

PA 11-066

SB0983

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**JOINT
STANDING
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HEARINGS**

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

2011

Though people might have thought our state was far removed from issues stemming from issues of disaster and terrorism, I believe the past few weeks of severe weather conditions and the result of these conditions require us to face disaster issues that affect our children now.

Most recently, in ten daycare centers across our state, which they had to close for various reasons relating to the storm.

In unnatural disasters and in workplace episodes such as Middletown and East Hartford, lock-downs, evacuations of our school, our children, unfortunately, are experiencing firsthand the effects of unanticipated violence.

Natural disasters have caused floods and tornadoes in other parts of the state and build-up this year for ice, and I did not remove the ice off the top of my roof. I didn't find anybody to help me do it, either, so it's still there.

Collapsing buildings and being evacuated. We had one daycare in our area, which provided services for 60 children, 60 children from hardworking families, and they were forced to close because the entire facility was ruined by this last storm. The roof caved in on the church and the childcare program was in the basement.

This was an accredited excellent center. The children were scattered. Many families had no childcare, and it impacted their going to work.

I am going to just briefly go through here. It's so important that we help our families and our children with unintentional evacuations,

and having an evacuation plan to address multiple issues of disaster.

This bill offers the components that have researched throughout the states by Save the Children as necessary for quality and fast response to children.

This information is key for both childcare and schools. Helping children thrive while parents work is of paramount importance to our quality of life and economy.

I would recommend the few amended changes offered by the Commission on Children today. In particular, this plan should not be a separate plan from a regular plan of state emergency management and homeland security disaster plan. It should not be separate. It should be one.

That way, we do not fragment, but integrate children with adults into a plan that links to federal requirements and federal resources.

Just a post note to you. When emergencies happen, it's so great when state agencies come together and do their share. I was able to put together, with the help of the Commission on Children a committee from Public Health, Public Safety and Homeland Security, again, the Commission on Children, representatives from Save the Children and Connecticut Charts a Course.

And we had dialogue with the federal government at the same time talking about what needs to be done, and I'm happy to say even though we think of rigid regulations that are in each one of these organizations, they came to the table willing and able to make changes to recognize the emergency and I wish to applaud them

publicly for doing that. And we're hoping to find a new location for our three to eight-year olds.

And I thank you very much for this, and I know you'll be working on it as time goes by, but nothing is more important in my estimation than alleviating the woes of young children and parents having to deal with a problem like this when we can incorporate it into an adult program that we've already planned. Thank you.

REP. URBAN: Thank you, Representative Boukus and can I ascertain that from what you've already said that this group has actually been brought together starting to make some points and discussions on this issue?

REP. BOUKUS: Yes, I believe that's true. As a result of what's happened we think of our daycare as safe places, and they are. But we don't think of accidents like this happening with roofs falling in and nothing due to the facilities. It's just very unusual situations this year, and we need to have a plan ready ahead of time so that we don't run into this again.

REP. URBAN: And make that a part of our state plan, not have it a separate?

REP. BOUKUS: Correct. Every time that we can make it part of our state plan in anticipation, then maybe we can wipe away these winters, because it will never happen again because the plan will be there.

REP. URBAN: Right. Are there questions for Representative Boukus or comments? We thank you very much for bringing this forward, Betty, and we're certainly going to take this very seriously as we move forward.

REP. BOUKUS: And I know you will, and I thank you for that in anticipation of getting some good work done. Thank you.

REP. URBAN: Thank you. Next on our list of public officials is Representative Dan Carter. Welcome, Representative Carter.

REP. CARTER: And thank you, Madam Chair. Representative Urban, Senator Musto, Representative Fawcett, Senator Markley, Representative Wood and members of the Select Committee on Children, thank you for the public hearing and the opportunity to talk in support of House Bill 5661 AN ACT CONCERNING COURT INTERVIEWS IN CHILD CUSTODY CASES.

Thousands of Connecticut families experience divorce each year. Even under the best possible circumstances, divorce takes a toll on children.

Unfortunately, situations arise where custody becomes a bitter dispute, where children are left in the middle.

Current Connecticut law states that the Court shall be guided by the best interest of the child, giving consideration to the wishes of the child and if the child is of sufficient age upon which a child can state preference as to which parent she or he would like to live with, a Court will consider the child's preference and take into consideration the child's age and overall circumstances of the divorce. The child's preference is not binding on the Court.

Now there tends to be an argument that the child's preference should be obtained very carefully. In fact, legal professionals in Connecticut do a superb job in supporting

REP. MUSHINSKY: Okay. So other than mental health issues, it should be able to be done within 30 days? Is that a good number to use?

SHARI SHAPIRO: I would believe so, yes.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Okay, thank you.

SENATOR MUSTO: Other questions from members of the Committee? Thank you very much.

SHARI SHAPIRO: Thank you.

SENATOR MUSTO: Elaine Zimmerman.

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: Good afternoon, Representative Urban, members of the Committee. My name is Elaine Zimmerman. I'm the Executive Director of the Connecticut Commission on Children and I'm here today in support of Raised Bill 983 AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN AFFECTED BY DISASTER OR TERRORISM.

Our state was the first state in the country responding after 9/11 to say we better figure out what this means for children.

We were the first state to set up a Child and Crisis Committee under Homeland Security, and though what might have seemed like a one-time horrible thing for our nation, we then had Katrina, and then our own state had a building explode in Middletown, major workforce shooting, gangs fighting and children having to be removed and close downs in childcare centers and in schools because of urban violence.

What we've learned over time nationally is that unfortunately, we have to have protocols and ways to protect our children and have evacuation planning.

In Katrina, it took six months for children to be reunified with their family. What happened was there was a disbanding. Children, there was a, people went wherever they could, and there was no mechanism.

We now know, because of various natural disasters and unnatural, what needs to be in place. The Childcare Bureau in D.C. has asked every state to come up with a mechanism to protect and to support this.

Save the Children has studied what to do, and this is the result of a committee under Homeland Security where we have worked across agency, across branch of government and with safety officers on the ground.

So we are recommending that we have this legislation. There's some very specific pieces to it. One, that when children need to be evacuated from a setting that there be a place that they're going to that is understood.

Two, that parents know where to find a child after so we don't have the problem that happened with Katrina.

Three, that this is for all kinds of childcare, not just one kind of care, so family daycare, center-based care, summer camps, children in congregate care.

We have, schools are better at evacuation planning than some of these more informal settings, and certainly better than childcare. So we've worked with Save the Children. I believe that they are going to be testifying later. You have the full support, as I understand it, of Homeland Security, the Health Department and the different state agencies.

We're very proud of this legislation. Our state, the work that we did setting up a Child and Safety Response and a law after 9/11 was then replicated by Congress under Senator Dodd.

And so we present to you today the next step that we realize we need to take. This essentially also integrates the work of children into our Homeland Security plan, which parenthetically helps us with resources. It helps us with federal dollars, so there is no cost to this.

It is really integrating a system and saying well, don't forget the children.

SENATOR MUSTO: That's it?

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: That's it.

SENATOR MUSTO: You came here to tell us to try to keep kids safe?

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: I did.

SENATOR MUSTO: Okay.

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: Pretty nervy, huh?

SENATOR MUSTO: Yeah, right. I think, yeah, you probably got a good case there.

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: We did have, you heard already from Representative Boukus, but we did have roofs collapse because of the recent storms and ice density, and we have had childcare centers have to close.

This very problem that we're learning happened, where a center closed. No plan. Sixty children separated. Parents didn't have a

place, they couldn't go to their jobs because there was no care.

This would change that. We would have a coordinated system.

SENATOR MUSTO: Yes?

REP. BETTS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Elaine. Just a couple of questions. One is, when childcare facilities are not operating, do they not have some kind of a plan for communicating with parents as part of their operational manual?

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: They absolutely do, and they are required to have a plan.

But what hasn't been in place because we didn't ever think about this is, what should I do if you have to close down because there's a gun shooting, and where will I find my child after? These are the things. Why would we even be talking about this? What should we do if there's a tornado and all 60 children or all 80 children have to be disbanded and you're going to go three counties away. How will I know where to go?

We've never had to convey that. We don't have any mandate for that. We haven't had any protocol.

Now, unfortunately, because of a mix of natural and unnatural disasters ranging from the first in Oklahoma that was a terrorist attack that affected lots of childcare centers, 9/11, which affected childcare centers in the World Trade Center.

But also, we've had a host of natural disasters in our country and in our state for that matter. We now know we need to build this one.

REP. BETTS: You raise a good point. My assumption, and maybe it's erroneous, but my assumption is because of these, if I were an executive director of either a child daycare facility or school, or whatever, I absolutely would have a plan in place.

I wouldn't need, you know, a law to tell me to do it. I would just do it out of common sense, and is that not how everybody's reacted to the series of terrorism or natural disasters?

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: That's correct. It is not happening. And, you know, there's a lot of forms, there's a lot of places where children are that are forgotten. So, children are sometimes in summer camps. They're sometimes in a congregate care setting. They're sometimes in informal care, a family daycare or center-based care. It is not coordinated. We don't have standard protocols and parents don't know or think to ask about this, so that they're not going in and selecting a quality environment and saying, oh, and by the way when there's a tornado do you have a plan for where I should go.

This is, unfortunately, because of the last ten years of disaster, we've actually learned that we have to have some protocols. Not many. It's really just five that would help all sites that have children have a plan and that would coordinate this.

We are very lucky because the Department of Social Services has contracted with Save the Children using federal dollars, to help us with this plan. So this is a no-cost bill.

With the best experts in the country, because they have been either at or following every disaster in the country and seeing what we need to put in place for children.

REP. BETTS: Okay. Thank you very much.

REP. WOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What are the five protocols?

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: One protocol is to have a place that is predetermined that is an alternative relocation.

A second is to be informing the parents.

A third is to be notifying the parents of where the reunification site would be.

And another is to make sure that we're taking care of special needs children and there's attention paid to special needs children in natural and unnatural disaster because a child say in a wheelchair, or a child who is blind may not have the same speed or whatever.

And then also to make sure that this is occurring not just in our traditional settings that we think of where children are, which would be education, the schoolhouse, but also to be paying attention to childcare.

REP. WOOD: So in every situation that a child under a certain age is during the day, and what is the age? I mean, if that's what you're saying that it should be for all children --

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: Well, actually --

REP. WOOD: -- in every situation.

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: We need a plan in our state for should there be a disaster, natural or unnatural that people know and have a checklist of how they should be planning in advance for this.

And it is not just for young children. This would be also for a 16-year-old in a public school. Parents need to know where to find their children.

I think the sort of tattoo on everybody's skin from Katrina was it took six months to reunify families. We don't need that here.

REP. WOOD: What was number one? I'm sorry. I was busy writing two, three, four and five and I forgot to write one.

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: We need evacuation and safe removal plans including an alternative relocation site. We need a plan for notification for parents, and a plan for the parents to know, parents need to be notified. They need to understand what the plans are and they need to know where to go after, when there's an evacuation.

We need to take care of special needs children and we need to have this be for both childcare and also for public schools.

REP. WOOD: Is there anybody in the state that's doing this well that you would model this program on?

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: Well, what we've done, and Save the Children will be speaking to you, the national organization and Mr. Schriver will be writing a letter to the Governor and to leadership about this.

What they've done is, they've come up, they've actually evaluated every single state and they rated our state and they said that we were bad in all of these except for schools. So we've actually, there's actually a report card they'll speak to in a bit, and they're telling us that in any sort of broad way we're not following this.

And they are saying that we're doing okay in the schoolhouse, but the truth is, even there we have been good on paper but we're not doing very well.

We do have sites that have been trained, because for the last five years we have begun to train in our state the childcare field on evacuation planning. And right here in this city there was a shooting and because the childcare center was trained in evacuation planning, all the children were safe and they were able to leave and not be harmed.

REP. WOOD: It wasn't exactly my question.

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: I'm sorry.

REP. WOOD: I had asked, I mean it was good to have the information, but it wasn't exactly the question.

The question was, is there anybody in the state that's doing this well that you would model this program on?

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: No.

REP. WOOD: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR MUSTO: Thank you. Thank you, Miss Zimmerman.

The children that Alison Loop spoke about are two such children that would benefit by a longer stay in an emergency setting with professional caregivers who can assess their needs and determine, and help determine what might lead to a more successful placement.

Yes, many can be in and out in two weeks to 30 days, but a review process should be instituted. No hard date. No two children are alike. No two children are coming out of a, you know, the same situation.

So putting a hard date of, or a time limit I think is detrimental. Let's have a review process with DCF and maybe the Courts, but any sort of hard date, any sort of hard time limit I think is detrimental to the many children that may require longer care. I think as anyone would know, anyone who has a child, anyone who's a grandparent would want their children to get the professional services that they need before they move on.

SENATOR MUSTO: Okay, thank you. Are there other questions? Thank you.

MICHAEL FERGUSON: Thank you.

SENATOR MUSTO: Next up is Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY: Good afternoon.

SENATOR MUSTO: Good afternoon.

SENATOR HARTLEY: Senator Musto and Co-Chair Urban and Representative Fawcett, thank you very much for putting me in here. I know it's probably been a long day for you.

SB982 SB983

I'm just here before you in support of two bills on your agenda today. The first is S.B.

982, which is AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PILOT TRUANCY CLINIC IN WATERBURY. Actually, it basically calls for the codification of that program. I think perhaps you've heard from Probate Judge Brunnock and the Probate Court Administrator as well.

This is a program that was put together as a no-cost initiative in the Probate Court in the Waterbury District, which has resulted in exponential reduction of truancy in our school districts, really to the extent of like 66 percent. It was the outgrowth of the mayor's blue ribbon commission on trying to deal with, like every urban center, a growing and very exponentially increased truancy rate.

It has in fact done this. What the experience has been is that we have found that parents have welcomed it because it gives them a tool that they were looking for so many times they were unable themselves to get this situation under hand.

The other interesting thing that we found out about this pilot was that truancy, well it was very much demonstrated in this situation, begins very young in the academic life of a child and becomes very embedded as they go along, and also with the family members.

And so when you address a truancy early on as this is being done in the elementary school arena, it has a very great residual result.

So that is the first bill that I wanted to first of all thank the Committee for raising, and going through, putting on the public hearing agenda for today, and also I am here to speak before you in support of S.B. 983, which is AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN AFFECTED BY DISASTER AND TERRORISM.

And as you perhaps well know that this is an update from our 2002 legislation, and it was taken and replicated in D.C. by Senator Dodd so it is now on a national level, and this is essentially the next iteration.

When I spoke with the Commission on Children on this, you know, it's kind of like yes, of course, what don't we get about this. But I did ask them to please craft this in a way that it was a no-cost fiscal, no fiscal note item, and I believe that they have done that.

So the only other comment I have, Madam Chair and Mr. Chair is that Section 3, I would just suggest be deleted, and other than that, I would ask for your support and thank you for your indulgence in bringing this forward today.

And if there are any questions?

REP. URBAN: Senator Hartley, first of all thank you for being here, and we were very impressed with the data on the truancy program.

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SENATOR HARTLEY: It's pretty stunning.

REP. URBAN: Right. Quite thrilled that it was results oriented.

SENATOR HARTLEY: (Inaudible) RBA model, Madam Chair. We're learning.

REP. URBAN: Right. We're going. The Section 3 on the disaster bill, could you remind the Committee what section that is?

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SENATOR HARTLEY: Yes, sure. That was actually the naming of the bill for the tragic events that happened in Arizona, the Christine Taylor Green, so it's called the Christine Taylor

Green bill and we were thinking that we perhaps should keep it more generic.

REP. URBAN: This is 983?

SENATOR HARTLEY: Yes, this (inaudible). On the draft I have in front of you it's labeled as Section 3, but perhaps maybe, I mean, I may not have the most current LCO.

REP. URBAN: We're checking, quickly. It doesn't seem to be there so that makes it much easier.

SENATOR HARTLEY: Do you have two sections there? You only have one?

SENATOR MUSTO: The one I'm looking at is Raised Bill 983, right?

SENATOR HARTLEY: Yes. Actually, I think this is a very early iteration that I talked about with the Commission on Children, so you have the most current information in front of you and thank you for being so far ahead of me.

SENATOR MUSTO: Well, no, feel free if you look at 983 again, because I think what they did is they just took out that Section 3 and maybe consolidated another one. But if you have further comments, just let us know on that, but it seems like a good idea. We've been getting some positive feedback.

SENATOR HARTLEY: Yeah. Yeah. You know, Mr. Chair, also on 982, you know, I just wouldn't want this bill to be pigeonholed by virtue of the title. AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CLINIC may connote that, you know, it's a new item, new program, i.e., new fiscal note, so I'm not sure if there's a way to explain that or neutralize it.

REP. URBAN: Well, I thank you for your testimony. Are there any questions or comments? Thank you, Allison.

ALLISON PETIT: Thank you.

REP. URBAN: And next on our list is Bruce Lockwood.

BRUCE LOCKWOOD: Good afternoon.

REP. URBAN: Welcome.

BRUCE LOCKWOOD: Good afternoon, Madam Chair Urban and members of the Select Committee on Children. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today in support of Senate Bill 983.

My name is Bruce Lockwood. I'm a certified emergency manager, President of Region 1 the New England, the six New England states for the National Emergency Managers U.S. Council, founding member and past president of the Connecticut Emergency Managers Association and a member of the State of Connecticut's Child Safety Crisis Response Committee, which was established by legislation in 2002.

I am also a member of the National Commission on Children and Disasters and serve as the Chair of the Subcommittee on Evacuation, Transportation and Housing, which was championed by Senator Dodd as you've heard from two other speakers today.

President George W. Bush and Congress created the bipartisan Commission in 2007 to identify and recommend ways to fix gaps in emergency planning and management for children.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, children represent nearly 25 percent of the American

population. Seventy-four million are eighteen years of age or under. In Connecticut, that equates to over 800,000 children.

One would think that children would be a top priority in disaster planning and management, but sadly, at all levels of government across our nation, the unique needs of children historically have been unaddressed.

Instead, the needs of able-bodied adults are considered, while children are placed in the categories with several other populations such as with disabilities, with limited English proficiencies and the elderly. These groups collectively are labeled, at risk, vulnerable or special needs.

As a consequence, not enough consideration is given to children when disaster plans are written are exercised, when equipment and medicines are purchased and when disaster response and recover efforts are activated.

Children are not simply little adults.

I am pleased that Senate Bill 983 recognizes this fact by ensuring that Connecticut's 800,000 plus children receive the focused attention they deserve when it comes to preparing for, responding to, recovering from, emergencies and disasters.

Senate Bill 983 also recognizes that disaster management is a shared responsibility that cannot depend on a single government agency, nor be approached on a piecemeal basis. All agencies must work together in a coordinated manner.

Senate Bill 983 recognizes that children are most vulnerable when they're away from their

families at school or childcare, and that it is essential for schools and childcare providers to be prepared to provide a safe and secure environment for children before, during and after a disaster.

But I also want to suggest a way to make the bill more effective. In Section 2 of the bill, rather than creating a separate plan for children, the directive should be to more fully and consistently integrate children into emergency and disaster planning efforts across state and local governments.

Separate plans typically are used, are of little use to emergency managers because they end up as annexes relegated to the back of the plan and therefore not considered a priority.

Therefore, the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, in consultation with all the named departments and individuals in the bill, should review and amend the state's emergency plan to integrate children's needs throughout the document.

In addition, the roles and responsibilities of the named departments should be integrated in the state's plan and each agency should also have a disaster plan that indicates how it will continue operations, support local agencies, to meet the needs of children.

I would also recommend that the Committee consider adding juvenile justice and Court systems to the bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. Senate Bill 983 is a major step toward ensuring that Connecticut protect its most precious assets, children.

REP. URBAN: Thank you for your testimony. We have, there have been several people that have pointed out to us that this should be included within the disaster plan. I was just looking at the text of the bill.

BRUCE LOCKWOOD: I would also just like to point out that in 2009, there was language changed in the legislation that did, it took fire drills and created them as the emergency plan drills. It was well placed legislation, well meaning.

The only problem is that nowhere in regulation or state statute do you require that plan even exists. So if they're required to exercise a plan they're not required to have and there was also no oversight requirement. No one's checking to see if they're actually doing it.

REP. URBAN: Right. That is duly noted. Thank you for that. Are there any questions? Other questions or comments? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony.

Next to testify is Jessy Burton, followed by Cheryl Smith.

JESSY BURTON: Thank you. Good afternoon. Thank you, Committee members for allowing me to testify today in support of the effort to improve our state preparedness for children in disasters.

My name is Jessy Burton. I'm a resident of Hartford an Emergency Preparedness Project Manager for the international organization Save the Children.

Save the Children is a leading independent organization creating lasting change for children in need. Our worldwide operations,

including hundreds of employees are headquartered in Westport.

We are deeply concerned about the welfare of the children in our home state and are proud of the unique disaster preparedness partnership with several state agencies. We hope it becomes a model for the whole country.

However, more needs to be done, and in several critical areas, Connecticut is failing to meet minimum criteria for protecting our children. These areas need a legislative solution. I'm here today to urge you to pass the amendment to S.B. 983 and then support quick passage of this legislation as a critical step to protecting the most vulnerable citizens in our state.

Working with Commissioner Boynton and his staff at the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, funds were designated from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to create a partnership between Save the Children and the Departments of Social Services, Public Health and Emergency Management and Homeland Security to address the gaps in disaster planning for young children in Connecticut.

This initiative is creating a state emergency plan and system to ensure that childcare providers are properly linked to state emergency personnel. It's unique to the country.

However, at the same time, Connecticut still does not meet three of our four criteria we used to grade states in our annual report card on Protecting Children During Disasters. I am submitting to you the state's scoring page from that report, as well as more information on the four criteria.

Far from being a leader, our state is behind a majority of states. This situation should not be acceptable, particularly since the remedies are common sense and either no cost or low cost.

Further, these remedies have been enacted in other states with little or no opposition. The most vulnerable Connecticut children and the most vulnerable settings are made more vulnerable because these measures are not in place.

While I cannot speak for other agencies or individuals as to their positions on this bill, I can assure you that the state agencies and emergency responders are eager to partner in meeting these standards, but we need you to pass this legislation.

To keep my testimony brief, I will not go into detail of the four criteria. However, in quick summary the goal is to support the work of state agencies, responders, daycares and schools by providing adequate and mandatory common standards.

These standards must require every school and licensed daycare or childcare setting to have a written multi-hazard plan that includes steps for off-site evacuation, relocation, reunification of children with their families and specific steps for all children with special needs.

Connecticut is not completely lacking in these areas, and in fact, one of the strengths of this bill is the ability to use existing enforcement, training and other in-place resources to easily implement the new requirements.

However, currently there are varying standards for different classification of licenses, combined with other holes, leaving the state short of the needed standards. In the case of schools, a minimal policy is in place but we seek to strengthen it so it is better used in practice.

In closing, I would like to once again urge you to pass the amendments to S.B. 983 and then work for quick passage and enactment of the bill.

I would also like to publicly thank state officials who worked collaboratively to meet the needs of our children when the next emergency strikes in Connecticut.

If the quality of our unique partnership is combined with the steps in this legislation, Connecticut will be the national leader in protecting children in disasters.

Save the Children would like nothing better for our home state and our children deserve it. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak.

REP. URBAN: Thank you for your testimony. Are there any questions or comments? Thank you. We're very much taking to heart what you expressed here today.

JESSY BURTON: Thank you.

REP. URBANA: Thanks. Testifying next is Rainey Wayne. Or did I skip Cheryl Smith? Sorry. Cheryl Smith and on deck is Rainey Wayne. Welcome, Cheryl. Sorry about that.

CHERYL SMITH: That's okay. Senator Musto, Representative Urban, Representatives Fawcett

HB 6340

SB 981

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**SELECT
COMMITTEE
ON CHILDREN
PART 3
622 - 943**

2011

P.7, line 5

State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



COMMISSION ON CHILDREN

Representative Urban and members of the Select Committee on Children,

My name is Elaine Zimmerman. I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Commission on Children and am here today to testify in support of Raised bill 983, An Act Concerning Children Affected by Disaster or Terrorism.

Connecticut was the first state in the nation to respond to September 11 and its impact on children. Our work focused on bioterrorism, mental health, training and safety. The language was studied and replicated by Congress through Senator Dodd. Congress created a National Commission on Children and Disaster with key recommendations to the President, just released.

Today in Connecticut we have one of the only child and crisis response committees in a homeland security department. Our work includes this legislation before you. We recognize that we need to take our work to the next step with intentional multi hazard evacuation plans for both schools and child care.

What has changed? More natural disasters including Hurricane Katrina, floods, and tornados.

We have also seen in our very own state plant explosions, worksite shootings and growing urban violence fueled by competing gangs.

Just recently, over 12 child care centers were harmed by roof damage and/or collapses resulting from our snow and ice storms with few pockets of warmth for melting.

Through federal disaster processes, there is a chance of reimbursement to cover costs of child care relocation and repair. But none of this is possible without a coordinated response in planning and in communications and training.

Agencies need to work together fast and urgently with clear and articulated goals and procedures for children.

After Katrina, our nation saw the devastation of a child care industry. There had been no attention to the impact of children without a place to go, the impact on parents as workers, the loss of safe facilities and the loss of jobs for the child care teachers. Now the federal Child Care Bureau is taking notice and calling on states to have disaster plans for children in both school and in childcare.

Katrina also highlighted the need for schools and child care to have family reunification plans during disasters; it was not until six months after Katrina that the last of over 5,000 children was reunited with family.

RB 983 includes the recommendations of Save the Children. This national organization has been at or studied the majority of natural and unnatural disasters and their impact on children, including Katrina. They have written recommended protocols and goals to help. These are embedded in this proposed statute.

I offer a few language changes to ensure alignment with the national recommendations. In particular, we need to ensure that the child plan is not a separate plan from the homeland security plan. By integrating the two, we will have greater access to professional awareness, a coordinated system and federal resources. I submit the recommended changes with this testimony.

We ask that you move this bill forward.

Thank you.

DRAFT REVISIONS

**AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN AFFECTED BY
DISASTER AND TERRORISM.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives
in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (Effective from passage) (a) On or before January 1, 2012, and annually thereafter, the Commissioner of Emergency Management and Homeland Security shall report to the General Assembly, in accordance with section 11-4a of the general statutes, on planning and activities for children and youth as part of homeland preparedness and emergency response planning for natural disasters, man-made disasters and terrorism. This report shall be part of the existing state emergency management and homeland security disaster plan and shall include provisions that address (1) the discrete health needs of children for purposes of bioterrorism preparedness and other public health emergencies, (2) public education and communications for families concerning public safety issues relating to disasters and terrorism, (3) training in safety and security measures and multi-hazard response plans for child care providers, school personnel and

personnel in before and after school programs, family homeless shelters and summer camps, and other child congregate care settings including group homes and juvenile justice centers (4) coordination of school health and mental health strategies, and (5) the plan developed pursuant to subsection (b)-(d) of this section.

(b) The Commissioner of Emergency Management and Homeland Security shall, within available appropriations and in consultation with the Commissioners of Social Services, Public Health, Children and Families, Mental Health and Addiction Services, and Education, and the Commission on Children, develop a disaster response plan for protecting children during natural disasters, man-made disasters and terrorism. The plan may also be developed in consultation with parents, local emergency services and child care providers. The plan shall be appropriate for multiple hazards.

(c) The plan shall include, but not be limited to, a requirement that all schools and licensed or regulated child day care services and facilities, including family day care and centers, as defined in section 19a-77 of the

general statutes, shall have a written disaster response plan that addresses evacuation and safe removal of children to an alternate relocation site, (a safe location), a plan for notification of parents after (of) a disaster, a plan for reunification of parents with their children and (care for) an accounting of how children with special needs will be included in the emergency plan.

(d) The agencies involved in the above plan as enumerated in Section 1(b), shall update regulations, as needed, for child health and safety based on evolving best practices in the area of children and disasters.

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Bruce Lockwood, CEM
Testimony before Connecticut General Assembly
Select Committee on Children
February 22, 2011

Senate Bill 983 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CHRISTINA TAYLOR GREEN
CHILDREN AFFECTED BY DISASTER AND TERRORISM ACT

Good afternoon Madam Chair Urban and Members of the Select Committee on Children.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 983.

I am Bruce Lockwood, a Certified Emergency Manager (CEM), President of Region 1 (New England) for the International Association of Emergency Managers – US Council, founding member and Past President of the Connecticut Emergency Management Association and a member of the State of Connecticut’s Child Safety Crisis Response Committee.

I am also a member of the National Commission on Children and Disasters and serve as Chair of the Subcommittee on Evacuation, Transportation and Housing.

President George W. Bush and Congress created the bi-partisan Commission in 2007 to identify and recommend ways to fix gaps in emergency planning and management for children.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, children represent nearly 25% of the American population; 74 million are 18 years of age or under¹.

In Connecticut, that equates to over 800,000 children.

One would think children would be a top priority in disaster planning and management, but sadly, at all levels of government across our nation, the unique needs of children historically have been unaddressed.

Instead, the needs of able-bodied adults are considered, while children are placed into categories with several other populations such as persons with disabilities, with limited English proficiency and the elderly. These groups collectively are labeled “at risk” “vulnerable” or “special needs.”

¹ US Census Bureau, State and County Quick Facts, July 1, 2009;
<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/09000.html>

As a consequence, not enough consideration is given to children when disaster plans are written and exercised, when equipment and medicines are purchased, when disaster response and recovery efforts are activated.

Children are not simply "little adults."

I am pleased Senate Bill 983 recognizes this fact by ensuring that Connecticut's 800,000-plus children receive the focused attention they deserve when it comes to preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies and disasters.

Senate Bill 983 also recognizes that disaster management is a shared responsibility that cannot depend on a single government agency nor be approached on a piecemeal basis. All agencies must work together in a coordinated manner.

Senate Bill 983 recognizes that children are most vulnerable when they are away from their families at school or child care; and that it is essential for schools and child care providers to be prepared to provide a safe and secure environment for children before, during and after a disaster.

But I also want to suggest a way to make the bill more effective.

In Section 2 of the bill, rather than creating a separate plan for children, the directive should be to more fully and consistently integrate children into emergency and disaster planning efforts across state and local governments. Separate plans typically are of little use to emergency managers because they end up as annexes relegated to the back of the base plan, and therefore, aren't considered a priority.

Therefore, the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, in consultation with all the named departments and individuals in the bill, should review and amend the State emergency plan to integrate children's needs throughout the document. In addition, the roles and responsibilities for all of the named departments should be integrated into the State emergency plan and each agency should also have a disaster plan that indicates how it will continue operations and support local agencies to meet the needs of children. I would also recommend that the Committee consider adding the juvenile justice and court systems to the bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. Senate Bill 983 is a major step toward ensuring that Connecticut protects its most precious assets: children.

Select Committee on Children
February 22, 2011
Testimony of Jessy Burton, Save the Children
Supporting SB 983 with Amendments

Thank you Chairwoman Urban and committee members for allowing me to testify today in support of the effort to improve our state's preparedness for children in disasters. My name is Jessy Burton, I am a resident of Hartford and am an Emergency Preparedness Project Manager for the international organization Save the Children. Save the Children is the leading independent organization creating lasting change for children in need. Our worldwide operations, including hundreds of employees, are headquartered in Westport. We are deeply concerned about the welfare of the children in our home state and are proud of a unique disaster preparedness partnership with several state agencies—we hope it becomes a model for the whole country. However more needs to be done, and in several critical areas, Connecticut is failing to meet minimum criteria for protecting our children. These areas need a legislative solution. I am here today to urge you to pass the amendments to SB 983 and then support quick passage of this legislation as a critical step to protecting the most vulnerable citizens in our state.

Working with Commissioner Boynton and his staff at the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, funds were designated from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to create a partnership between Save the Children and the Departments of Social Services, Public Health, and Emergency Management and Homeland Security to address the gaps in disaster planning for young children in Connecticut. This initiative is creating a state emergency plan and system to ensure that child care providers are properly linked to state emergency personnel—it is unique in the country.

However at the same time, Connecticut still does not meet three out of four criteria we use to grade states in our annual Report Card on Protecting Children During Disasters. I am submitting to you the states scoring page from that report as well as more information on the four criteria.

Far from being a leader, our state is behind a majority of states. This situation should not be acceptable, particularly since the remedies are common-sense and either no-cost or low-cost. Further, these remedies have been enacted in other states with little or no opposition. The most vulnerable Connecticut children in the most vulnerable settings are made more vulnerable because these measures are not in place. While I can not speak for other agencies or individuals as to their positions on this bill, I can assure you that state agencies and emergency responders are eager to partner in meeting these standards—but we need you to pass the legislation.

To keep my testimony brief, I will not go in detail on each of our criteria. However in quick summary, the goal is to support the work of state agencies, responders, day cares, and schools by providing adequate mandatory common standards. These standards must require every school and licensed daycare or childcare setting to have a written multi-hazard disaster plan that includes steps for off-site evacuation/relocation, reunification of children with their families, and specific steps for all children with special needs. Connecticut is not completely lacking in these areas, and in fact one of the strengths of this bill is the ability to use existing enforcement, training, and other in-place resources to easily implement the new requirements. However currently there are varying standards

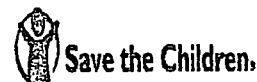
for different classifications of licenses, combined with other holes, leaving the state short of the needed standards. In the case of schools, a minimal policy is in place but we seek to strengthen it so it is better used in-practice.

In closing, I would like to once again urge you to pass the amendments to SB 983 and then work for quick passage and enactment of the bill. I would also like to publicly thank state officials who have worked collaboratively to meet the needs of our children when the next emergency strikes in Connecticut. If the quality of our unique partnership is combined with the steps in this legislation, Connecticut will be the national leader in protecting children in disasters. Save the Children would like nothing better for our home state, and our children deserve it.

Thank you again for your time and the opportunity to testify today. If you have questions, I am happy to either answer them now or respond back to the committee in writing.

Jessy Burton?

P. 14, line 24



2010 National Report Card on Protecting Children in Disasters Criteria

This document provides analysis of the definitions and applications of the four minimum standards for emergency preparedness in Save the Children's National Report Card on Protecting Children in Disasters. Many states have policies in place that relate to disaster preparedness. Whether these policies meet the Report Card's standards depends upon their content and application.

In the Report Card, a state is not judged to meet a particular standard unless (1) the substance of the state's policy meets the minimum requirements of the standard; (2) the policy is mandated; and (3) all licensed or regulated child care—or in the case of the 4th criteria—all K-12 schools are subjected to the policy. Substantive descriptions of the standards are listed below. A rule is considered mandated if it is (1) in statute (2) in regulation or (3) is provided by the relevant agency as mandatory guidance. Mandatory guidance includes forms, templates, and technical assistance that are provided to all licensed or regulated child care facilities and are required to be completed or implemented.

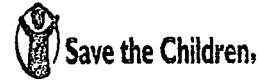
The final requirement is that all license or regulated child care—and all K-12 schools in regard to the 4th criteria: An Evacuation Plan for Schools—be implicated by these requirements. Many states not receiving credit have policies in place but do not make those policies applicable to all facilities. For example, a state might have a full multi-hazard written plan requirement but apply it only to center-based child care, excluding homecare facilities. Despite having a regulation in place, the state would not receive credit for the first criteria: A Plan for Evacuating Children in Child Care.

Criteria 1: A Plan for Evacuating Children in Child Care

The state must require all licensed or regulated child care facilities to have a written multi-hazard plan for evacuating and safely moving children to an alternate relocation site. A multi-hazard plan must cover manmade and natural emergencies and address evacuation, shelter-in-place, and lock-down situations. A state may have more than one classification for licensed or regulated child care, but the standard must apply to all facilities equally.

Criteria 2: Reunifying Families after a Disaster

The state must require all licensed or regulated child care facilities to have a written plan for emergency notification of parents and reunification of families following an emergency. Again, a state may have more than one classification for licensed or regulated child care, but the standard must apply to all facilities equally.

**Criteria 3: Children with Special Needs**

The state must require all licensed or regulated child care facilities to have a written plan that accounts for children with special needs. This standard is not met by policies that address accommodations for special needs children in child care settings, but instead those that direct emergency plans to specifically meet the needs of all special needs children. Again, the requirement must apply to all licensed or regulated child care.

Criteria 4: An Evacuation Plan for K-12 Schools

The state must require all K-12 schools to have a multi-hazard emergency preparedness plan. A multi-hazard plan must cover manmade and natural emergencies and address evacuation, shelter-in-place, and lock-down situations. Mandating fire or tornado drills alone is considered incomplete and therefore does not meet the standard. Again, it should apply to all K-12 schools.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Andrew Hysell at 202-640-6638.

###

	①	②	③	④
	Evacuation/ Relocation Plan	Reunification Efforts	Special Needs Of Children In Child Care	K-12 Written Procedure For Disaster Planning

ALABAMA	•	•	•	•
ARKANSAS	•	•	•	•
CALIFORNIA	•	•	•	•
HAWAII	•	•	•	•
MARYLAND	•	•	•	•
MASSACHUSETTS	•	•	•	•
MISSISSIPPI	•	•	•	•
NEW HAMPSHIRE	•	•	•	•
NEW MEXICO	•	•	•	•
VERMONT	•	•	•	•
WASHINGTON*	•	•	•	•
WISCONSIN*	•	•	•	•
DELAWARE	•	•	•	•
D OF COLUMBIA	•	•	•	•
NEW YORK	•	•	•	•
NORTH CAROLINA	•	•	•	•
OHIO	•	•	•	•
OKLAHOMA	•	•	•	•
PENNSYLVANIA	•	•	•	•
SOUTH CAROLINA*	•	•	•	•
TENNESSEE	•	•	•	•
TEXAS*	•	•	•	•
UTAH	•	•	•	•
WEST VIRGINIA	•	•	•	•
ALASKA			•	•
COLORADO		•		•
FLORIDA		•		•
MINNESOTA		•		•
RHODE ISLAND			•	•
VIRGINIA	•			•
ARIZONA				•
CONNECTICUT				•
GEORGIA				•
ILLINOIS				•
INDIANA				•
KENTUCKY				•
LOUISIANA*				•
MAINE				•
NEBRASKA				•
NEVADA	•			•
NEW JERSEY				•
NORTH DAKOTA	•			•
OREGON				•
SOUTH DAKOTA				•

Handwritten mark: a symbol resembling a stylized 'P' or 'R' with an arrow pointing to the right.

IDAHO				
IOWA				
KANSAS				
MICHIGAN				
MISSOURI				
MONTANA				
WYOMING				

Research was conducted by Brown Buckley Tucker and reflects action in relevant state administrative offices and state legislatures as of July 15, 2010. The asterisk* signifies that regulations are under revision and a draft of the proposed regulations has reviewed and met criteria.



United Way of Connecticut

2-1-1

Select Committee on Children
Public Hearing - February 22, 2011

Testimony Presented by United Way of Connecticut
on
S.B. 983 An Act Concerning Children Affected by Disaster and Terrorism

My name is Richard Porth. I serve as the CEO of United Way of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of S.B. 983, AAC Children Affected by Disaster and Terrorism.

United Way of Connecticut (UWC) helps meet the needs of Connecticut residents by providing information, education, and connection to health and human services. We have been partners with the State of Connecticut for many years; and we are proud of our service together with the state government to tens of thousands of Connecticut residents through 2-1-1 services, 2-1-1 Child Care services, HUSKY Infoline, Child Development Infoline, and Care 4 Kids. UWC's 2-1-1 Child Care assists parents and child care providers by providing information and referrals for child care options and by maintaining a database of all licensed and license-exempt programs in Connecticut.

Recently, 2-1-1 Child Care has been working with the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, the Department of Social Services, the Connecticut Commission on Children, the Department of Public Health, and Save the Children to develop an emergency response plan for young children and child care facilities across the state. This project, funded with federal stimulus money, is making good progress. One component of the plan would establish 2-1-1 Child Care as the communication hub for information exchange for child care providers and parents of enrolled children in the event of an emergency.

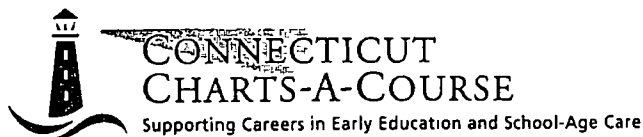
S.B. 983, AAC Children Affected by Disaster and Terrorism will help to sustain this important disaster planning effort for young children after the initial plan is completed in DEMHS, as part of its larger disaster preparedness and response efforts on behalf of all the residents of Connecticut.

**Select Committee on Children
Public Hearing - February 22, 2011**

Page Two

United Way of Connecticut/2-1-1 Child Care supports the strategy outlined in S.B. 983 and looks forward to working with DEMHS and other state leaders to protect Connecticut's young children in the event of disasters or emergencies.

Thank you.



ACCREDITATION FACILITATION PROJECT

2321 Whitney Ave. • Hamden, CT 06518
Tel/Fax (800) 832-7784 • www.ctcharts.org

To: The Honorable Representative Diana Urban, Chair, and Members, Select Committee on Children, Room 011, Capitol Building, Hartford, CT 06106

From: Colleen Brower, Curriculum Specialist and Deborah Flis, Director, Accreditation and Quality Initiatives

Re: Select Committee on Children Public Hearing on S.B. 983, AAC Children Affected by Disaster and Terrorism

Date: February 22, 2011

Connecticut Charts-A-Course supports, with recommendations, SB 983, *An Act Concerning Children Affected by Disaster and Terrorism*.

We are writing in support of S.B. 983, AAC Children Affected by Disaster and Terrorism. We are active members of the Child Care Subcommittee of the Child Safety and Crisis Response Committee tri-chaired by the Commission on Children, Department of Social Services, and Department of Public Health, from which this bill originates and urge the Committee to pass this bill to advance the state's planning and implementation of disaster response. The Child Care Subcommittee meets regularly to plan for the implementation of supports to early childhood programs that might experience natural or un-natural disasters.

We urge the committee support SB 983 and to consider adding language that would create a statewide Early Childhood Crisis Response Team in Connecticut. This team should be in place to respond to the regulatory/compliance issues, business continuity challenges, and mental health issues that will arise out of a crisis, whether it involves many programs in the state or a single site that has experienced a disaster. The Crisis Team's charge would be to provide expert guidance and advice to early childhood provider(s) with the goal of assisting with the management of the crisis in order to restore business operations as quickly as possible.

The recent winter weather precipitated events that help us understand how critical the intervention of a team of experts would be to a crisis situation. Several roof collapses and dangerous situations caused by ice and water damage draw attention to our need to help early childhood programs address their needs while at the same time we work diligently to re-establish business operations. A program that closed due to a roof collapse three weeks ago remains out of their building, and only some children have been able to access new child care arrangements. A quick and expert response to this situation (by Emergency Management personnel and an early childhood crisis response team) would enable the program to re-establish itself in its community, thereby ensuring that children receive high quality care, and that staff and families can return to work.

The Child Care Safety and Crisis Response Committee, and its Child Care Subcommittee are dedicated to the goal of child safety. SB 983 and the addition of a Crisis Response Team would further this goal on behalf of all children in CT.

P.1, line 2



State of Connecticut
 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
 STATE CAPITOL
 HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE ELIZABETH A. BOUKUS
 DEPUTY MAJORITY CAUCUS CHAIR
 22ND ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 4017
 HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

CAPITOL 860-240-8500
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 E-MAIL Betty.Boukus@cga.ct.gov

CHAIRMAN
 BONDING SUBCOMMITTEE

MEMBER
 FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE
 INTERNSHIP COMMITTEE
 PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE
 TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

February 22, 2011

Select Committee on Children
 Testimony for Raised Bill 983
 An Act Concerning Children Affected By Disaster And Terrorism.

Dear Representative Urban, Senator Musto, and members of the Select Committee on Children:

My name is Representative Betty Boukus, and I am here to testify in support of Raised bill 983, An Act Concerning Children Affected by Disaster or Terrorism.

Though people might have thought our state was far removed from issues stemming from issues of disasters or terrorism, I believe the past few weeks of severe weather conditions and the result of these conditions require us to face disaster issues that affect our children now, most recently the 10 daycare centers across our state in which had to close for various reasons relating to the storms.

In unnatural disasters such as in Middletown and East Hartford, lockdowns and evacuations in our schools our children unfortunately are experiencing first hand the effects of unanticipated violence.

Natural disasters have caused floods and tornadoes here. And this year our relentless snow and ice buildup have led to rooftops collapsing and buildings being evacuated.

In Plainville, one child care center that the community utilized for sixty families, hard-working families, was forced to close. The roof caved in on the church and the child care program was in the basement. This was a NAEYC-accredited, excellent center.

Children were scattered throughout Plainville. Many families had no child care and this impacted their going to work. There was no state plan for how to protect the child care center and the families preference for this program in a natural disaster.

Children did not get to see their peers. Parents missed work as they could not afford the scattered and more expensive child care options. It seemed we were going to have to start over with a new build location requires new licensing which would takes several months. No child had time for that, nor did any working parent!

We can help our families and our children with an intentional evacuation plan to address multiple kinds of disasters. This bill offers the components that have been researched throughout the states by Save the Children as necessary for a quality and fast response to children.

1. Pay attention to special needs children,
2. Detail evacuation plans and locations for multiple types of hazards
3. Provide information to parents so they know how to find and contact their children
4. Ensure family reunification after evacuation with detailed planning in advance of the crisis.

This information is key for both childcare and schools. Helping children thrive while parents work is of paramount importance to our quality of life and economy.

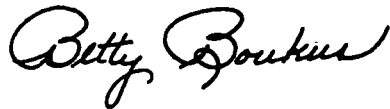
Connecticut was the first state to write a law about children and terrorism. We now need to be one of the first states addressing child care and education planning in the face of natural and unnatural disaster.

I would recommend the few amended changes offered by the Commission on Children today. In particular, this plan should not be a separate plan from the regular plan of the state emergency management and homeland security disaster plan. That way we do not fragment but integrate children with the adults into a plan that links to federal requirements and federal resources.

Just a post note, I had an excellent meeting with representatives from Public Health, Public Safety and Homeland Security, Commission on Children, representatives from Save the Children and CT Charts-A-Course. They are all working for a new location for our 3 to 8 year olds.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betty Boukus". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Elizabeth "Betty" Boukus
State Representative, 22nd

H – 1116

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2011**

**VOL.54
PART 25
8264 – 8614**

law/lxe/jr/fst/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

15
June 7, 2011

further? If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor of the resolution please indicate by saying Aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Opposed Nay. The resolution is adopted. Will the Clerk please call calendar 497.

THE CLERK:

On page 19, calendar 497, substitute for Senate bill number 983, AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN AFFECTED BY DISASTER AND TERRORISM, favorable report of the committee on public safety and security.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Thank -- thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move the joint -- I move acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the Senate.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question is on acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the Senate. Will you remark?

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Yes, Mr. Speaker. It was just about a week ago, Mr. Speaker, that you stood at that podium and you told us that there was a tornado watch. I looked around at my colleagues and I saw their worried faces thinking of their loved ones and probably even more especially, Mr. Speaker, their children and their grandchildren.

And I know that our Governor offered our support as we were horrified when that tornado touched down in our neighboring state of Massachusetts. We have a particularly timely bill here, Mr. Speaker, because this bill requires the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security to amend our State's civil preparedness plan and program to include planning specifically for children and youth in the event of a natural or a manmade disaster or terrorism.

This would involve all schools and daycare centers having a plan about children being evacuated and removed to a safe location, the notification of parents, the reunification of parents with their children and care for children with specific needs.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the -- Senator Hartley and Representative Boukus for bringing us -- this to the attention of the children's committee. Because in our -- this past winter we suffered 12 incidences of roof

damage to childcare centers where some of the roofs actually collapsed.

We know that in Manchester we had a workplace shooting. In Middletown we had a plant explosion. And we're all familiar with some of the urban violence neighborhood shootings that we also have to deal with. In addition to this -- to this -- to the response plans we also will have a report annually to the General Assembly on how we have updated the plan and how we can take and be sure that our children are safe.

And I would also like to thank Save the Children, whose an organization in Connecticut who was the one that did a national look at how these plans are being instituted and we will join, I hope, the ten states that have gone down this path. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Do you care to remark further? Representative Kirkley-Bey.

REP. KIRKLEY-BEY (5th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question through you to the proponent of the bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, Madam.

REP. KIRKLEY-BEY (5th):

Representative -- thank you. Representative Urban, is it a part of legislative intent to make sure that this covers children who witness shootings and other disasters that happen natural in our communities, you know, children who get hit by cars, children who get -- are near shootings, children who are at school who are in lockdown because those are very traumatic experiences for our children and I wanted to make sure. I have an amendment but I just wanted to make sure that's what you meant for legislative intent.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you so much for that question. It is totally what we mean in legislative intent. It's why the language manmade was included there. And I do believe that there was an incident in Hartford last year where the teachers actually had training and they were able to calm the children, work with the children. We're enormously grateful that they had that experience when we want to be sure that all of Connecticut's schools and daycare centers have that experience. So I thank you again

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Kirkley-Bey.

REP. KIRKLEY-BEY (5th):

Thank you, Representative Urban. That makes me feel much better. Thank you, Madam. Thank you, Mr., Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you a couple of questions to the proponent of the bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, Madam.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, sir. Through you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to inquire about where the monies for the training and preparedness would come from if they're part of the Governor's budget or are they dependent on federal monies?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. This is going to be done -- United Way has been working on this with federal stimulus funds. And it will be a 211 hub. Through you,

Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would wonder if the gentlewoman is aware that Fairfield County has lost its homeland security federal funding and that our congressional contingency is working very hard to try and bring those monies back to the State of Connecticut and how that would impact on this specific plan.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. That was one of the reasons why we incorporated this into the civil preparedness rather than having it as a standalone plan because that makes us much more eligible for all federal reimbursement and federal monies. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the gentlewoman

for her answer. And, Mr. Speaker, just one more question for legislative intent. When we're talking about natural disasters and sometimes children can be separated from the adults who are traditionally their caregivers or their supervisors. How does the gentlewoman envision this piece of legislation supporting those children through that very difficult time?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that question. And that is where the training comes in and there is specific language in the bill about training for the childcare workers and the teachers to be sure that they can handle that. And I would -- I would say that when we were in a symposium they talked about a young child who was separated from their parents for six months after Katrina.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And just for a little bit

more clarification around that, would the gentlewoman see the State, possibly DCF stepping in to support that child or is she envisioning the community with the resources that it has kind of wrapping around that child and protecting them until they are reunited if they are to be reunited with their family?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. I would actually envision both of those things happening and whichever one was -- would work in that situation the best to move in that direction.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank the gentlewoman for her answers.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Representative Wood.

REP. WOOD (141st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand in support of this

bill unfortunately I think it's one of those pieces of legislation that we shouldn't have to do. I know a lot of preschool and programs like this already do it. But we do have to set this into statute and I do support this and I hope you all will join me in supporting this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I may, a couple of questions to the proponent of the bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In section one we're requiring the commissioner to produce a particular report. And some of these issues are dealing with particular health issues and I'm just wondering would the -- would the commissioner be consulting with other departments and sort of compiling a general report in that section that sort of addresses just the general issues of children and safety and biohazard issues?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. The Commission on Children has been one of the main proponents of this and we would expect that they would be able to work with all our departments and agencies to be sure that these questions were answered adequately.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I guess just in reading it, the way it -- I'm wondering the way section one interacts with section two. Is section one meant to be more of a -- a general report identifying the issues and then section two is sort of addressing how we execute plans in -- in local districts? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. That would be correct.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And in section one would we be addressing potentially particular strategies dealing with issues involving, you know, these types of disasters and terrorism? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. And just kind of going back to another question that the good Representative asked. We -- if we go -- if you look at the language of the bill we have DSS, DPH, DMAA, the Commission on Children and Save the Children all sharing information. So my response to that would be yes, I think, if I remember the question.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, were there any discussions about when these reports are produced of whether the documents are subject to FOIA or would these particular reports be able to be, you know, sequestered and not have to be produced pursuant to FOI?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

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SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. It'd be my understanding that these would be FOIable.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you. Could the good Representative just repeat that answer? I didn't hear her.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

It would be my understanding that under -- that any request under the freedom of information act would be honored. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And was there also any discussion about whether local communities already have these type of plans? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Urban.

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REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. The Save the Children in their study found that in Connecticut with four elements of a plan that works we did not have those four elements in any of our communities. We only had one of the four which was the original plan for a school or a daycare center but nothing about reunification, notification, et cetera.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the good Representative's answers to my questions. I -- I support the underlying intent of this bill, however I am a bit concerned that this information would be subject to FOI and would be reportable. I know in my community our school district went through great strides to create an emergency plan in certain situations. And those plans are actually protected under FOI.

Individuals have tried to get that information and as a policy our school has felt that it's important when we're preparing for certain types of emergencies especially dealing with potential terrorism or threats of violence to our children that these plans are not

disseminated to the public. And there -- there's been some controversy about it.

But I feel pretty strongly that we charge our superintendents, our school principals in making sure that our children are protected and I wholeheartedly support all the efforts that they've done. And I think it would -- it would probably behoove us in this Legislature to support that effort. And maybe as is pointed out in section one there's a general plan that homeland security needs to sort of create.

And I guess general guidelines make sense for informational purposes to disseminate to the public but section two concerns me in how it would be implemented with the locales because I do believe that any particular plans that we create should be protected under FOI and should not be disclosed because as well intended as we need to do to make efforts to protect our youth if those plans get into the wrong hands they certainly could be used against us.

So in this type of situation I think the cloak of confidentiality is very important to our children's public safety. And so with that I have to vote against this legislation. I regret having to do so. But I think it is critically important that we incorporate the

protections against having to disclose these records so that we can make sure that our children are safe in our school districts.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Representative Cook.

REP. COOK (65th):

Good morning, Mr. Speaker. How are you?

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Good morning, Madam.

REP. COOK (65th):

Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago I sent out photos to both the Senate and the House of pictures of the devastating tornado that hit Joplin, Missouri which is my home state. And I really hope that this legislative body pays close attention to the photos that I sent and the devastation of which it can be done to somebody very unexpectedly within minutes.

And in one of those photos, the very last one at the bottom of the page it was of a concrete wall on the side of the hospital in Joplin, Missouri that was utterly destroyed within five minutes, no warnings. And this is from the Midwest who has ample warnings for emergencies. There was a chair that went sideways into the concrete

wall, did not break the chair but stuck.

And I think what we need to do when we're thinking about this legislation, not questioning whether things are knowledgeable to the public and -- and what other information can be found but what we're doing here is we're protecting the children. And we have to do that.

And upon those tornados hitting the Midwest, I called my superintendent and we had nothing in place for tornados. And I think we really need to sit back and look at what we're doing and the things that we're questioning. And what we have to realize is we're not prepared.

So Mr. Speaker, I stand in complete support of this legislation. I think it's a longtime coming. And if all we do is teach a child how to sit in a hallway away from glass during a tornado drill and to be prepared that is lifelong lessons that we need -- we are teaching them. So I strong -- I strongly urge everyone to support this legislation and not to question the underlying concerns.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Representative
Rebimbass.

REP. REBIMBAS (70th):

Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Good morning, Madam.

REP. REBIMBAS (70th): .

Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of this bill. What I did want to point out, I actually had the opportunity to vote for this bill both in the public safety committee as well as the select committee on children and I think it's a wonderful bill.

And as one of my colleagues had indicated earlier it's certainly one of those common sense bills that you would hope that people who had already thought of these issues and planned for it in advance. One of the things I want to make sure though, that it's taken into consideration is all too often things get very narrow. So such as this title of children affected by disaster and terrorism.

So there's a whole plan put together in order -- how to address children but sometimes the connection of addressing the situation with the children and making the connection then to the family members sometimes doesn't always get carried through. So I think what we need to do is be sensitive to putting a plan together that's actually going to foster not only the protection of the children, then making sure that the parents then have the proper notification as the intent of the bill is so we want

to make sure that that's fully carried through.

One of the other things that I certainly want to point out as well is that we should also be sensitive hopefully as this group moves forward and works together as to what kind of plans may already be in place in a variety of different school districts dealing with some of these situations because they may already have the experience of what works for them and what doesn't work for them.

And sometimes different parts of the State of Connecticut as small as it is, is very different. So once again when it comes to line of communications or access to different areas of the State we also need to be sensitive that maybe what works for one area doesn't necessarily work for other areas.

So these are just points that I hope that this group as they move forward they will take into consideration what's already being done and also what's best for the different areas in order to properly protect the children. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Representative Lyddy.

REP. LYDDY (106th):

Morning, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Good morning, sir.

REP. LYDDY (106th):

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this piece of legislation. As a member of the public health preparedness advisory council I find it very important that we insure adequate public education, communication, service coordination and volunteer recruitment regarding disasters, terrorism, and public health emergencies.

These are all very important aspects to preparedness and responsiveness during times of disaster. And we also need to focus on the mental -- mental health and emotional effects of children, adults in regards to disasters and the traumatic events and experiences that result from these types of events.

So Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this. I commend the Commission on Children as well as Representative Urban for her work on this very important issue. And I urge the Chamber to support this measure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Would you care to remark further on the bill? Care to remark further on the bill? If not, staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Members take their seats. The machine will be

open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call.

Members to the Chamber. The House is voting by roll call.

Members to the Chamber, please.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? Please check the roll call board to make sure your votes are properly cast. If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked. The Clerk will please take a tally. The Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill 983 in concurrence with the Senate.

Total Number voting 126

Necessary for adoption 64

Those voting Yea 125

Those voting Nay 1

Those absent and not voting 25

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The bill is passed. Will the Clerk please call calendar 621.

THE CLERK:

On page 37, calendar 621, substitute for Senate bill number 1014, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PENALTY FOR CERTAIN

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Seeing no objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

And Madam President, moving now to Calendar page 10, Calendar 192, Senate Bill 983. Madam President, would move to place that item also on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Moving to Calendar page 16, Calendar 305, Senate Bill 897, Madam President, move to place that item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Moving to Calendar page 17, Calendar 319, Senate Bill 944, Madam President, move to place that item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

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Madam President, if the Clerk would now call those items placed on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Yeah, it's (inaudible).

THE CLERK:

Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

THE CLERK:

I'm going to try to call it off the screen; I've never done this.

THE CHAIR:

Okay.

THE CLERK:

Calling --

THE CHAIR:

Just take your time.

THE CLERK:

-- off the screen, Calendar page 1, Calendar Number 394, Senate Joint Resolution 42; Calendar page 1, Calendar Number 427, House Joint Resolution Number 111; Calendar page 2, Calendar Number 428, House Joint Resolution Number 112; Calendar page 2, Calendar Number 436, Senate Joint Resolution 43;

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Calendar page 2, Calendar Number 437, Senate Joint Resolution 44; Calendar page 2, Calendar Number 438, Senate Joint Resolution 45; Calendar page 2, Calendar 468, Senate Resolution Number 26; Calendar page 3, Calendar Number 469, Senate Joint Resolution 46; Calendar page 3, Calendar Number 484, House Joint Resolution 113; Calendar page 3, Calendar Number 485, House Joint Resolution 114; Calendar page 3, Calendar Number 486, House Joint Resolution 115; Calendar page 3, Calendar Number 487, House Joint Resolution 116; Calendar page 4, Calendar Number 488, House Joint Resolution 117; Calendar -- returning to Calendar -- Calendar page 4, Calendar Number 488, House Joint Resolution 117; Calendar page 9, Calendar 177, substitute for Senate Bill Number 1110; Calendar page 10, Calendar Number 192, substitute for Senate Bill Number 983; Calendar page 16, Calendar Number 305, Senate Bill Number 897; Calendar page 17, Calendar Number 319, substitute for Senate Bill Number 944; Calendar page 17, Calendar Number 326, substitute for House Bill Number 6297; Calendar page 18, Calendar Number 331, substitute for House Bill Number 6358; Calendar page 20, Calendar

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Number 360, Senate Bill Number 1155; Calendar page 35,
Calendar Number 42, substitute for Senate Bill
Number 866; Calendar page 36, Calendar Number 60,
Senate Bill Number 888; Calendar Bill Number 105, on
page 38, substitute for House Bill Number 5266;
Calendar page 39 --

THE CHAIR:

So that --

THE CLERK:

-- Calendar Number 1112 --

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, can you wait for one moment, please.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Madam President, there is one item that the Clerk
read that I believe should not be on the Consent
Calendar -- I don't believe I placed it there -- and
that was Calendar page 35, Calendar 42, Senate
Bill 866. That item needs to be amended before it
will be taken up.

THE CHAIR:

Sir, okay. We will take that. Will you remove
that from the Consent Calendar, please?

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The next item after that, Madam President, to be on the Consent Calendar is Calendar page 36, Calendar -- Calendar 60, if the Clerk might pick up on that one.

THE CLERK:

Okay. Calendar page 36, Calendar Number 60, Senate Bill Number 888; Calendar page 38 --

SENATOR LOONEY:

Okay.

THE CLERK:

-- Calendar Number 105, substitute for House Bill Number 5266; Calendar page 39, Calendar Number 112, substitute for Senate Bill Number 458; Calendar Number 39 -- I mean page 39, Calendar Number 123, Senate Bill Number 1041; Calendar page 40, Calendar Number 132, Senate Bill Number 868; on page 40, Calendar 141, Senate Bill Number 985; on page 43, Calendar Number 199, substitute for Senate Bill Number 1068.

I don't know if there's any other pages here.

THE CHAIR:

Page 18?

A VOICE:

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THE CLERK:

Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Yes.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes. That --

THE CLERK:

I yield to the Majority Leader.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes. That --

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Majority Leader.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I apologize. That item that we had removed from the Consent Calendar actually should be put back on. That was Calendar page 35, Calendar 42, Senate Bill 866. The amendment that was adopted on that bill is the -- was the only amendment that was -- that was needed, so there is not a need -- not a need for an additional amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

SENATOR LOONEY:

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Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Mr. Clerk, if you want to --

THE CLERK:

Madam President, someone pointed out to me that on Calendar page 18, Calendar Number 331, substitute for House Bill Number 6358, that I missed it, but that's supposed to be on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

That's correct, sir.

Any corrections?

Okay. At this time, I would ask that the Clerk please open up the -- the machine and may announce a roll call vote, and the machines will be open.

THE CLERK:

An immediate roll call vote on the First Consent Calendar has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber. An immediate roll call vote on the First Consent Calendar has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

THE CHAIR:

You don't have the Consent Calendar up,

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Mr. Clerk?

THE CLERK:

(Inaudible.)

THE CHAIR:

A ready vote.

Senators, we're having a little problem with the machine, if you'll just wait one moment, please.

Okay. It's -- I'm going to close the machine and reopen.

Mr. Clerk, are they resetting the -- the title?

Mr. Clerk?

THE CLERK:

I'm sorry.

THE CHAIR:

Is somebody resetting?

THE CLERK:

He's trying --

THE CHAIR:

Okay.

THE CLERK:

-- to do that. Okay.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

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Do you want to announce again? Mr. Clerk, will you announce a roll call vote again, please, and we will open the machines.

THE CLERK:

An immediate roll call vote on the First Consent Calendar is taking place in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber. An immediate roll call vote on the First Consent Calendar is taking place in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all members voted? If all members voted, the machine will be locked.

Will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Madam President:

Total number voting	36
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Absent	0

THE CHAIR:

The Consent Calendar is adopted.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY: