTION. Favorable report of the Committee
on Human Services.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

(Inaudible) Representative Tercyak, you have the
floor.

REP. TERCYAK (26th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move for acceptance of
the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of

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the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

The question before the Chamber is acceptance and passage. Please proceed.

REP. TERCYAK (26th):

Thank you very much. This -- this is a good bill that will help us reorganize the department into regions, and then I have a couple of amendments also if I could, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Please proceed.

REP. TERCYAK (26th):

Mr. Speaker, the Clerk has Amendment LCO Number 6493 Schedule MMA.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

I'm sorry, Representative. Someone was trying to talk to me over here and I couldn't hear what LCO number it was.

REP. TERCYAK (26th):

I'm very sorry, sir. The -- Clerk has an amendment LCO 6493, Senate Schedule Amendment "A". I would ask the Clerk --

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

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Clerk, please call LCO 6493, previously
designated Senate "A".

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 6493, Senate "A" offered by Senators
Musto and Fasano.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Tercyak.

REP. TERCYAK (26th):

Thank you very much. This makes it clear to the
DCF, classifies the abuse or neglect reports as lower
risk for purposes of the differential response,
provides that no child can be found neglected solely
on the basis of impoverishment and changes the
definition of abuse and makes technical conforming
changes. I move the amendment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Question before the Chamber is adoption of Senate
"A". Further on Senate "A"? Further -- if not, I'll
try your minds, all those in favor signify by saying
Aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

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Opposed? The Ayes have it. Senate "A" is
adopted. Further on the bill? Representative
Tercyak.

REP. TERCYAK (26th):

Thank you, Speaker. The Clerk has an amendment,
LCO 7272, Senate Schedule "B".

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Would the Clerk please call LCO 7272, previously
designated Senate "B".

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 7272, Senate "B", offered by Senator
Williams, et al.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Tercyak.

REP. TERCYAK (26th):

Senate -- thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.
Senate Amendment "B" adds information to that -- to
the bill which the DCF commissioner must report
annually on children and youth who are runaways or
homeless. I move adoption --

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

The question before the Chamber is adoption of
Senate "B". Adoption of Senate "B"? If not, I'll try

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your minds, all those in favor signify by saying Aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Opposed? The Ayes have it.

Further on the bill as amended? Further on the
bill as amended? Representative Tercyak.

REP. TERCYAK (26th):

I ask that this item be placed on the Consent
Calendar, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Without objection? Without objection? So
ordered.

Would the Clerk please call Calendar 583.

THE CLERK:

On page 27, Calendar 583, substitute for Senate
Bill Number 98, AN ACT PROHIBITING SPOOFING AND
CRAMMING. Favorable report of the Committee on
Judiciary.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Fox of the 146th, you have the
floor.

REP. FOX (146th):

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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 Bill 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
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Necessary for passage	75
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Those voting Yea	148
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Those voting Nay	0
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Those absent and not voting	3
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DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

Consent Calendar is passed.

Representative Sharkey, you have the floor, sir.

Is there business on the Clerk's desk?

THE CLERK:

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**HUMAN
SERVICES
PART 6
1529 – 1842**

2011

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lk/gdm HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

March 22, 2011
10:00 A.M.

CHAIRMEN: Senator Musto
Representative Tercyak

VICE CHAIRMEN: Senator Coleman
Representative Morris

MEMBERS PRESENT:
SENATORS: Markley

REPRESENTATIVES: Gibbons, Adinolfi, Butler,
Chapin, Cook, Flexer,
Lyddy, Miller, Orange,
Rigby, Thompson,
Wadsworth, Holder-Winfield

SENATOR MUSTO: -- eleven. Just a quick announcement before we go forward, that there will be a Democratic caucus on the bills we're hearing today and on the agenda for today at 12:30. Madam Clerk, 12:30? At 12:30 in this room -- and we'll -- I guess we'll go until the hearing starts or we're done. And there will also be a Republican caucus, which will certainly start no later than two o'clock, right, and -- we're going to caucus at 12:30 right here. And there will be a Republican caucus in the Human Services conference room at 12:30 as well. And, of course, if either one of us need a little more time, we can gavel in the meeting and then -- and then take a few more minutes. Okay?

That being said, hopefully, this will be a very short one. We've only got a few people signed up and only a couple of bills. And our first speaker will be Commissioner Joette Katz, Commissioner of DCF.

Welcome, Commissioner Katz.

COMMISSIONER JOETTE KATZ: Thank you so much for

SB 1199
HB 6053
SB 959

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10:00 A.M.

hearing me this morning and I will certainly try and be brief. You got written testimony, and many of you allowed me to make a presentation last week so, hopefully, I'll be short, and then will be available for any questions you may have.

Good morning, Senator Musto, Representative Tercyak, Senator Markley, Representative Gibbons, and members of the Human Services Committee.

I am Joette Katz, Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families, and I am here to offer testimony in support of two bills on your public hearing agenda.

First, again, I want to thank you for meeting me -- with me, two weeks ago to discuss the restructuring of DCF. My vision, which I explained to you at that time when we met, is before you today in Bill 1199, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES REGIONAL STRUCTURE, DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE AND POVERTY EXEMPTION.

In the interest of time, again, I will not read my entire written statement, but I would like to briefly summarize what this bill does. Sections 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the bill simply change statutory references to reflect an organizational shift from area offices to five service delivery regions.

Section 2 of the bill establishes unclassified regional director positions for the department and two additional positions in the unclassified service, who would oversee the new clinical and community support consultation team and the new residential and institutional facilities team.

Section 7 of the bill allows DCF to establish a differential response system. Section 8 specifically exempts poverty from the definition of neglected, in Section 46B 120 of the general statutes.

Regarding the unclassified positions, the regional director positions will allow the department to move forward towards a comprehensive service delivery system at the community level with higher levels of regional responsibility, authority and accountability. They will report directly to me as the Commissioner.

Once these positions are established, five high-level regional directors will be selected and tasked with implementing a more comprehensive system of services at the regional and community level. We expect these individuals will come from both inside and outside the department, operate as a team, and be in place during September, 2011, at the latest.

We are also seeking the appointment of two additional positions in the unclassified service. These people would oversee the new clinical and community support consultation team and the new residential and institutional facilities team.

The other major issue addressed in the bill is the addition of permissive statutory language regarding the Differential Response System, or DRS. DRS is an approach that allows child protection agencies to differentiate their response to accepted reports of child abuse and neglect, based on such factors as the type and severity of the alleged maltreatment, the number of previous reports, the motivation and cooperation of the parent in addressing safety

concerns, among others.

Integral to this approach is the multiple focuses on child safety, family engagement, and community response. The process begins with a thorough exploration of a family's strengths and needs. Low risk cases, where there is no current safety concern for the children, will be responded to by a family assessment response. Higher risk cases, and those with allegations involving child safety, will continue to be responded to by a traditional investigative response.

At any time, based on the social workers ongoing assessments, an assessment case can be returned to the child protective services investigative track, if appropriate. The department, in conjunction with the Casey Family Services, has been planning for implementation of DRS for two years.

We have examined the community readiness for Differential Response System in each of DCF's five regions, and we plan to implement DRS in all five regions beginning in late 2011.

The implementation of DRS will build on the implementation of the DCF practice model, which is already under way in regions one and three and will begin implementation in regions two, four, and five later this year.

Finally, we are seeking to amend the statutory definition of neglected to specifically exempt cases involving poverty. This language will provide additional legal rights for impoverished parents who might otherwise face child neglect allegations, court involvement and the potential removal of their children and placement in foster care. The department believes that this will allow for more

effective use of our child protection --
protective staff and resources.

Finally, I would also like add our support for
House Bill Number 6053, An Act Concerning
Domestic Violent and Child Trauma. This bill
implements some of the recommendations of the
Speakers Domestic Violence Task Force, which
was chaired by Representative Flexer, and
Sections 1, 2 and 5 of the bill directly relate
to DCF responsibilities.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to present
this testimony and I would be happy to answer
any questions you might have.

SENATOR MUSTO: Thank you, Commissioner Katz. Are
there any questions from members of the
committee? Okay.

I'll ask one. DRS --

COMMISSIONER JOETTE KATZ: Yes.

SENATOR MUSTO: -- got a big fiscal note on it last
time we tried to do it; seems like it's going
to cost a lot of money if we do it right. You
know, I -- I, personally, have been in favor of
it from my work on the children's committee the
last couple of years, and I think it's sort of
the right model to -- to follow, not to tell
you how I feel about it or anything.

The -- I was just wondering if you could
address the cost issue with DRS because it's
certainly going to come up down the line, and
maybe for members of this committee, it might
be nice to hear it directly from you what --
where you think that's going to go.

COMMISSIONER JOETTE KATZ: Thank you.

SB 1199

All right. Well, currently, my thoughts on the issue of funding and implementation are as follows. I think it's going to require issuing a request for proposal, outlining the method of delivery service, and the families to receive the services.

We'll refer the families to selected differential response providers in the regions. Now, currently, under our current service model, these families would have been provided for through area service social workers using wrap funds and various contracted services.

Differential response is going to replace the current model, it's my expectation, in the same way that wrap funds are currently used to support children staying in their home or foster care placement and, ultimately, what I hope will happen, is it will ultimately reduce the need for higher cost services in out-of-home care.

So what it will do is invest in future successes of families, giving them the assistance and support they need, eliminating the need for higher levels of out-of -- out-of-home care, that might otherwise become necessary, so it's essentially borrowing from wrap funds to facilitate the implementation of the program up front and, ultimately, pay for itself in the long run because we will be putting fewer cases in our computer system, will be managing fewer case, and certainly will be taking -- the biggest cost savings will come from the -- I (inaudible) expect diminished removal of children from their homes and placing them in out-of-home care and foster homes, where we obviously incur great expense.

So it's -- it's going to be current funded, currently, with our appropriations by changing

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the service delivery system that we have, and, again, my expectation that it will diminish the number of families who are, or will be involved in higher, more costly levels and greater department involvement.

The other -- the other point I'd like to make is because we've already done so much training in two of our regions. I was in a meeting last week with our -- with the regions -- regional -- current regional directors who have already been trained, as well as the director of the training academy.

And it's our expectation that certainly we'll continue to do the training and the regions that have not been fully -- that have not fully embraced DRS, will require additional training. But some of that is going to come from within DCF from the people who have already been trained.

And I actually think that there is a real benefit to that because, in training social workers, the ones who have already, essentially, bought the religion, will be able to, I think, both educate as well as connect with our workers around these systems.

SENATOR MUSTO: Thank you, Commissioner.

Yes, Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, Commissioner. It's nice to see you here.

COMMISSIONER JOETTE KATZ: Nice to see you again. Thank you.

REP. GIBBONS: And we're delighted to have you take over DCF. Good luck to you and to all of your

staff. I think it's a big challenge, but we are looking forward to working with you.

I think that your organization chart is terrific. DCF had been broken, as we've all known, and not because -- it's not a reflection of past commissioners, I just think the task has been so huge, as to what they are -- have -- or charged with accomplishing, that it's very hard to get your arms around it. So we wish you well in that.

COMMISSIONER JOETTE KATZ: Thank you.

REP. GIBBONS: A couple of comments. H or -- SB 959 talks about requiring DCF to take care of -- of youths at age 16 transitioning into, I guess, DMHAS or DBS at age 18. We have a specific bill in here requiring DCF to do this. It is my understanding that DCF already was supposed to be doing this. Could you comment on this, please.

COMMISSIONER JOETTE KATZ: Yes. Your right. We are supposed to be doing it. And, consequently -- and I certainly believe we should be doing it, and, consequently, I would support that legislation. I know that in past years there's been an issue around data and compilation of data, and how many kids we are talking about. And -- and I'm happy to say that when this was brought to my attention last week I immediately went to our data czars, whom I call my (inaudible) my data czars, Fernando (inaudible) and (inaudible) and we located the data, and it turns out -- so I've got data now on exactly how many children we are talking about. I didn't bring it with me but it's -- it's under 200 kids who are both close to 17 or just over 17, whom we expect to transition into DMHAS, and we should be taking care of them. And so I -- I have no problems with the legislation

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10:00 A.M.

Hallberg. Good morning.

CARYL HALLBERG: (Inaudible.) Good morning, Senator Musto and Representative Tercyak. I'm Caryl Hallberg. I'm the Executive Director of Covenant to Care for Children. It's a nonprofit, statewide, here in Connecticut. We've been around for 24 years.

Covenant to Care for Children mobilizes and channels the generosity of caring and faithful people to advocate for, mentor and provide direct services to the children of Connecticut who are abused, neglected, or at risk. And I am here today around SB 1199, specifically, Section 8.

CCC provides the -- for the specific individual needs of approximately 25,000 children here, in Connecticut, every year. We do this through our five programs and one project. We work directly with DCF workers across the state, and also with social workers from any agency or nonprofit that deals with the same child client base.

In response to our participation in the TANF program, through DSS, this past summer, we began collecting data from our DCF workers, and that data related to family income for the levels of the children -- levels for the children we served.

Only two of our programs participated in the TANF effort, and they were our smaller programs, Critical Goods, which delivers household items and furniture to families, and our Children's Enrichment Fund, which literally purchases items for children that cannot be found in any other agency or through DCF programs.

Just in those two programs, between July and December of this past year, we served approximately 2,000 children, providing beds to children who had no beds to sleep in, furniture, clothing, and much more. What we provide is basic need items. And every child that comes to us, comes to us through a social worker.

What we found was that all the families receiving aid were U.S. citizens. Most families comprised of two children and a caregiver. Many had more children. Disposable income for these families ranged between 12,000 and 15,000 per year, but most were below 12,000 a year.

Income was being used for rent, utilities, and this is true even when other subsidies were provided to the family. Many of the families were receiving other forms of assistance. And one of the things that surfaced regularly for us during this period was the need for an I.D., photo I.D., for the adults, in order for them to get work or benefits, and that there was a cost to that, and that they were making decisions between feeding their children or getting that I.D. And for you and I, that might be a very small amount of money, but for them it was critical.

I'm going to give you a quick example of what we have seen over and over again. And that is that we have a DSCF investigator to go out and investigate a report of neglect. And what she will find is a single parent, usually a mom -- and this is a specific case that we had -- four children -- I'll be as quick as I can -- the mom was doing everything she could, working full-time jobs, but the children had no furniture, no clothing, very little.

The DCF worker has a choice: Open the case and

send these kids of foster care, maybe separate homes; or keep the family together by calling us. And we provide the items needed, and the case gets to move on.

The reason I point this out is because impoverishment is not a crime. And this section of this bill makes that differentiation. I want to wrap it up because I don't want to waste your time, but I thank you very much for allowing me to testify before you. You have my written testimony. And I'd be happy to take any questions.

SENATOR MUSTO: What section of the bill?

CARYL HALLBERG: Section 8 --

SENATOR MUSTO: Section 8 --

CARYL HALLBERG: Of 1199. It relates to -- a child or youth may be found neglected, who, for reasons other than impoverishment -- that's what's being added to that.

It -- it reduces the penalty for people being -- they won't be charged with neglect, if they just impoverished, but they will still be able to receive the services. And -- and right now we have social workers that are working with us, that, kind of, go around the rules in order to serve the family. This will allow them to serve the families without going around the rules.

SENATOR MUSTO: Thank you.

Are there questions from members of the committee? No.

Thank you very much.

CARYL HALLBERG: If I may just -- want to address a question that was asked earlier. We do receive electronic payments on a regular basis from DCF, with no delays. And I just wanted to -- to offer that because that seemed to be a question.

SENATOR MUSTO: Great.

CARYL HALLBERG: Thank you very much.

SENATOR MUSTO: That was the last person on the public list, and our list in total. Is there anyone who did not sign up who would like to testify on any of the bills on today's agenda? Going once, going twice, meetings adjourned. Thank you.

TI



STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Public Hearing Testimony

Human Services Committee

March 22, 2011



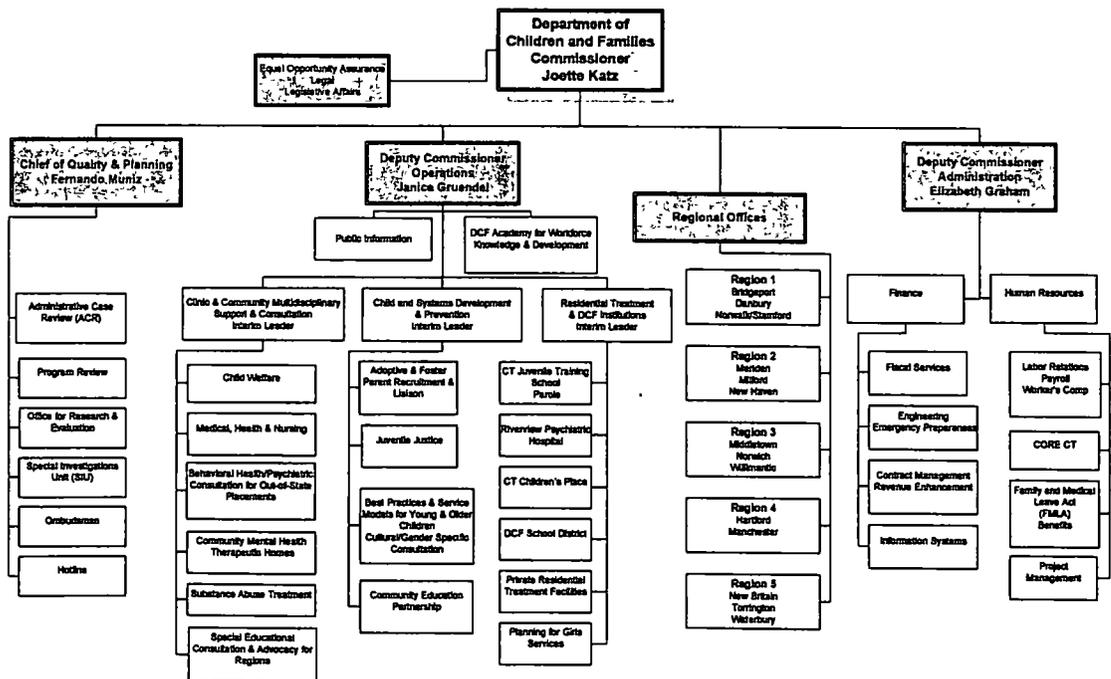
H.B. No. 1199 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES' REGIONAL STRUCTURE, DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE, AND POVERTY EXEMPTION.

The Department of Children and Families strongly supports H.B. No. 1199, An Act Concerning the Department of Children and Families' Regional Structure, Differential Response, and Poverty Exemption.

DCF Organizational Structure

Sections 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the bill, changes statutory references to reflect an organizational shift from area offices to five service delivery regions.

The organizational restructuring already has begun, including the most dramatic change involving supervision of the area offices. At the DCF Central Office, existing bureaus will be realigned over the coming months, including the elimination of the Bureau Chief job classification. Whereas previously area offices were lodged within the Bureau of Child Welfare, with multiple levels of supervision above them, the Service Area Directors now report directly to the Commissioner.



Once this new leadership structure is in place, the current Service Area Director classification will be eliminated, and individuals will be supported to relocate within or outside the Department. Because empowering families requires we empower our staff, we are strengthening the training academy to become the DCF Academy for Workforce Knowledge and Development. The enhanced Academy will expand learning opportunities for both staff and our private agency partners.

On the program side, we shortly will begin operating with three teams rather than bureaus. The Clinical and Community Support/Consultation Team will integrate subject matter expertise across health, nursing, psychiatric consultation, mental health, education, child welfare and substance abuse to support the new comprehensive system of regional services for children and families. The Child and Systems Development, and Prevention Team will bring together best practices related to child and youth development in a culturally and gender-specific manner. It also will provide (1) leadership in juvenile justice systems work, (2) foster and adoptive support, (3) new partnerships with local education agencies, and (4) expanded investments in prevention.

The DCF facilities -- the Connecticut Juvenile Training School, Riverview Hospital and the Connecticut Children's Place -- will be supervised as part of the Residential and Institutional Facilities Team. This team also will be responsible for planning related to secure girls' services and for performance contracting with our private residential treatment partners. A time-limited but detailed analysis is now underway concerning all out-of-state placements along with a review of the mission and structure of both Riverview Hospital and the Connecticut Children's Place.

Managing this change, which will be phased in over the next six months, will be complex.

A tremendous amount of good work is being done at the Department, but now is a golden opportunity to get even better at what we do. Commissioner Katz is confident that with these changes and realignments, the Department will become evermore effective in strengthening families and enhancing child well-being.

Regional Directors

Section 2 of the bill establishes up to six unclassified Regional Director positions for the Department, which is a structure similar to that provided in section 17b-6 of the General Statutes for the Regional Administrators for the Department of Social Services. It is also similar to a structure that existed in the Department of Children in Youth Services from 1987 to 1993, at which time six Regional Directors and up to twelve Assistant Regional Directors, all in the unclassified service were permitted by statute.

As noted above, Commissioner Katz intends to utilize a five region structure, but the statute refers to six to reflect the statutory authority provided in section 16a-4a to the Office of Policy and Management to establish "not more than six uniform regional service delivery areas."

These positions will allow the Department to move toward a comprehensive service delivery system at the community level with higher levels of regional responsibility, authority and accountability. They will report directly to the Commissioner. Once these positions are established, five high-level Regional Directors will be selected and tasked with implementing a

more comprehensive system of services at the regional and community level. We expect these individuals will come from both inside and outside the Department, operate as a team, and be in place during September 2011.

This section also provides for the appointment of two additional positions in the unclassified service, who would oversee the new Clinical and Community Support/Consultation Team and the new Residential and Institutional Facilities Team. Interim leadership has been designated for all three teams. Quality assurance and administrative case review staff, who used to report to the Bureau of Child Welfare, will now report to Central Office in order to improve standardization, efficiency and accountability for service delivery at the regional level.

Differential Response

Section 7 of the bill allows DCF to establish a Differential Response System (DRS). DRS is an approach that allows child protection agencies to differentiate their response to accepted reports of child abuse and neglect based on such factors as the type and severity of the alleged maltreatment, the number of previous reports, and the motivation and cooperation of the parent in addressing safety concerns. Integral to this approach is its multiple focuses on child safety, family engagement and community response. The process begins with a thorough exploration of a family's strengths and needs. Low risk cases where there is no current safety concern for the children will be responded to via a family assessment response. Higher risk cases and those with allegations involving child safety will continue to be responded to via a traditional investigations response. At any time, based on the social worker's ongoing assessments, an assessment case can be returned to the Child Protective Services investigative track, if appropriate.

The Department, in conjunction with Casey Family Services, has been planning for implementation of DRS for over two years. We have examined the community readiness for a Differential Response System in each of DCF's five regions and we plan to implement DRS in all five regions beginning in late 2011. The implementation of DRS will build on the implementation of the DCF Practice Model, which is already underway in regions 1 and 3 and will begin implementation in regions 2, 4 and 5 late this year.

The primary goal of DRS is to serve low risk families who come to the attention of DCF in a strengths-based, solution focused, and culturally competent manner. The process must be family-driven aimed at assessing needs, without compromising child safety. Families eligible for the Differential Response System will be those who meet statutory requirements of abuse and neglect. Differential Response System services will be provided at the family's discretion following a determination that all children in the home are safe.

Differential Response System services will best be delivered through a collaborative partnership including families, DCF, and community providers. Although initially guiding the safety and needs assessment processes, the Department's role diminishes as linkage to services and community supports aimed at addressing identified needs occurs. Cases will be handed over to the community providers as soon as possible. DCF will close cases as soon as families are deemed safe and receiving all needed services.

The Practice Model complements the strategies employed under DRS. The Practice Model, which is now in final development, will establish in daily practice for all cases handled by the Department the following principles: respect and working with families as partners; focus on the social worker as a "helping" relationship to the family; engagement of parents, extended family, kin and natural supports; and the leadership of families in the development of case plans. Other jurisdictions that have implemented these principles and practices have experienced lower rates of removals, higher use of kin/relatives as placement resources and lower rates of repeat reports for families.

Under the bill, cases the commissioner refers for community services may be transferred back to DCF for a traditional investigation if safety concerns become evident. Conversely, where a full investigation has begun, DCF can refer cases to DRS whenever the Department determines the child should be classified as lower-risk.

The bill also permits DCF to adopt regulations to establish a method for monitoring the child and family's progress while in the differential response system. The regulations may also set standards for reopening referred cases.

DCF must disclose to providers accepting referred cases all relevant information in its possession concerning the child and family, including prior child protection activity. A provider can use this otherwise-confidential information in: (1) assessing, diagnosing, and treating the family's unique needs, and (2) preventing future reports. The provider must disclose to DCF all relevant and otherwise-confidential information gathered during its assessment, diagnosis, and treatment. DCF may use the information only to monitor and assure the child's continued safety and well-being.

This bill is written as permissive language to allow implementation of the differential response program to occur within available appropriations. The Department is working on identifying internal and external resources to allow implementation of DRS to occur later this year. Ultimately, savings in direct services and/or state personnel may result should differential response programming and the use of the Practice Model successfully mitigate child abuse and neglect and divert families from the child welfare system.

Poverty Exemption

Section 8 of the bill specifically exempts poverty from the definition of "neglected" in section 46b-120 of the General Statutes. This is consistent with the goals of the differential response system and it follows the lead of other states including Arkansas, Florida, Kansas, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Texas, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

This language will provide additional legal rights for impoverished parents who might otherwise face child neglect allegations, court involvement, and the potential removal of their child and placement in foster care. The Department believes that this will allow for more effective use of our child protection staff and resources.



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**STATEMENT REGARDING S.B. NO. 1199 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING
THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES' REGIONAL STRUCTURE,
DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE, AND POVERTY EXEMPTION.**

Covenant to Care for Children (CCC) mobilizes and channels the caring and faithful people of Connecticut to advocate for, mentor and provide direct assistance to the children and youth of Connecticut who are abused, neglected or at-risk.

CCC provides for the specific individual needs of around 25,000 Connecticut children every year through our five programs and one project. We work directly with DCF social workers and with social workers from any agency serving abused, neglected and impoverished children.

In response to our participation in Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) through DSS, in July 2010, we began collecting data from our DCF social workers relating to the family income levels of the children whom we serve.

Much of our work is preventative and directly addresses the issue of impoverishment vs. neglect found in -

S.B. No. 1199 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES' REGIONAL STRUCTURE, DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE, AND POVERTY EXEMPTION.

Subdivision (B) of section 46b-120 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2011):

(B) A child or youth may be found "neglected" who, for reasons other than being impoverished, (A) has been abandoned, (B) is being denied proper care and attention, physically, educationally, emotionally or morally, (C) is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to the well-being of the child or youth, or (D) has been abused;

In just two of our smaller programs¹, between July 1, 2010 and December 31, 2010, we served approximately 2000 children, providing beds to children who had no bed to sleep in, other furniture, clothing and much more. The items that CCC provides are basic: diapers, formula, beds, cribs, clothing, linen, etc.

Every child we serve comes to us through a request made by his/her social worker, more often than not a DCF social worker.

¹ Children's Enrichment Fund, Critical Goods



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Generally, what we saw with the TANF eligibility forms was the following:

- All families receiving aid were citizens of the US – 100%
- Most families were comprised of at least two children and a caregiver
- Disposable income for these families ranges \$12-15K per year, but most were below \$12K. Income was being used for rent and utilities, even when subsidies were available. There was little, if any, money left over to provide for the basic needs of the children in the household.
- Many families were receiving other forms of assistance: SNAP/WIC/SAGA/TFA
- One thing that seems to surface rather regularly was the need for financial assistance for the adults in the household to get picture ID cards. This is now necessary for employment, to apply for public assistance, and to receive health care.

A CASE STUDY:

A DCF investigator had a report of neglect in a family of four children ranging from infant to 7 years of age. When she visited the family she found the apartment was tidy, the children clean but possessing only one outfit each. The children slept on the floor wrapped in their clothes for warmth. The baby was kept in a closet at night to protect him from rats. There wasn't a stick of furniture in the apartment.

The children attended school; the single mom worked three part-time jobs at minimum wage and used every penny for rent and food. There simply was nothing left over. The investigator determined that there was no issue of neglect in this household, only poverty. She contacted CCC and requested school uniforms, clothing, baby goods, beds for the three older children and a crib for the baby. We provided two bunk bed sets, along with bed linens, towels, stuffed animals, a few age appropriate books, extra clothes, a table and chairs, couch and dressers.

The investigator was able to close the case with a positive report, the children had their basic needs met, and the mother knew that somewhere out there were caring people who understood that she was doing the very best she could and who supported her effort to be a good mom.

CONCLUSION:

Covenant to Care for Children, along with our thousands of volunteers from over 300 faith-based and civic organizations across Connecticut, supports any alteration to the definition of *neglect* that removes the stigma of poverty and allows for the ongoing efforts of CCC and our partner social workers to provide for the basic and special needs of our children.

Caryl Hallberg, Executive Director

Covenant to Care for Children

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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2011**

**VOL. 54
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3323 - 3673**

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roll call vote and I will open the machines.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber. An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators return to the Chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all members voted? Have all members voted? Seeing so, the machines will be closed. Mr. Clerk, will you -- call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Total Number Voting	36
Those Voting Yea	36
Those Voting Nay	0
Those Absent, Not Voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The bill passes.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Turning to page -- Calendar page 7, Calendar Number 280, substitute for Senate Bill Number 1199,
AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND
FAMILIES' DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE AND POVERTY

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EXEMPTIONS. Committee of Human Services.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Musto.

SENATOR MUSTO (22nd):

Good evening, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, sir.

SENATOR MUSTO (22nd):

Madam President, I would move adoption of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

The question is on adoption. Will you remark further, sir?

SENATOR MUSTO (22nd):

Yes, Madam President. Madam President and members of the Circle, this bill is part of the DCF overhaul language that the new commissioner has instituted and intends to pursue.

Specifically what this bill does is it implements a system called differential response services or DRS. It's something the Children's Committee worked on last year while I was Chair, and before that I believe -- when I believe Senator

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Meyer was Chair, now that Senator Gerratana is Chair, and it's just one of those things that has been -- its time has come finally. We've been working on it for years and it's a great idea.

What it essentially does, for those who are not familiar with it, is it provides DCF, the Department of Children and Families, with a lesser level of intervention, the option to have certain families in certain situations treated, not as an intervention by DCF where the goal may be to remove the child from the home, but as a level of service where DCF will come in and -- and really put the families back in families, try to keep the family together by providing certain services. Less intervention, less intensive services, and really a greater level of true assistance to the families.

That's what the underlying bill does. We do have two amendments that I plan to call, and the first one I would ask the Clerk to call is LCO 6493.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

LCO 6493, which will be schedule -- Senate
Amendment Schedule "A".

THE CHAIR:

Senator Musto.

SENATOR MUSTO (22nd):

Thank you, Madam President. I would move adoption of the amendment and be -- and request to be granted leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

The question is on adoption. Will you remark further?

SENATOR MUSTO (22nd):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. This is an amendment that I was happy to work on with Senator Fasano. It requires certain reporting requirements regarding the Department of Children and Families, specifically related to children who have run away or otherwise fallen out of the system.

A couple years ago we did a bill called the Stuck Kids Bill and in that bill we were trying to keep track of some of the children in DCF care, or really should have been in DCF care and were not. These were mostly homeless children, runaways, people who had been in foster care and were now

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missing. DCF was very often looking for them but could not find them. What -- what this amendment does, at Senator Fasano's urging, is to help -- or rather require DCF to keep track of which children those are, their ages, how long they've been missing, and where they were last found.

I think this will help DCF keep track of the children. It will help DCF keep track, maybe of not that child, but implement policies that will allow them and help them, DCF that is, to better keep these children in foster care and keep them in the types of situations where we want them. Keep them in school and in the home.

And with that, I would just ask for support for the amendment, and at this point would yield to Senator Fasano if you will accept the yield.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fasano, will you accept the yield?

SENATOR FASANO (34th):

Thank you, Madam President. Yes, I accept the yield. First of all, I want to thank Senator Musto and the DCF Commission for helping on this bill and getting the language together. I think this bill is very important because there are a number of

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children who are missing when they are in State care, and although there is some sort of a mechanism that we track children who are missing in State care, it's not broken down by age, how long they've been gone, where they are found, and I think once we start finding the problem, what age groups are more prone to run away, how long do they run away.

Until we're able to really break down the data so that it's manageable, we're not going to be able to fix the root of the problem because we don't know what the problem is. And all this does is, the data is already there and DCF just has to take it and break it down. The Department of Children and Families has to take it and break it down a little bit further.

So I think this is a great amendment to go forward with to help those. I had a situation where a constituent was a foster parent, the child was returned to State custody and -- 16-year-old girl, she ran away from home two years -- I think when she was like 14, I think she ran away from home and at the age of 16 called the ex-foster parent to get help. And I was amazed at that point in time that no knowledge that this girl was missing was ever

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known other than in the agency, and then when I
inquired I was surprised at how many kids are
missing in our State custody and I think that we
need to know what those -- I mean, if you're missing
a day, that's one thing. But if you're missing for
six months and it's an eight-year-old, that's
something different. Or two years and it's a ten-
year-old, that's a big deal. And I think this helps
us understand where we are, so I want to thank the
Chair, Senator Musto, for helping me with this
amendment. I appreciate everything he's done on
this and I look forward to the amendment being
passed. Thank you, Madam Chair -- Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark further? Will you remark
further? If not, I'll try your minds. All those in
favor of the -- of the amendment, please say Aye.

SENATORS:

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed?

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The amendment passes.

Senator Musto.

SENATOR MUSTO (22nd):

Thank you again, Madam President. The next amendment that I would ask the Clerk to call is LCO Number 7272.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

LCO 7272, which will be Senate Amendment Schedule "B".

THE CHAIR:

Senator Musto.

SENATOR MUSTO (22nd):

Thank you, Madam President. I would move the amendment and request leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

The question is on adoption. Please proceed.

SENATOR MUSTO (22nd):

Thank you, Madam President. This amendment essentially does four things, two of which were requested by the Judiciary Department, and two of which were what came out of the bill itself when it went through the legislative process.

The first is it provides a new definition for "dependent". It rather -- rather it doesn't provide a new definition, it takes dependent out of the statutes. And the second reason it does that is because the Commissioner was very insistent that poverty by itself not be considered a reason to find a child in a neglect situation. This is because of the DRS system which is of course the underlying bill. We're trying to have, again, less intrusive government services here, more helpful government services regarding DCF.

So the first thing it does is takes the word dependent out because it's no longer needed, replaces the whole theory of dependents with impoverishment and, again, that will not be -- solely being impoverished will not be a basis from removing a child from a home. Now if because of impoverishment there are other problems, those may still be bases for removing the child, but pure impoverishment just by itself will not.

Those are the first two things it does. The third thing it does is it -- is a technical change because the word "abused" was removed from what was prior -- its prior inclusion under neglect. It was

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thought that courts might not be able to intervene when a child is actually being abused because a statutory change of that nature would have just -- it was -- an oversight by the Judicial Department and it would have potentially made it impossible to remove a child who's being abused, putting us in the strange position where a child was neglected, they could be removed from the home or given services, but abused would be a problem. So we fixed that by adding "abused" to certain definitions. And also providing that abused itself has a definition of when a child could be found abused.

These are all good changes. They were talked about throughout -- with the various departments, DCF, Judicial, and I would request support for this amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Musto.

Will you remark further? Will you remark further? Seeing none, I'd try your minds. All in favor of the amendment, please say Aye.

SENATORS:

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

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Opposed?

The amendment passes.

Senator Musto.

SENATOR MUSTO (22nd):

Thank you, Madam President. I would just ask at this time, if there's no further comment, for a vote on this bill.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE (32nd):

Thank you, Madam President. Just one quick question, through you, to the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR KANE (32nd):

Thank you, Madam President. In regard to the fiscal note, it -- attached, says that there will be a General Fund cost of three and a half million, and a General Fund savings of three and a half million, net impact zero. Can you just explain that?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Musto.

SENATOR MUSTO (22nd):

Yes, thank you, Madam President. Thank you, Senator Kane. The reason for the increased fiscal cost is that it is anticipated that these services will cost more. They are, again, more -- they are less intrusive into the family, but sometimes these families when they have these types of problems need counseling as a whole.

We are not simply taking the child and putting them in foster care and congregate care somewhere and then dealing with a court proceeding, we're really doing more of what would be, I think, considered traditional social work. There is an increased cost to that and the cost to do it right will be approximately three and a half million dollars according to the department.

The offset to that is that by doing it this way, there will be less intrusive intensive services in other ways. You will save money by not having to go the court, for example. You will save money by not getting into these fights with the parents and really needing the kind of intense supervision that is caused by that. And also with the Governor's plan to -- excuse me, not the Governor's. The Commissioner's plan to restructure the agency to

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make sort of five mini DCFs that will, again, sort of in the Commissioner's goal of bringing the services really closer to home, as it were, there would be some savings in that plan as well.

That is not in this bill, but that is coming in a different bill and so that is where the fiscal note comes from. And again, I think we did -- we did talk about the past years. There was a fiscal note. We have been able to refine that fiscal note a little bit. Refine exactly what services we provided and how there would be some savings to the State through this program. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE (32nd):

Thank you, Madam President. And just, I guess one more question, and this may be more philosophical than otherwise. But to institute programs like these, and as you say you can -- reduce some costs by the shifting or creating these -- the five mini DCFs as it were. Was it looked at the possibility of using private providers for some of these things for maybe an additional savings?

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Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Musto.

SENATOR MUSTO (22nd):

Thank you, Madam President, through you.

Private providers are extensively used by DCF.

Foster parents are certainly private providers and many of the institutions where these children end up, unfortunately some of the more severe ones have been going out of state. That's another thing we're trying to remedy. The ones who are unfortunately detained, what we might call if they were adults incarcerated, many of those are -- some of the services around them rather are private providers. Obviously the incarceration is a State issue.

So, yes, DCF is -- much of its budget is spent on private providers already. As far as do these savings that we -- that we've been talking about include an increase in private providers? I'm not aware that they do and I -- I would love to be able to answer that question, but I cannot at this time. But I can tell you that DCF certainly uses -- much of its budget goes to non-state workers, people outside the state who are taking care of these

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children, providing therapy, providing foster care, providing treatment for medical and psychological issues. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE (32nd):

Thank you -- thank you, Madam President, and just one last question if I might. In regards to personnel, these programs, or this change, this implementation, would it -- would it be potential to do this with the same personnel or possibly less personnel? Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Musto.

SENATOR MUSTO (22nd):

Through you, Madam President. I would rather leave that to the people who are really expert in this area. We have been discussing this with the staff of DCF and we have been talking to the Commissioner about it. That is, the committee, Children's Committee. Excuse me, this is from -- this is obviously from Human Services, right. Having been Chair of both committees it's a little

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hard to remember sometimes where they come from, and having done it last year also.

So regarding the proper level of staffing, you know, there is -- there is an element of micromanaging sometimes that we're trying to get away from, at least I'm trying to get away from. I would like the Commissioner to do the job. I would like DCF to do its job. I am not licensed as a social worker or as a childcare professional so I'm hesitant to say exactly what level of staffing would be required for this program. I can say that the people in DCF who we've trusted with our children and with our money in this case have looked at this and came up with this as a fiscal note. Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE (32nd):

Thank you, Madam President. I thank Senator Musto for his answers.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you very much.

Will you remark further? Will you remark further? If not, Mr. Clerk, will you please

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announce a roll call vote and I will open the machine.

THE CLERK:

An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber. An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all members voted? Have all members voted? The machines will be locked, and Mr. Clerk, will you call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Total Number Voting	36
Those Voting Yea	36
Those Voting Nay	0
Those Absent, Not Voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The bill passes.

Mr. Clerk.

Oh, nope. Senator Looney.

· SENATOR LOONEY (11th):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, that will conclude our business for this evening.