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HB6482

House	4243-4356	114
Public Health	3361-3377	17
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		156

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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2013**

**VOL.56
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Bill Number 6384 as amended by House "A".

Total Number Voting 137

Necessary for Passage 69

Those voting Yea 137

Those voting Nay 0

Absent and not voting 13

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The bill as amended passes.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 338?

THE CLERK:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

On page 47, Calendar Number 338, favorable report of the Joint Standing Committee on Planning and Development, House Bill 6482, AN ACT CONCERNING BIRTH CERTIFICATES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The question is acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

Will you remark, madam?

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

This is a bill that will enable homeless youth to obtain their birth certificates, so that they'll be able to become employed, obtain housing, become -- obtain driver's licenses, be able to work, and get student loans during the period of time. It would affect youths between the ages of 15 and 18. I move adoption.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, madam.

Would you care to remark? Would you care to remark on the bill that's before us?

Representative Srinivasan of the 31st. You have the floor, sir.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Good evening, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Good evening, sir.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This bill allows homeless youth under the age of 18 to access their birth certificates. Parental

abuse, physical, sexual, maybe its neglect, maybe it's a parental intolerance to their sexual identity of the child that leads to this homelessness, as far as this age group is concerned. The youth now, without a birth certificate, is powerless. The children -- the youth are powerless to enroll in school, to gain employment, or to receive any form of state assistance.

A birth certificate is the first step in permanent identification, regarding drivers' license, Social Security, and then hopefully, to some form of employment. And we heard in the public hearing, there was no opposition to this particular bill at all.

All of those who spoke in the public hearing were supportive that we need to make sure that we take care of this group of children that we have between the ages of 15 and 18, who are very unfortunate in their situation.

Parents, I'm told, cannot be found, so they do not have the document, or in certain situations, even refuse to give the document, as far as the birth certificate is concerned, to their children. And so for this reason, making it accessible that our youth, under the age of 15 to 18, are able to able access and

get their birth certificates is definitely a step in the right direction for all of us to do.

Through you, Mr. Speaker. If I can have a few questions to the proponent of the bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

In line 78 and 79, we talk about 15 years of age to 18. Is there a reason why we choose 15 and not under the age of 15?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am not completely aware of why we picked 15. I think that 15 is an age where there might become some difficulty between the parents and the child, where the child, as you mentioned, is find -- is discovering a sexual identity and that might be a time when the child would be removed from the house or not be

welcomed in the home in such a circumstance. So I think that may be why 15 is picked.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

And that is a concern for me, because in what we are trying to do here is obviously take care of the children who are in very difficult situations on the home front. Either they've run away or they're having significant difficulty at home, and so my concern is not in supporting those between the age of 15 and 18.

I definitely plan to support them and in doing what we need to do here, but my concern is that we are limiting ourselves in the age group of 15. Because as we all know, unfortunately, all of this, whether it be neglect, whether it be sexual abuse in the parents' home, in the foster home, does not have a time limit of 15 and above.

And it can happen at a much, much younger age. Unfortunately, that is the reality that we all faced with and that is one of my concerns, through you, Mr. Speaker, this age of 15. Is there some way in which

we can readdress that and look at children at all ages who need to qualify?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Because I'm concerned that we are restricting ourselves in this age and I would like to see if when, not necessarily today obviously, but over time that we expand that to any age group that needs help.

Thank you Mr. Speaker, and, through you, Mr. Speaker. I have a few more questions to the proponent of the bill. That was just a comment on the age, because that was my concern, not the bill, per se, but the age at the age of 15.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

In lines 153, and I will give my esteemed Chairwoman a moment to look at those lines, and I need to move there too.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Line 153 talks about where the youth was born and that is where they need to go to the Registrar's office to get the birth certificate.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

If the child has run away and is at a shelter far, far away from where he was -- he or she was born,

would they still have to go back to where they were born or it is insignificant as to their birthplace?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Thank you for your good remarks and also, for your question.

Certainly, they can go back to the place in which they were born, but also, if the certificate is recorded electronically, they can also obtain the birth certificate through the Department of Public Health.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

In the event that it is not recorded electronically, that is my concern. And the reason I bring that up, Mr. Speaker, is I have had two constituents that I have dealt with over the last couple of years with a similar problem, where they have run away, basically from Chicago, and come to

Connecticut and my -- and they had no place to go, other than go back to Chicago to apply for the birth certificate.

So through you, Mr. Speaker, what we are doing this evening, will that youth with the appropriate personnel that the youth will require, have to go back to where they were born or it does not matter, it can be filed when, electronically the data is not available?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Each state -- I believe has its own methodology of recording vital statistics. Some of this law is -- comes from Federal law, because it defines who -- who a homeless might be and it also defines who might be an appropriate person to certify who is homeless through the Department of Housing and Urban Development's shelters that they sponsor for homeless youth or for just plain homeless families.

So in those circumstances, that -- that would be where the homeless youth would find the certification.

The person to certify, but also, again, we would have to do this through each state's own laws for vital statistics.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

We are talking about our state. We are talking about Connecticut. And if in Connecticut we have a child that has run away from home, for parental neglect, sexual abuse, whatever be the unfortunate set of circumstances that this child has -- has to deal with, run away from Illinois and come to us in Connecticut.

In that case, through you, Mr. Speaker, I just want to be clear as to where would this child -- where would this youth have to go to make sure that the appropriate papers are filed with the appropriate people?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It would be through one of the certifying people who are listed in the statute, either through the school district's liaison who can certify, the Director of Emergency Shelter Program, through a Department of Housing and Urban Development type of project, a homeless shelter, or through the Director of a Runaway or Homeless Youth Center, also certified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, they would provide the certification.

In those circumstances, then, if it was from an out -- an out-of-state runaway youth, they would be able to utilize that certification, which is Federal, and utilize -- and then go to that particular state, that maintains its own vital statistics, and through either their Department of Public Health or through their local county government system or through their local town, be able to access that.

I doubt, with the right documentation, that they would need to actually travel to that particular state. That with the correct documentation and certification, they could contact them by the phone, find out the procedure, and then have the birth certificate mailed to them.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

This right documentation that they need, so that they would be able to get it by mail, and this kid, hypothetically that we're talking about, from Chicago who's run away to Connecticut does not have to go all the way back to Illinois again. What would be that this child would need, so that he can file it in Connecticut and does not have to go all the way to Illinois?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe that the -- the state of Connecticut will house the births and vital statistics in the state of -- of -- the state of Connecticut, folks who are born here, and in Illinois, they house them there. So if someone comes from Illinois to Connecticut, they would have to go to Illinois, either by phone and

mail, to -- to -- to obtain that or actually physically appear there, but those would be the ways in which they would be able to obtain that, with the correct documentation.

And we would have to check Illinois law, for example, to see exactly what their process might be. Some -- some States don't require -- have any requirements to obtain the birth certificates and others do. We just happen to have this requirement in this state, but some States do not.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

So that I am clear. So this what we are trying to do this evening and pass, which I'm -- I support overall and I will definitely supporting, I just want to make sure that I -- I'm clear on this. Is it applicable only to youth children 15 to 18, homeless children in the state of Connecticut? That they were born and brought up here or it does not matter where they were from originally, as long as 15 to 18 they happen to be in the state of Connecticut?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

This really applies to state of Connecticut birth certificates and youth who were born in the state of Connecticut.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

So I am clear and the Chamber is clear too, if somebody is born in Illinois and has run away at the age of 16 and lands in Connecticut at the age of 16, in a shelter, comes into a homeless shelter, what we are trying to do this evening, will it apply to them or will it not apply to them?

Through you Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know what the law in the state of Illinois is. I know that the Federal part of this would allow them to be able to utilize that part of it to certify that this child is homeless. I'm not sure exactly what they'd have to do to get an Illinois birth certificate.

They may not need to do anything, except request it from the -- the town or county in -- that they were born in Illinois, but here in Connecticut, this will enable Connecticut youth that are born here to be able to access their birth certificate.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

So through you, Mr. Speaker.

Since we do not know what it is in other parts of the country and -- obviously we have to follow Federal law and Federal law and Federal guidelines, I'm well aware of that. And in that in the event that there are strict requirements of that particular state, and hopefully they are similar to what we have in our state, would that child -- would that 15-year-old, 16-year-old, in a shelter in our state, if that other

state requires stringent, you know -- you know, kind of requirements in getting that certificate, will we be able to get that birth certificate through -- for that child as well?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I -- there -- the state of Illinois has an interest in maintaining it's vital statistics in accordance with its own law as does the state of Connecticut have an interest in maintaining it's vital statistics in accordance with its law. If there's no conflict in the -- between the two States, in terms of their law, then they would be able to access the certificate.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

So in the event that there is no disparity between the States, we will get the necessary

reciprocity and be able to get the certificate, but my concern is not when everything is going well and hunky-dory. Because, unfortunately, what these children have endured is beyond belief in what they have gone through at this very, very young and tender age. The neglect, the abuse, and it just goes on and on.

So my concern is will we be able to access and support and provide the necessary -- the necessary support to all our children in Connecticut who are now under our umbrella, making sure that all homeless youth between the ages of 15 and 18 are having the access to their birth certificates.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I too am concerned about youth that come here from other States. Each state has its own interest in how it -- how it maintains its vital statistics. And the only thing that we can say for certain with respect to this, is that the Department of Housing and Urban Development has developed a definition for

homeless youth and that they have developed certain people -- they've designated certain people who would be able to certify that they're -- that these particular youth are homeless, based on those definitions.

And from there, if there is more of an interest for Connecticut law to -- to -- for the homeless youths to be able to -- be able to make a request to a different state, then that state would comply. It depends on the interest of the state and how heavily it's regulated.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

In the very unfortunate event that that particular state, and we will not mention it by name, if a particular state in our Nation does not maintain those statistics as well as we do here and that we are proud of in our state in Connecticut, in that case, if the statistics are not maintained, how would the homeless youth between the ages of 15 and 18 still be able to get their birth certificate?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through -- through you.

If they don't have a birth certificate, I'm not sure exactly how they would be able to obtain a birth certificate. Some States allow baptismal certificates as well.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

It is interesting, our esteemed Chair says that if they don't keep a birth certificate, because where I was born, and I won't say how many years ago, I won't give my date of birth -- may age away, but where I was born there was no certificate roll.

And so if I were to go and try to get a birth certificate where I was born many, many moons ago, I don't think there are some vital statistics there kept. And so I can see -- and that is my concern,

because our goal here is to make sure that all our homeless youth between the ages of 15 and above, that we are able to provide them the birth certificate. So we are on the same page there, in terms of making sure that all of them are adequately protected.

But I worry and the reason I worry is in my own town, I have such children. I have kids that have come away from another state for reason A or reason B and they are in a very sad state of affairs -- very, very sad state of affairs, you know, not having adequate protection at all.

And so my concern is that if we are not able to get that birth certificate from that particular state, because it is not there for whatever be the reason, in that situation, would this bill, what we are talking about today, would it be able to somehow make it possible, regardless of where they are or do they need to get the birth certificate only from the place of birth?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm sorry. I just cannot come up with a -- a better answer than I've already given to you. And I appreciate your good remarks. Each state, to the best of my knowledge, has its own laws regarding vital statistics and this -- this bill may help, because we now have a process in place, whereas before we showed that we didn't have an interest.

So by passing this law, it demonstrates that Connecticut now has an interest in this age group and Connecticut will be able to match up, perhaps with other States and see whether or not there is a conflict between our laws and -- and the other States' laws.

We're getting into perhaps a discussion about conflict of laws between the States. And so I think that you have to go and you have to take a look at each state and what the law is and whether or not there is a conflict.

If there is no conflict, then in those circumstances, then you should be able to use this as a -- as a starting point to obtain the documentation and -- but if we don't have it, then in that circumstance we show we don't have an interest and so we leave those children without any assistance or any

possibility of being able to work through this particular issue.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I do appreciate very much the first step comment that you made, because I definitely believe this is a step in the right direction. We need to be there and I'm very thankful -- very thankful that we are able to take care of our unfortunate youth who are in that predicament, which is unbelievable the lifestyles of these people.

But my -- as you can sense my frustration is we need to extend it to not only the children born in the state of Connecticut, but all of those who live in our wonderful state. And I see where you're coming from, that we do the best that we can, but this is definitely a good -- very good first step.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

If I can move on to line 154, where we talk about the mother, we are moving from where the child was born, to where the mother of the certified homeless

youth resided at the time of birth. And here once again, through you, Mr. Speaker, does that mother, does she have to be in the state of Connecticut, where she resided, or could she have resided anywhere else and then all of this would still apply?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe the same principle holds true of the mother where she gave birth, as it does for the child, so I would -- I would say that my answer would be the same. That it would have to be where the child was born and that's -- that's going to be the place where the vital statistics are picked up.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

So through you, Mr. Speaker.

So that I'm clear that the certificate -- the birth certificate would be from where the mother resided at the time of the birth of the child.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The answer would be yes.

Thank you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just wanted clarification on that.

And my final question through you, Mr. Speaker, is if this youth happens to be in a shelter that is not by the U.S. Department for Health and Human Services or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban, and I'm sure we all have examples, unfortunate situations where other shelters are taking care of these homeless children, whatever those shelters may be, would all of this apply to them as well, or would it have to be only through this that we are talking about in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Not only would it be through a Department of Housing and Urban Development shelter or a runaway homeless youth shelter transitional living situation, also, it could be through the school. Each school the state of Connecticut has a homeless liaison and they would be able to also perform the service.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

My question was, if the shelter happened to be not anyone of the ones that we just talked about, because there are other shelters as well that take care of our youth, would they also be allowed to go and get the necessary certificate.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Access to the certificate can be in these types of shelters as stated in the OLR Report and also through the homeless liaison. These children should be in school and they can obtain help through the school district, because each school district in the state of Connecticut has a homeless liaison.

So if they are not in the certified Housing and Urban Development Shelter, they certainly can obtain the certificate through the liaison in the local school.

Through you. Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

In the event, and -- and I speak this from my practical experience, my life experience, if the child is not in school also, but happens to be in a shelter that is not one of the two that we just talked about, because in these situations we have to remember it is not the routine. It is not run of the mill. They are very, very difficult situations.

And going to school and learning English and math is not the top priority because life is such a challenge for them. Living day-to-day is the challenge. And what if they are not in school, they are truant, and they are not attending their school on a consistent basis, a, or not attending school at all?

And the reason I ask, through you, Mr. Speaker, is this is life experience, then would be there or would they still be able to get the certificate because they do not go to any of these shelters that we just talked about?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would -- the shelters would provide the correct information if the youth is in the -- in a shelter, they would be able to find the correct kind of Homeless shelter director to make sure that the youth had access, whether it's through -- they could contact the school liaison, even if the person isn't in school or they could find a local shelter that is HUD certified.

There are many types of shelters, as you are well aware, and most of them do get HUD money. They seek the HUD money as much as they can. So I do believe that they -- they would be able to find a local shelter fairly close by that would have the HUD-certification person/director there or they would be able to also go through the local school system and obtain assistance through their -- access to someone who would have the right credentials would be known by the person operating the shelter.

If they -- if they are a shelter that's operating in a town, they have to go through a permitting process. They have to go through a number of different processes to obtain funding, so there are church groups and community groups that work with them. They have access and work with Social Services. They work with hospitals and federally qualified health centers.

They are connected with a number of organizations throughout that would be able to access the correct person to help the youth obtain the -- the correct certification for homelessness and then be able to obtain the birth certificate.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

So through you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm so glad to hear that. That regardless of what the shelter is, as long as the child -- this unfortunate child is in a shelter, that child will be able, regardless of the shelter, whether the shelter is a church group, is a temple group, or regardless what it is, the child will be able to go through the appropriate channels, even though he or she may not be in school, and still be able to get the birth certificate.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to make sure that it does not matter what shelter the child is in.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Thank you.

Yes. Thank you for the question. That -- that is an excellent point and -- and that is true. The shelters are basically staffed with at least one

person who does the fundraising. They have Boards of Directors that are people who are concerned throughout the community, from, like I said, medical facilities or churches, people who are social workers, people who work at -- in different types of Social Service Agencies.

So these organizations work together to make sure that the people who come to them are well served and -- and are able to obtain the documentation.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the esteemed Chairwoman for the Public Health for her -- for her comments and her answering all of my questions. We -- I appreciate that very much.

This is an issue, which is gut wrenching for all of us. One cannot even imagine the life of these children, whether they're 15, 16, or 18. We cannot imagine to be in their shoes for even one day, let alone live their life. And so for all of us, the right thing to do is to do everything that's possible,

anything and everything that's possible to make their lives a little better, that their tomorrow is a little better.

And if this birth certificate is their entry visa to go into school enrollment, to get a driver's license, to get a job, whatever it is we need to do, because one cannot even imagine the lives of these people. If we saw in movies, if you read it in books, we would not even believe, because what happens in real life is even much, much more than what we read or see in the movies.

So I'm hoping that this Chamber of ours, at the end of the evening, will be able to support in a bipartisan way, because our youth, whether they're 15, 16, or 18, need all our help to make their life a little better. And what we can do will go a long way for them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir.

Gentleman from the 113th, Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much and good evening.

If I may, sir, through you, a few questions to the proponent of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Proceed.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you, sir.

I -- I understand that we have made an effort here to define certified homeless youth. It is a new definition in statute. I am trying to understand exactly why that needs to be defined. You know, we -- we -- we have homeless youth. We've talked about homeless youth in the past. Statute does identify homeless youth. Why are we specifically defining certified homeless youth.

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We are defining it for purposes of them being able to obtain a birth certificate.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again, through you.

Is this the same as the Federal definition for certified homeless youth?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Well the definition of homeless youth under the Federal law includes children and youths who are sharing other people's housing, due to a loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar type of difficulty. Sometimes parents and children are homeless and they become separated. Sometimes they are living in hotels or motels, trailer parks or campgrounds, due to a lack of alternative, adequate accommodations. This is all in accordance with Federal law.

Sometimes the children are abandoned in hospitals or they're awaiting foster care placement. The children and youth with a primary nighttime residence, they don't have that sort of thing. There's a public or private place not designated or ordinarily used as a sleeping accommodation, like a bus station or some -

- some sort of place like that, parks, public places, abandoned buildings.

These are the -- and also the children of migratory workers as well, living in difficult circumstances. So these are some of the Federal definitions. And we have yet, in this state, adopted a certified homeless youth definition.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So to follow up, it sounds to me as though -- I'm assuming that all those different types of individuals that were mentioned by the Chair of the Public Health Committee are in the Federal definition. So if that is indeed the case, the Federal definition is clearly different and much more expansive than the definition that we here in this bill propose to be included in statute.

You know, our -- our definition is relatively short and includes only three different types of individuals. The list that the Chair of the Public Health Committee laid out was extraordinarily long and

may have listed 20 to 25 to 30 types of individuals. Is that difference in definition -- is that difference in list of individuals who would qualify as certified homeless youth -- is that going to cause any sort of challenge in our ability to A, identify certified homeless youth, and B, ensure that those certified homeless youth are able to obtain the birth certificates that we intend for them to attain?

I'm just concerned that those definitions appear to be extraordinarily different. So how are we going to manage that?

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

The definition just gives examples. It's certainly one way of -- there -- there should not be any conflict.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I -- I understand that answer. I'm -- I'm not sure that it gives me any sort of solace. One of the items within the definition that we propose here is that the individual be certified by a school district homeless liaison, and while certainly some of the types of individuals listed by the Chair of the Public Health Committee could be certified by a homeless liaison from a school district; it doesn't necessarily mean that they would have to be certified by a school district homeless liaison.

So my concern is that some of those individuals listed as homeless -- certified homeless in the Federal definition, could conceivably be left out of the list of individuals who could be certified homeless youth within this proposed statute that we have laid before us today.

So if our goal is to truly ensure that those homeless youth who need access to their birth certificate and who we, I think -- believe -- should have access to their birth certificate, that the language as -- as stated before us could leave out a significant portion of that group.

And so my question is, was that intended -- was the goal to cut out specific individuals listed as

examples within the Federal definition, or is it simply expected or hoped for that those individuals would be included under Section A, which lists the identification by a school district homeless liaison.

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

There is no intention to leave any -- anybody out. That's just a -- that's just a reference to what the Federal law gives as examples and certainly those people and those -- those students or young people in those circumstances would be considered homeless by anyone's definition.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you very much.

And I thank the Chair of the Public Health Committee for her answer to the question.

A follow up, if I could, through you.

Lines 147, 148, and 149 describe -- and I'll just read the language very briefly, "Such certified

homeless youth and the person who is certified -- who -- who is certifying the certified the homeless youth."

So I'm wondering who would be the individual certifying the certified homeless youth. And I -- just -- just to clarify, that is referenced back to Section 7-36, and as I look at 7-36 there seems to be little clarity as to who that certifying individual could be.

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

The school district homeless liaison can certainly do that. The Director of an Emergency Shelter Program that is funded through the Department of Housing and Urban Development or the Director's designee or a Director of a Runaway or Homeless -- Homeless Youth Basic Center or Transitional Living Program funded by the Housing -- U.S. Housing and Urban Development.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And again, I thank her for her answer, as she referred back to a previous section of the bill, but just to clarify. Is -- are those three types of individuals that the Chair of the Public Health Committee listed, is that meant to be an exclusive list?

So to clarify the question, is there anyone else outside that pool of individuals who could conceivably certify someone to be a certified homeless youth or is -- are those just the three types, there's nobody else?

Through you, sir.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Those are -- through you, Mr. Speaker.

Those are the three types that are listed and they are the ones that -- they can certainly find someone who can certify and -- and -- and go to the Town Hall and provide the documentation, so the homeless youth would be able to obtain the birth certificate.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So just to clarify, the Chair of the Public Health Committee said that those individuals could find someone to certify the youth. I -- I think that's what I heard; maybe that's not what I understood. So if the Chair could please clarify.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My apologies, I misspoke. Those are the -- those are the certifying agents.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you very much. I -- I appreciate the answer and for the clarification. I -- I -- I was concerned there might be a difference.

Line 160 refers to sufficient identification. So basically, saying that the individual -- that the

potential certified homeless youth, in order to get their birth certificate, would have to prevent -- present sufficient identification. Sufficient identification is not defined in this section of statute nor do, I believe, in any other section of statute, so I'm wondering, what would be certain types of sufficient identification?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Perhaps a baptismal certificate might be something that would be sufficient.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Oh -- okay, thank you.

A baptismal certificate, to clarify, is not necessarily, as I understand it, a legal document in any way, shape, or form, but that would -- we would expect that would be acceptable. Would the individual

be able to sign an affidavit stating that they were the individual they claim to be.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

That's an excellent way for them to be able to identify themselves.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank -- thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That concerns me just a little bit. A simple signature by an individual who has no other form of identification saying that they are who they say they are, can obtain a birth certificate, and that birth certificate then becomes a mechanism by which all kinds of identity theft can be perpetrated.

So all I need to do in order to obtain a birth certificate saying that I am Jason Perillo is to sign a piece of paper saying that I am Jason Perillo. That's all I would need to do and, quite frankly, if I

weren't who I say I am, I can then use that piece of paper to obtain credit cards, to obtain driver's licenses, to vote.

Is that the intent? Is it really the intent that someone can sign a piece of paper and obtain all this information that can lead to such bad consequences for an individual? Is that really what we're trying to do?

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

My understanding of an affidavit is that it's a legal document that someone would swear to and would also be held accountable legally if they were to commit some kind of fraud with an affidavit.

So they would really be putting themselves in legal jeopardy to be able to do something like that and they would have to be informed as they're doing the affidavit that that would -- there would be a legal consequence involved if they were misrepresenting who they were through some type of fraud.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I -- I respect that answer. It offers me little solace. Quite frankly, an individual who's going to perpetrate identify theft, obviously is aware there may be legal consequences, but it doesn't seem to deter them from doing it. I don't suspect the signing of an affidavit is going to be any more deterrent in order to deter that individual from perpetrating the identity theft.

I -- that is extraordinarily concerning for me and, quite frankly, it's not even a question I had conceived of when I first started asking questions, because I didn't think it was a question that would be answered in the affirmative.

I was hoping that my question of whether or not an affidavit would be sufficient, would receive an answer of no. And instead, the exact opposite occurred; we received an answer of yes. I don't --
wow.

That is extraordinarily concerning, that someone can simply sign their name to a piece of paper and then obtain a birth certificate, in an age when identity theft has become so prolific and so frequent and so damaging to people's lives, their credit histories, prohibiting them from getting mortgages, racking up debt upon debt upon debt.

We're creating an avenue for individuals to simply sign a piece of paper and perpetrate the crime. And the only answer we can get as a deterrent is that a misrepresentation on an affidavit brings with it legal consequences.

That type of legal consequence does not deter this kind of individual and failure to deter that illegal act has tremendous damaging consequences for those individuals whose identities are stolen. So I'm going to leave that, but I want to understand some of the other types of identifications that could be utilized.

Mr. Speaker, through you.

Could a phone bill -- phone bill or a utility bill of any sort be utilized as adequate, sufficient identification in the obtaining of a birth certificate?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

The phone bill, I think, would be difficult to obtain, because, at this point in time, the person has no means of having a job. The person is trying to establish a way to earn money and to go to school and to do all the things that other -- other students have -- do during the time that they're between the ages of 15 and -- and 18 years old.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

So because we don't suspect the individual has any money, their phone bill would not -- it's not that it wouldn't be sufficient, it's just that we suspect they won't have one? Just to clarify. Is that the answer to my question?

Through you, sir.

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

The answer is, it would be very difficult for a homeless youth who leaves the home with very -- very little in the way of resources, or has become separated from a parent because the parent is homeless and the youth is homeless, so both the parent and the child are homeless, it would be very difficult for them to try and find a phone bill, so it would be hard for them to have those types of documentation.

This is the way for the child to be able to establish who -- who they are and be able to live a life like everybody else. Just because they're homeless doesn't mean that they're criminals.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I would agree with the Chair of the Public Health Committee that just because an individual is, indeed, homeless, certainly does not make them a criminal. I don't believe that was what I was

suggesting, and I don't believe that is what -- what anyone suggests here in this Chamber.

My question had nothing to do with whether or not the individual would perpetrate a crime. My question is whether or not they could utilize a phone bill as an identification in order to obtain a birth certificate, and the only answer I have received so far is that we suspect, perhaps these individuals couldn't afford a phone, so that really doesn't answer the question as to whether or not a phone bill, if presented, could be used.

So if -- if there could be some clarification as to that specific question.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Could a phone bill be used if it were in the possession of the individual?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I guess I'm having difficulty understanding the question, because, in terms of the context, I would -- I would appreciate some -- some context. I -- I'm thinking of someone who has left the home is homeless,

either because they've become separated from a parent who perhaps has been living in an automobile for a while and the parent somehow loses track of where the -- the -- the child is, or they're running away because they're in a very severe abusive, neglectful situation where they're terrified of being injured in some way.

And so I'm thinking of these kinds of circumstances and I'm thinking about how -- they're living in -- perhaps they're 15 or between the ages of 15 and 18, they're leaving home, they have no place to live, they're in a homeless shelter, -- how would they get a phone bill?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo, you have the floor.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So I understand that this bill attempts to help those individuals who have run away from home, who are in horrible circumstances, but that is not the only class of individuals who are impacted by this bill. There are individuals who have jobs that pay minimal amounts of money, but who do not have homes.

Many of these individuals have chosen to get cell phones and have the bill sent to a P.O. box. Is that bill that has the individual's name on it, sufficient evidence to prove that they -- that is a required or sufficient identity -- is that sufficient in order to obtain a birth certificate? So due respect, but the question has not yet been answered.

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson, do you care to respond?

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, if the person was to fill out the form for the post office box and also, you know, receive mail in that place, that is one way for them to establish some sort of identity.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much and I appreciate it.

So then, indeed, if an individual were to obtain that phone and get a phone bill, and have it sent to

their P.O. box and be able to pay the bill and present that phone bill to a Registrar of Vote, a Town Clerk, that would be sufficient, provided they had an -- another individual to certify that they were homeless.

So all it would really take, in addition to a signed affidavit, they could also just use a simple phone or other utility bill? Just to clarify. It's a simple yes or no.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Yes, given the circumstances you described. Yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

And again, that is another example of something that gives me great concern, in an era where identity theft is so prevalent. We've already established that an individual can simply sign a piece of paper stating that they are who they say they are, and that that is sufficient to obtain a birth certificate.

We then say that an individual can prevent -- can present a phone bill, sent to a P.O. box, stating that they are who they say they are, and that is sufficient to obtain a birth certificate. And again, once they have that birth certificate, the world is their oyster. They can obtain whatever they want, whether it well intended or otherwise.

Once they have a birth certificate, whether it's their own or someone else's, and I am most concerned about the situations where it is someone else's, they are given a license to steal identities. And once that identity is stolen, as I said before, people's lives are ruined. Absolutely ruined.

And we've all heard the horror stories. Credit ratings. It destroys relationships. And we're making it extraordinarily easy for individuals who are able to be certified as homeless in order to attain those birth certificates. Extraordinarily easy.

And as the Chair of the Public Health Committee said before, and I do agree, I believe it to be true, that the individuals that we're talking about are certainly not all criminals. In fact, the vast majority of them are not. They're simply looking for a better life.

They're simply looking perhaps, to restart their lives and to get past the difficulties they've had and move onto something better in the future. And that's what we hope for.

We hope we're going to help that 99.9 percent of the individuals that we're talking about, but we're also opening to door -- the door to that 0.01 percent who are not well intended, who are not trying to make a fresh start, who are actually intending to perpetrate a fraud and to commit crime.

We're making it extraordinarily simple. And I think we all need to take that into consideration as we move ahead with this bill. So again, as we talked about the 99 -- I talk about 99 percent, I talk about one percent. How many people, through you, Mr. Speaker, how many homeless youth are there in the state of Connecticut?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

The OLR report claims that there are ten that might avail themselves of this process.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are 10,000 or just ten? Ten people?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Ten.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So we are opening the door for any individual to sign a piece of paper saying that they are who they say they are, any individual, saying that they are who they say they are, such that it would enable them to steal someone's identity, in order to help ten people in the state of Connecticut? We are putting at risk the livelihoods of millions in order to help ten. That seems a little bit bizarre to me.

I understand we want to help ten people and we all come here because we want to help people. I get

it. I get it. But not at the expense of so many others. Not at the risk of so many others. We are putting the financial futures of way too many Connecticut residents at risk to help what the OLR suspects will be ten people. That defies logic. That's not safe.

And from my perspective, there's very little common sense in it. So with that, I -- I cannot support -- possibly support the bill that's before us today, despite the fact that I would love to help these ten people. Would love to help these ten people, but not if it increases the risk of identify theft for every other resident in the state of Connecticut. We can't make that trade off. We can't make that trade off.

So for that reason, Mr. Speaker, I will be voting no to the bill today.

Thank you, sir.

And I thank the Chair for her time.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir.

Gentleman from the 57th, Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you.

A few questions to the proponent of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Proceed, sir.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If the kind lady from Windham could please enlighten the Chamber a little bit about the school --

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative. (Inaudible) specifically prohibits questions being asked to enlighten the Chamber. The only reason for a question is because you don't understand something in the bill. So if you would rephrase your question, it would be very helpful, sir.

Thank you.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and my apologies.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Would the Chairwoman of the Public Health Committee please describe the process of a school district homeless liaison -- it was unclear to me in Committee. I know it was something that brought up and was not very clear and for the edification of the Chamber, perhaps, and myself, would she please expand

upon who exactly in a school district is the homeless liaison?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

For Representative Davis' sole interest, Representative Johnson, do you care to respond?

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Each school district has a school district homeless liaison that works with the students in these circumstances to make sure that they have access to services, including, and if we are able to pass this bill, access to a birth certificate so they'll be able to obtain educational services, be able to work and get a driver's license, and be able to live like anybody else in this society.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker.

Does this liaison have to be a staff person with the school district?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

The liaison is an employee of the school.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Now is this something that they do on top of other duties or are they only the school homeless liaison?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

They are an employee of the school. Their duties have not been made clear in the statute or in any of the other materials that we have available to us at this time.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I ask that question because in lines 147 through 165 it specifically asks that this liaison, if approached to be the one who certifies the homeless youths -- youth, would then accompany that homeless youth to their place where they would like to obtain their birth certificate.

And, through you, Mr. Speaker.

Would the staff member who is the liaison be paid to appear with the homeless youth while they're obtaining this birth certificate?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker.

I couldn't hear the Representative's remarks.

Could you please ask him to restate them?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis, please repeat the question.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Most certainly, Mr. Speaker.

Through you.

In lines 147 through 165 in the bill, it specifically asks that the homeless liaison accompany the homeless youth while they are attempting to obtain their birth certificate, if the homeless liaison is the one, in -- in fact, chosen to certify them as a homeless youth here in the state of Connecticut.

And through you, Mr. Speaker.

Would the homeless liaison be paid to do this duty for the homeless youth?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

The homeless liaison through the school system is an employee of the school system, so they're -- they are being paid.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So if the homeless youth is identified in the Town of Canaan in the northwest corner of the state,

they believe, under this bill and in that section, that their mother perhaps resided in the Town of Stonington during their birth and they decide that that's where they would like to go and get their birth certificate.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Would the homeless liaison that is being paid by the school district then have to travel with the homeless youth from the Town of Canaan all the way to Stonington to -- in order to obtain their birth certificate?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Given the fact that it would be a distance, perhaps they could work something out over the phone with a written documentation. They would then provide the certification and be able to, you know, work with them through the school system and the Town Hall to mail the birth certificate to the school.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And would the gentle lady from Windham be able to point me to the section in the bill that would allow them to not actually appear in person and, instead, do it through the phone?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Well, actually, it does talk about them being -- appearing in person, as the good Representative remarks.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So then the homeless liaison would then be paid to travel from Canaan to Stonington in this hype -- in this situation to help get this certified homeless youth their birth certificate?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

That would be one of the duties of the liaison of the -- of the -- of the school district for the Homeless. Thank you.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

There could be circumstances where the homeless youth is not in the unfortunate situations described from the gentleman from Glastonbury or the gentleman from Shelton, where they perhaps are in an abusive relationship, or they're in a situation where their family life is not very good for them to live at home.

And through you, Mr. Speaker.

Is there anything in statute that mandates the homeless liaison to try to reach out to the family before attempting to go forward with obtaining this birth certificate for the certified homeless youth?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

No there's nothing -- no requirement, but there probably -- there -- in most of these circumstances where we have homeless youth, there are a number of people who are working with families in a number of different ways to try and help.

So these youth are just, unfortunately, falling through the cracks, and this is the best way that a number of agencies, whether they're a church -- religious organizations or service organizations that help people who are in desperate circumstances, have comes up with this -- this way to address a -- a problem that has been -- a problem that's been growing for our youth in the state.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So there is nothing in this bill that would simply ask them to perhaps call a family member to ask

that they provide the birth certificate for this homeless youth?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

There is nothing in the bill that would require -
- the bill really focuses on providing a certificate for a homeless youth that finds themselves in a difficult set of circumstances.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I -- I certainly have seen the scenario played out on -- on television through documentaries and through other movies where a -- an individual youth, perhaps, is not necessarily in a situation where their family is not loving, their family does not want them there, their family does not provide for them.

In fact, there's situations where youth travel far away from their family because they have various things that they want to do that their family does not allow them.

And through you, Mr. Speaker.

There -- is there a scenario in which the homeless liaison would need to contact a family member, if a family member can be identified, in order to try to avoid having to go through the process of bring the homeless youth down to the Registrar of Vital Statistics?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

The -- the duty of the homeless liaison in this set of circumstances would be to assist the homeless person and try and help them obtain birth certificates, so that they would be able to obtain a job, continue in school, be able to obtain medical services.

Those would be the kinds of things that would help the child, maybe in the future reconcile with the

family, maybe not, but at least help this child, this individual become independent.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

But I think this is a -- an interesting situation, where this bill, perhaps, does more harm than good, in that, perhaps this homeless youth actually is separated from their family by choice and not necessarily by circumstance and the family, in fact, actually wants that youth to still be part of their family.

This bill here would give them the opportunity to detach themselves from their family, to obtain this birth certificate, to get -- whether it be medical services that perhaps threaten their life, maybe get a job, maybe get a driver's license so they can travel even further away from -- from the individual, and through you, from the family.

Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Is there anything in the bill that provides an opportunity for the family to step in and say we understand this individual is looking for a birth certificate, we would like to provide it for them.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

The bill doesn't have to do that. The family can certainly help the child, if they want, obtain the birth certificate.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What happens in this scenario in the bill if the certified homeless youth does not want the family involved, yet the family still wants to be involved? Is there any avenue for the family to stop the -- from the individual from obtaining their birth certificate if they were to, perhaps enforce their parental rights over the individual?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Yes, through you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly the Probate Court could intervene at the request of the family. The Department of Children and Families certainly could work through this situation if they were notified. There are a number of ways.

This law does not in any way change any of those laws that are in place to work with families, to emancipate minors. All those types of things are still available under the law. This doesn't change any of that.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And would the Chairwoman of the Public Health Committee identify in the bill where it would allow for that, because my understanding of the bill is that they would still be able to go forward with getting a

certified homeless youth certification and getting the birth certificate, whether the family wants to or not.

And through you, Mr. Speaker.

Where in the bill does it say that they would be able to get the court order or go through DCF or some other state Agency to be able to have the family intervening and try to attempt to bring back in this homeless youth into the fold.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

It doesn't have to say that in this bill. This bill only allows the -- the homeless youth to become certified homeless and obtain a birth certificate with the proper identification and proper assistance from an adult that is in a professional employment doing this type of work.

The laws about the Probate Court intervening or Department of Children and Families are laws that are in existence in other areas of the statutes and are still going to be present and available to any parent that would like to avail themselves of those laws.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And perhaps for the purposes of legislative intent, then it is not the intent of this bill to limit the family's ability to step in and -- and try to take the -- the child back into the fold and perhaps not go through this process of certified homeless youth, and perhaps not go through the process of them obtaining the birth certificate on their own. It is not the intent of this bill to do that?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

No, it's not the intention at all of this law to do any of those things. The law simply wants to help children who are basically abandoned and in those circumstance, have -- have nobody else but the -- the school to go to or the Homeless shelter director or someone who is acting in the capacity that's allowed

under the statute to help them obtain the -- the birth certificate, the certification, first, that they're homeless and secondly, the ability to obtain the birth certificate, so that they would be able to go and get a job.

These children are abandoned, they're frightened, they're abused, and this bill merely helps these children move through, so that they can go to school and get jobs, just like everybody else, and not worry about predators in this society that might take advantage of some child in this circumstance.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well unfortunately, I think that this bill is drafted, it does not allow for that. It specifically allows the -- the individual to be identified as a homeless youth, certified as such, and then go through a liaison or a shelter to be able to obtain their birth certificate and it doesn't -- it doesn't address whether the homeless youth was abandoned by their family, as -- as the Chairwoman said or if the -- if

the homeless youth actually chose to leave their family, and their family very much would like to have them back and would be a very loving family to have.

But in the circumstances, perhaps, where they are not in a very safe environment and they go and become emancipated from their family, in Section Three of the bill, would the emancipated youth have to go through this certification process and go through the process of going through a liaison or a shelter director to obtain their birth certificate?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Mr. Speaker, could you please ask the Representative to rephrase the question please? I'm having a hard time understanding what he -- what he means. Thank you so much.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In Section Three of the bill it discusses emancipated youth and in the final -- lines in the

bill, lines 199 through lines 201, it -- it adds the ability of them to obtain a certified copy of their birth certificate.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Would they have to go through the process of becoming a certified homeless youth and go through the process of going through a certified homeless liaison or shelter director in order to obtain the birth certificate.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

An emancipated minor is a minor that has been emancipated by the Probate Court and perhaps the Juvenile Court. And so in those circumstances, an emancipated minor means someone who has been determined by the Court to be able to work on their own and raise their own money on their own.

So generally, as a general rule, emancipated minors have found by the Court to be self-sufficient.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In a circumstance where the you was emancipated under those circumstances, yet has found themselves under the age of 18, above the age of 15, but unable to find work, finds themselves in a situation where they are homeless.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Would they have to go through the same process or does the bill allow them to simply go down to the Vital Registrar and -- Vital Statistic Registrar and get their birth certificate?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

If -- if they can demonstrate that they've been emancipated by the Court, then they should be able to obtain the birth certificate on their own with the documentation from the Court.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and through you.

Were they able to obtain the birth certificate before or currently or would they not be able to do it unless we pass this bill?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't believe that this bill speaks to that, whether or not before they're -- they're emancipated. It speaks to the fact that if they're emancipated, then they would be able to get the -- there's a listing in the bill, from line 172 all the way through to 201, that lists all the things that the emancipated minor can do.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And in particular, I guess it would be -- for the purposes of this bill -- the new language is in lines 199 to 2000 -- or 201.

And, through you, Mr. Speaker.

Were they unable to obtain the birth certificate as emancipated youth prior to this bill, as we currently stand in the state of Connecticut or does this bill give the authority to do so?

Thank -- through you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Could you please have the Representative repeat the --

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Please repeat the question, Representative Davis.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

I'm sorry.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Certainly, Mr. Speaker.

Through you.

The lines 199 through 201 are -- is new language under the bill.

And, through you, Mr. Speaker.

Were the emancipated youth currently, before this bill is passed, be able to obtain their birth certificate on their own, or is the language in this bill necessary for them to obtain their birth certificate?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

The minor should be able to obtain the birth certificate in his own name.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And -- and they can currently do that or this bill enables them to do it?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

This bill lists all the things the minor can obtain as emancipated minor.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I appreciate her answers. I think it's important to recognize that there -- there's some ambiguity in the bill, in that if a family wants to keep their child in the fold, they want to have a loving relationship with their child, this bill gives that child the ability to -- to get away from the family, to run away.

It encourages runaways to run away and then claim that they're homeless or be certified as homeless and then be able to obtain their birth certificate and live their lives without their families, while their families are left at home saying, I wish I had my child with me tonight.

I don't know where my child is, but because now they're able to go get their birth certificate under this bill and be certified as a homeless youth and potentially, in the future, have other advantages where we'll never see our youth again. We'll never see our child again, because they have been given this advantage, despite the will of the family that wanted to provide a loving environment.

For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I cannot support the bill this evening. I think we -- the -- what the

intent of the bill may be certainly is very encouraging to try to help out the youth that have been abandoned or abused, but I think, unfortunately, we're encouraging runaways to be able to separate themselves from otherwise loving families and continue in a life that is not necessarily the path that their family and their parents would like for them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir.

Gentleman from the 125th, Representative O'Dea.

REP. O'DEA (125th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Clerk is in possession of Amendment LCO 7148. I ask the Clerk please call 7148 and I be given the leave to summarize.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Clerk is in possession of LCO Number 7148, which will be designated House Amendment Schedule "A". Would the Clerk please call.

THE CLERK:

House "A", LCO Number 7148, introduced by
Representative O'Dea.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The gentleman's asked to leave the Chamber to summarize.

Is there any objection? Hearing none, please proceed, Representative O'Dea.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative O'Dea.

REP. O'DEA (125th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just briefly 7-51 by this Amendment is left alone, except that it addresses the concerns that are spoken here tonight and allows an emancipated minor to obtain birth certificate if he's under 18, but is, in fact, emancipated.

So I would move adoption, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Questions on adoption.

Will you remark sir?

REP. O'DEA (125th):

It shall be moved adoption at this time, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Do you care to remark further, sir?

REP. O'DEA (125th):

No, thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would regard this as an unfriendly amendment and I would ask my colleagues not to support this, because it circumvents the purpose -- some of the purposes of the bill.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Will you remark further on House Amendment Schedule "A"? Will you remark further on House Amendment Schedule "A"?

If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Opposed, nay.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Nay.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The nays have it.

The amendment is defeated.

Will you remark further on the bill? Will you
remark further on the bill?

Gentleman from the 78th, Representative Betts.

REP. BETTS (78th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

A few questions to the proponent, please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. BETTS (78th):

Yes, I've been looking at the OLR Report and it
was describing what homeless children and youths are
and I wonder, through you, Mr. Speaker, if the good
Chair Lady from Public Health could tell us if there's
any timetable as to how long somebody has to be away
from their home to be qualified as homeless?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

There doesn't seem to be any timetable in -- in
the statute or in the OLR Report.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Betts.

REP. BETTS (78th):

I thank you for that answer.

One of the questions -- one of the concerns I have about this is without saying somebody's been away for 48 hours, or three months, or six months, or if they are repeated runaways that go away for a few days and then come back, I wonder, through you, Mr. Speaker, if that youth or that individual is described or referred to as homeless?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I would ask the gentleman to please repeat his question. I had a hard time hearing.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Betts.

REP. BETTS (78th):

Certainly.

You have an individual who repeatedly runs away from home and they may be running away for 24 hours or

maybe 72 hours. A lot of it may be just be for disputes with their parents, but it -- let's say they go and they run away four times in a six-month period for various days. Is that individual -- or for a couple of weeks during one of those times, is that individual looked upon -- described by the system as being homeless, because in the Federal definition, that individual is not staying at their permanent residence and is moving from place to place.

So I'm asking, is that individual looked at as being a homeless youth under that scenario?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

In that scenario, I believe what the good Representative is saying that the -- the youth is leaving and returning home. When they leave and return home, they're not homeless, I don't believe. In this circumstance, the -- the -- what we're talking about is a youth who is unable to turn -- return home for whatever number of reasons. Whether it's because the family itself doesn't have a home or because the -

- the youth is unable to live in circumstances in which the family is there. Some are living in an abandoned -- some families are living in an abandoned or -- or terrible buildings.

So there are a number of difficult circumstances that the report defines and those are the circumstances -- certainly we -- we couldn't possibly enumerate all of them, but these are some of the -- some of the circumstances in which you who are disadvantaged may find themselves in and that's the reason for this bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Betts.

REP. BETTS (78th):

And thank you for that answer.

I understand the motivation for this bill and as the good Chair Lady knows, one of the objections I have to this bill is I think it interferes with the opportunity and the relationship of bringing the child back to the family. That's an effort, I know, the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families has put a special focus on, because we all believe that the child has a better chance of having a

more successful life staying with their family then without.

And one of the things that could also happen during this period is you may end up having children who are mentally ill or who have emotional problems, and if that person is separated from the family or their guardians, I think it would be to the detriment of that youth to be classified as homeless and not have any incentive for getting reconnected to the family, or to another member, such as a grandparent.

And one of the concerns I have about this bill is, once somebody is able to become independent or get their birth certificate, they very well could come to the conclusion that they do not have a reason for coming back or trying to repair a broken relationship, and especially, if they're having mental health issues, they could easily be perceiving the situation incorrectly.

So one of the real concerns I have with this is, they don't define how long somebody has to be away from a home in order to be defined as homeless. Second thing is I do think it interferes with the optimum scenario of trying to bring, if not the

parents, some of other member of a family to help out this child during that time.

And I really think -- although it's well intended, I really do think we should focus on trying to get this person in a really good unified family-unit situation. So for those reasons, I'm going to be opposing this bill.

And I will listen to the rest of the debate, but I think that there's some real cause for concern here, especially as the ranking member had described before, I have real problems with limiting the -- the people who are described as homeless from 15 to 17.

Especially as when we are in the Children's Committee, we are listening about all the kids who -- between the ages of 12 and 14 -- had been -- who had run away and had been picked up, if you will, by pimps and got involved in human sex trafficking.

So there are a lot of people who run away and are homeless under the age of 15 and it would not cover that group and that is a cause for real concern.

So I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir.

Gentleman from the 103rd, Representative
Adinolfi.

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through Mr. -- through you, Mr. Speaker. I have
a few questions for the proponent of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Proceed, sir. Proceed, sir.

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

In the bill it speaks of unknown parentage. Now
in the event that somebody applies for a birth
certificate from unknown parentage, is that individual
eligible to receive a birth certificate somehow?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative.

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. I'm having a hard time
hearing the good gentleman. Could you please ask him
to repeat?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Adinolfi, could you repeat your question, please?

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

If an individual is from unknown parentage, which it speaks to in the bill, is that individual eligible for a birth certificate, providing they meet all the other requirements and so on and so forth?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not sure under what circumstances someone might be in that circumstance. It's -- it's hard for me to understand. Perhaps if the good gentleman could develop the thought, so that I could provide an answer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Adinolfi, can you (inaudible)?

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the bill, they speak of unknown parentage as being eligible.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Yes?

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

And they can't identify, so they don't know where to get the birth certificate. My question is, if, providing the individual meets all the other requirements where they're witnesses and is homeless and so, as it states in the bill are they eligible to receive a birth certificate?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson, does that help?

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Perhaps the good gentleman has in mind what kind of situation a person would find themselves with unknown parentage.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Adinolfi.

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

Through me -- through you, Mr. Speaker.

That's why I'm asking for the answer. It's in the bill and I want to know if a person from unknown parentage is eligible for a birth certificate, provided they meet all the other requirements for homelessness?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Certainly.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Adinolfi.

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

I didn't hear her answer.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Certainly, she said, sir.

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

Certainly was the answer? Okay.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir.

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

If somebody goes and applies with a copy of a birth certificate, which, as mentioned before, very easily forged or changed or duplicated, and they meet all the other requirements, as we said before, does that individual go in and they simply take the stamp and put an impression on the copy of the birth certificate if they can't locate the original?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not understanding what the good gentleman is saying in terms of the stamping of a birth certificate?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Adinolfi, can you (inaudible).

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

I'll repeat my question then.

If somebody shows up to a Registrar or a Town Clerk with a copy of a birth certificate and they meet all the other requirements of this bill, with the authentication (sic), with the witnesses, and so on,

and they can't locate the original through the media or through their computer system, will the Town Clerk be obligated to put the seal on that copy of the birth certificate, as it speaks to in the bill?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

The seal would be placed on a -- what would the -- the clerk would call an original birth certificate.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Adinolfi.

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

Oh, thank you.

Through, Mr. Speaker.

My concern with this, as we said certainly for the unknown parentage before. I think I had that correct. My concern is that if this bill passes, you won't have ten people a year applying, you'll have thousands, hundreds of thousands doing that, because you'll have no way, if that individual was brought into this country by illegal immigrants and the

children are illegal immigrants, and you'll have no way of knowing that. Yet, we can give them a birth certificate, which they can use to gain citizenship and how do we handle that?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

This bill speaks to the concerns of a -- of a child or a youth, really, between the ages of 15 and 18 who had been somehow estranged from their family, either because the family is homeless, because they're abusive, because they're in a very difficult circumstance.

The school can provide an I.D. with a picture, which is also on the Department of Public Health website. This does not get into any of these other types of issues that -- that would -- would perhaps be better addressed under a different law.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Adinolfi.

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

My concern here is that any individual, if this bill passes, any parent who has those children here illegally, along with them, believe me, there'll be organizations started all over the country, to make this happen. Tell their child, go homeless for six months and you'll become a citizen.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir.

Gentlewoman from the 143rd, Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Good evening, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

I have a -- a question for the proponent of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Proceed.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

If I may?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Proceed.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you so much.

I know that it's been established already that the -- and I'll confirm this -- that the identifying information that's necessary to request a birth certificate is not exactly defined. Am I right? It could be different from case-to-case?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

That's true.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you.

And therefore, if a certified homeless youth were to show up with some sort of identification and request a birth certificate and no records are found in the state of Connecticut, because the child was born somewhere else, does the state of Connecticut then have the obligation to ask for that search to be pursued in other states?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

The search would be done through the liaison at the school, the homeless liaison or through the shelter workers that are identified in the legislation.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you.

And if it so happens that the child was born and the records are found in a state where a minor would not have access to those records, is the state of Connecticut then obligated, nevertheless, to furnish them to the child or is the other state, where this is not required, required to furnish them to the state of Connecticut for the child?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

This law pertains to the state of Connecticut and how the state of Connecticut manages its vital statistics.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you.

Therefore, I'm to understand that if the records exist in another state, the law does not apply and the youth would not have access to the records if that's not the law in that state?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

If that state has an interest in providing its youth with the -- the birth certificate, then there shouldn't be a problem. It's only if there is no interest. In this circumstance, we're trying to

create an interest, so that homeless youth will be able to access their records.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

So do I understand that we are actually trying to influence actions or behavior or response in another state? If that situation were to occur?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Our law would only demonstrate an interest in our vital statistics. The state -- other states have their interest in their vital statistics and how they maintain them. If there's no conflict between the States, then there won't be a problem in terms of obtaining the documentation.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Lavielle.

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And were those records to exist in another country, would the search come to a stop or would they be pursued?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

That would be up to the country as well, how they manage their vital statistics.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you.

So I, just for clarification then, I -- I understand what we have here applies only to the circumstance as it exists in the state of Connecticut and anything else, anywhere else could happen in any number of ways, depending on what the circumstances are in these other places.

It's just out of -- out of interest. Do we -- and -- and, forgive me, I think this may have already

been asked, but does this particular law exist in other States?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Some States have limitations on access to birth records and others do not.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you.

And I thank the Representative for her answers.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, madam.

Representative Ziobron.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a couple questions to the proponent of the bill.

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Just a -- just moment, ma'am. I just want it clear between you and me.

Representative, please proceed.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Great. Thank -- thank you, Mr. Speaker, and through you.

A couple of questions to the proponent of the bill. To the good Chairwoman of the Public Health Committee. How did we get to the estimate of ten youth that would be affected through this bill?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

I'm sorry. Could the good Representative --

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

-- please rephrase the question?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative, could you please repeat the question?

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Sure.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

In the fiscal analysis detail of the bill, it talks about the possibility of maybe only ten children in the state who would avail themselves of this procedure. So my question, through you, Mr. Speaker, is how did we determine that number?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Yes, it's a good question and I'm not sure just how they came up with it, because the state Department of Education counted about 251, so there was a disparity and I had received that information as well, so I thank you -- the good Representative for her question.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Ziobron.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I -- I also serve on the Public Health Committee and had a number of questions about this bill. I did, in fact, support this bill out of

Committee, but listening to the questioning that my colleague, Representative Perillo, asked earlier, it raised some alarms for me about how someone could actually obtain their birth certificate. And I'm reading on line 160 that talks about Section 7-41 and a certified copy of a vital record.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Could the good Representative explain to me what an example of a certified copy of a vital record would be?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The certified copy is when the Town Clerk here in the state of Connecticut takes a -- a vital record and then stamps it with her stamp and certifies that that's an original copy. So that is how it's done and that is -- that is.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Ziobron.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And to the good Representative. What is an example of what specific piece of paper is that Clerk stamping? An example of that. And the reason I ask is I'm concerned about what a youth may have in their possession at the time of their request that would classify a vital record, so I'm trying to understand what that example is.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

The - the type of paper?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

A question. Are you referring to the type of paper? Is the good Representative referring to the type of paper?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Is it a student I.D. paper? Is it a report card? Is it -- what kind of record are they stamping? That's my question.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Oh.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

There -- I'm confused. First of all, to show to the Clerk, say, for example, the youth is a student. They could show a school picture to the -- to the Clerk and the -- the type of paper. There is special paper for birth certificates, so that they can't be copied for an original, so they use a special paper that's, you know -- that creates an image that's hard to duplicate.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Ziobron

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm sorry, Representative. I think I may have led to some confusion.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not specifying the type of piece of paper. I'm trying to understand the document; I guess that's a better word. What is the type of document that that youth would have to present? Is it a report card?

What is that vital record that -- that they're requesting? I hope that clears up that confusion.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

They can come with a number of documents to prove who they are. The easiest thing would be for them to go through the school system and get a report card or an identification from the -- from the school. They have class pictures and these things are also on the website of the Department of Public Health.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Ziobron.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I appreciate the clarification from the good Representative.

This bill was an emotional bill for me at Public Health, because I -- I have personal experience with

this classification of student and through my junior and senior year of high school, I worked three jobs and rented a room and took care of myself and I understand like nobody else, the consequences of what we're debating here.

But Representative Perillo raises a pretty good point and that is, how do you prove it. I needed those records so I could get a job and do all the things that you're talking about here. And these are kids that want to make a difference, that want to improve their lives, but we are talking about creating a whole new classification of homeless youth, and that concerns me.

And it concerns me for a number of reasons. I just don't know if I can support the bill in its present form, even though I supported it out of Committee, because of the questions that were raised by my colleague.

And so because of that, Mr. Speaker, the Clerk has an Amendment. It's LCO 7156. Would you please call the Amendment and I be allowed to summarize, sir?
DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Clerk is in possession of LCO Number 7156, which will be designated House Amendment Schedule "B".

Mr. Clerk, please call.

THE CLERK:

House -- House Amendment "B", LCO 7156,
introduced by Representative Ziobron.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The gentlewoman has asked to leave the Chamber to summarize. Is there objection?

Hearing none, please proceed, ma'am.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

The Amendment simply strikes a lot of the language and instead allows anybody the age of 16 and older to request a birth certificate. And I asked about this issue at Public Health, I think.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

The good Chairwoman will recall that conversation.

At this point, I would like to move adoption, so that I can explain the reasons for the Amendment, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Question on adoption. Ma'am? Please proceed.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you, very much.

Again, you know, during this debate at Public Health it was a pretty emotional debate for me,

because I understand what it's like to be 16, 17 years old and want to support yourself. There's a lot of kids out there that are good kids that are in very horrible circumstances and because of that I think, you know, why create a whole separate category of kids that's called homeless youth?

Isn't it much simpler to have, instead, a process where everybody age 16 and over can request their own birth certificate? Sixteen you need it to get a driver's license. You need it to get a job. You need it to do all those things.

Why muddy the waters and have a bill that not only creates a new definition of youth, but it also talks about a whole litany of things? It could be much cleaner if we would just consider allowing 16 and 17-year-olds to request their own birth certificates.

I urge support for this amendment, Mr. Speaker. And I -- I would like support of my colleagues as well, on the Public Health Committee.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Will you remark further on the House Amendment Schedule "B"?

Representative Johnson.

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REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the good Representative's concerns. However, I -- I cannot regard this as a friendly Amendment. I think that we -- that the bill that we have before us will serve the greater good and I urge my colleagues to vote no on the Amendment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, madam.

Will you remark further on House Amendment Schedule "B"? Representative Carping.

Will you remark further on House Amendment Schedule "B"?

If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Those opposed, nay.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Nay.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The nays have it.

The amendment is defeated.

Will you remark further on the bill?

Representative Carping, now.

REP. CARPINO (32nd):

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Proceed.

REP. CARPINO (32nd):

I've listened to the debate and I have one question that I believe hasn't been asked yet and if it has I do apologize to the good Chairwoman. My question is thus, through you.

In the event this homeless -- this certified homeless was born and given up for a confidential adoption, how will that affect this new status in the event this bill passes?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

The birth certificate should be made available in terms of the adopted parents' certificate. So however the adoption was conducted, that documentation would

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be obtained and it would be those parents who had a legal adoption who are listed on the birth certificate.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Carpino.

REP. CARPINO (32nd):

I thank the good Woman for her question. I have a number of concerns, this being yet one, but I will continue to listen if we have more debate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, madam.

Will you remark further on the bill? Will you remark further on the bill?

If not, staff and guests please come to the Well of the House? Members take your seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll.

The House of Representative is voting by roll. Will all members please return to the Chamber immediately.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members
voted?

If all the members have voted, the machine will
be (inaudible).

And Mr. Clerk would you please announce the
tally.

THE CLERK:

Bill Number 6482	
Total Number Voting	133
Necessary for Passage	67
Those voting Yea	94
Those voting Nay	39
Absent and not voting	17

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The bill is passed.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 246?

THE CLERK:

On Page ten, House Calendar 246, Favorable Report
of the Joint Standing Committee on Public Safety and
Security, Substitute House Bill 6488, AN ACT
CONCERNING THE EVACUATION AND TEMPORARY SHELTERING OF
CERTAIN ANIMALS DURING EMERGENCIES.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Hampton. You have the floor, sir.

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**PUBLIC
HEALTH
PART 10
3066-3376**

2013

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF RAISED BILL NO. 6482, AN ACT CONCERNING BIRTH
CERTIFICATES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

March 15, 2013

My name is Ashleigh Eubanks, I am a Homeless Youth Coordinator working at Burns Latino Studies Academy. I work with youth at Burns School and from all over Hartford. My position was created in order to address the lack of awareness around youth homelessness in the Hartford area, as well as the limited resources available to these youth. In my position I perform outreach to homeless and youth who are on their own, working with them to get their basic needs met while also providing them with opportunities to self-advocate for much needed services and supports. I also organize workshops and presentations to raise awareness to the broader community around the needs of unaccompanied and homeless youth. Prior to my position as Homeless Youth Coordinator at Burns, I had the opportunity to participate in a Doctoral research Project lead by educator Monica Brase, through which we interviewed Hartford youth who had been unaccompanied at some point in their high school career. Dr. Brase's research was the first of it's kind to take a closer look at unaccompanied youth homelessness in Hartford. I was selected to participate in this research because, as a former Hartford youth, my home became a "safe haven" for friends and peers who were fleeing unsafe and unstable living environments. In my highschool years alone, my family took in somewhere around 15 unaccompanied youth for various periods of time.

This bill would eliminate one of the major challenges faced by unaccompanied and homeless youth. In cases where youth have fled the home due to abuse or neglect, needing parental permission to access their birth certificates may require them to interact with their abuser, thereby jeopardizing their physical and mental health. In other cases where a youth's parent or guardian is homeless themselves or unable to be reached, the process of obtaining parental permission could be indefinite. It is crucial in our efforts to solve youth homelessness that these youth are able to act independently in obtaining their birth certificates. **Please support Raised Bill No. 6482. It is an immediate solution to one of the many challenges faced by homeless and unaccompanied youth.**

Day to day survival is an immense struggle for unaccompanied and homeless youth. The main causes of youth homelessness are: abuse and neglect by a parent or guardian; a parent's intolerance of a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender youth's sexual identity; a parent's intolerance of teen pregnancy or parenting as well as the breaking up of a family unit due to poverty and financial instability. The inability to access one's birth certificate prolongs and in some cases even prohibits youth from enrolling in school, gaining employment, receiving state assistance and accessing health care. These are the same resources and support systems that can contribute to ending a youth's homelessness.

This testimony is to strongly urge you to support Raised Bill No. 6482, "An Act Concerning Birth Certificates for Homeless Youth", which amends the current statutes to allow homeless youth who are under eighteen years old to access their birth certificates .

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,
Ashleigh Eubanks
Homeless Youth Coordinator
Burns Latino Studies Academy
(860) 906-6272



The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, Inc.

Testimony in Support of **Bill No. 6482, (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING BIRTH CERTIFICATES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH**

March 13, 2013

My name is John Cottrell. I am the Acting President/CEO for the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport. Since 1978, the year I began working at The Council, the Janus Center for Youth in Crisis has served children and families in the Greater Bridgeport area. A major focus of the Center is on serving runaway and homeless youth. Our primary goal is not only to assist these youth to obtain stability, but to also keep children out of state systems and maintain families.

Our Basic Center Program consists of four main components: 24 hour mobile crisis response, immediate intervention and support, temporary respite care in one of our host homes, and aftercare support once the young person leaves our care. These cover four of the five service components outlined in the bill.

The Janus Center for Youth in Crisis strives to ensure easy access to services needed by youth who "live" on the streets due to extenuating circumstances, do not attend school on a regular basis, and are not involved with any traditional services or who are resistant or don't know how to access traditional services.

I feel it is important to point out the while The Council of Churches is licensed by DCF as a Child Placing Agency, we currently receive no state funding for our services. Our revenue comes from federal grants, local municipalities, foundations, churches and individual donors.

Our staff process approximately four hundred referrals each year. The majority of these calls involve families who are experiencing serious conflicts which if left unattended would likely result in the young person leaving the home. In most cases, with early and immediate intervention, separation can be avoided. The most difficult cases are those where the young person has already left the home.

Runaway and homeless youth often face many barriers that block them from having stable lives. Most often if a youth runs away from home, they leave with very few belongings, as they rush to get away from the current situation that they are in. One of these barriers for runaway and homeless youth is access to their birth certificate. In our experience in working with this vulnerable population, the parent usually is the one who holds the birth certificate of the youth in fear that the child may lose it if it is in their possession. When the child leaves the home, they often leave without having any type of identification. There have been situations in our work with runaway and homeless youth where the parent refused to give the child their birth certificate as a way of blocking their independence. This is especially relevant when a youth seeks emancipation from their parent or legal guardian.

Obtaining a birth certificate is the first step in receiving permanent identification which includes: passport, driver's license, and Social Security card. To apply for benefits the youth would need at

Bridge Building Ministry • CO-OP Center • Hunger Outreach • Janus Center for Youth in Crisis • Project Learn

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minimum a birth certificate and Social Security card. If the youth is not able to return home and is eligible for employment, you cannot be legally employed without having proper identification, which might cause the youth to get money in ways that might jeopardize their health and safety.

This bill would provide youth with the opportunity to take advantage of available options legally. This is a vital step in their attempts to have a stable and productive life.

Respectfully submitted,

John R. Cottrell

John R. Cottrell,
Chief Operating Officer



Joint Committee on Public Health, March 15, 2013

Testimony of Nichole Guerra on HB 6482, An Act Concerning Birth Certificates for Homeless Youth

Sen. Gerratana, Rep. Johnson, Sen. Welch, Rep. Srinivasan and Members of the Committee:

My name is Nichole Guerra, and I am a Policy Analyst at the Partnership for Strong Communities (PSC), a statewide nonprofit policy and advocacy organization dedicated to preventing and ending homelessness, expanding the creation of affordable housing, and fostering best practices in community development.

I am here to testify in support of House Bill 6482, An Act Concerning Birth Certificates for Homeless Youth. This bill will allow unaccompanied homeless youth access to their birth certificates with the help of a school homeless liaison, a shelter provider, or provider to runaway and homeless youth. Current law states that a minor cannot obtain their birth certificate without a parent/guardian or grandparent, which is virtually impossible for unaccompanied youth who are homeless and living on their own. This creates obstacles to accessing mental health treatment, complicates school registration, and makes it almost impossible for a minor to obtain state issued identification.

The PSC staffs and manages Reaching Home, the campaign to build the political and civic will to preventing and ending homelessness in Connecticut. Reaching Home is focused on ending homelessness among youth as part of its effort to implement Opening Doors –CT, the state’s blueprint for ending homelessness that is aligned with the federal Opening Doors plan.

Reaching Home actively supports statewide efforts to identify unaccompanied homeless youth in Connecticut and better understand their needs through its Runaway and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Work Group, a diverse group of stakeholders including key state agencies, advocacy intermediaries and direct service providers. This legislation promotes our overall vision of quantifying and highlighting the problem, pinpointing and addressing systemic barriers, and developing a responsive service system for these vulnerable kids. It will allow unaccompanied homeless youth to access work, health and support services at a time when they have nothing else.

These youth face multiple dangers, such as exposure to violence and drug use, sexual exploitation, and trafficking. They are 2 to 3 times more likely to be assaulted or raped, 7 times more likely to die from AIDS, and 16 times more likely to be diagnosed with HIV than the general youth population. We urge you to support this policy as one step toward protecting them from the risks of living on the streets and avoiding further disconnection from mainstream institutions and supports.

I am available to address any question

Thank you very much.



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**Written Testimony of Kristen Granatek,
Manager of Technical Assistance and Program Services**

Before the Public Health Committee

March 15, 2013

In Support of: HB 6482 An Act Concerning Birth Certificates For Homeless Youth

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee. Thank you for hearing my testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH), and thank you for your consideration of matters of importance to individuals experiencing homelessness.

Connecticut's runaway and homeless youth face many barriers. One of the most common ones is having access to identification, including their birth certificate. Youth who are on their own have left home for many reasons. They may have been kicked out of their home after "coming out" to their parents as gay, lesbian or bisexual. They may be running from abuse or neglect. Or they may have been separated from their family members who are also experiencing homelessness. Many of them have no identification at all. It is our experience that parents or guardians often hold their child's birth certificate. The parent or guardian may refuse to turn it over to the youth, particularly in situations in which the youth is seeking emancipation. In some circumstances, the parent or guardian cannot be located or may refuse to talk to the youth about the birth certificate or other matters.

Youth who do not have access to their birth certificate are unable to obtain permanent identification, including a social security card, passport or driver's license. This hinders the process of enrolling in school, getting a job or getting access to needed entitlements. The changes proposed under *HB 6482: An Act Concerning Birth Certificates for Homeless Youth* will provide runaway and homeless youth with a legal mechanism for obtaining a birth certificate without the consent of their parent or guardian. The Act will put in place measures to verify the status of the youth as being homeless, through school or emergency shelter personnel. This is an important step toward eliminating some of the barriers that homeless youth face and allow them to move forward with obtaining safe and stable permanent housing.

CCEH espouses a "housing first" philosophy and approach to ending homelessness. This means that housing should not be used as a reward for compliance with treatment plans, employment success or "good" aka docile behavior or sobriety. Instead, stable housing is the pathway to a more stable life, better employment and earnings, better compliance with behavioral health treatment, participation in income support programs.

We urge you to not only focus on providing homeless youth with access to their birth certificates, but on housing-based solutions to end homelessness. While economic security for all our residents remains elusive, the good news is that we have the tools to end homelessness, and urge you to support several of the provisions in the Governor's budget.

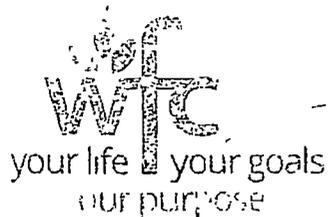
In particular, we urge your support for **rapid re-housing**. Governor Malloy's proposal includes an on-going commitment to rapid re-housing. It adds \$500,000 (\$250,000 each year) for housing relocation and stabilization services and short-term financial assistance to help homeless families move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability. CCEH views the rapid re-housing investment as a down payment on ending family homelessness in Connecticut. Rapid Re-Housing is a set of interconnected strategies:

- Coordinated intake, screening and housing-based assessment
- Housing search, landlord recruitment, and relocation assistance.
- Housing stabilization supports, linkages to community services
- Timed limited financial assistance (for up to 12 months). This may include transportation for housing search, first/last month's rent, security deposit, application fees, moving costs, utility connection fees and arrearages, and other costs depending on the needs of the family. Rental assistance structured as a shallow flat subsidy based on unit size and adjusted for each region.

Last biennium, Governor Malloy initiated a significant investment in affordable housing in Connecticut included \$120 million for affordable housing; \$30 million to preserve and upgrade public housing as the start of a ten year commitment; and over \$30 million for 300 units of supportive housing. The biennial budget also provides:

- **Supportive Housing.** The proposed budget also adds \$20 million in funding for 100 units of supportive housing, with an annualized \$1 million for rental assistance subsidies and \$1 million for services. There are approximately 2,500 chronically homeless individuals in Connecticut.
- **Affordable Housing.** Authorizes \$68 million in capital funding in each year of the biennium to create new affordable housing options for workers, youth and families.
- **Public Housing Revitalization.** Authorizes \$60 million in bonding (\$30 million in each year). Funding is supported with an annualized \$3 million for 300 new rental assistance vouchers.

We urge your support for measures supporting homeless youth as well as rapid, supportive and affordable housing. Thank you.



March 14, 2013

Testimony in Support of Bill No. 6482

An Act Concerning Birth Certificates for Homeless Youth

My name is John Johnson Jr. I am the Project Coordinator of Project R.E.A.C.H. and Shelter Services for Women & Families Center in Meriden, CT. Project R.E.A.C.H. is a program for runaway, at-risk, and homeless youth ages 13-21. Services are provided through two systems: street outreach and shelter services.

Street outreach canvases streets, train/bus stations, parks, schools, and neighborhoods where youth "hang out". At the point of contact; our staff provides services such as counseling, service linkages to community programs, survival aid (soap, toothbrush/paste, wash cloth, deodorant, etc.) and food. Shelter services provide emergency shelter for youth ages 13-17. Shelter services assist youth with identifying long term living arrangements. This could include: reunification with parents/guardians/relatives, independent living, Job Corps, etc. Aftercare support is also provided once a youth exits shelter.

Runaway and homeless youth who live on the streets face many issues. A majority of them do not attend school on a regular basis, very few have any belongings when they do leave, and for some, it could be months that go by before they are able to take their medications again. In my experience; the one item at the top of the list for many youth who have left their home is identification, including their birth certificate.

Parents or guardians often have possession of the youth's birth certificate. Because the youth has left home, his/her birth certificate is not returned to them to "show them" – blocking the right to independence. In some cases, the parent or guardian cannot be found. Having access to one's birth certificate is especially important when the youth is seeking employment, emancipation, obtaining other forms of identification (passport, driver's license, state I.D., social security card), or needed entitlements (food stamps, etc.).

This bill would provide a legal channel for runaway and homeless youth to take-hold-of, manage, and secure the necessary steps for a stable, healthy, productive future.

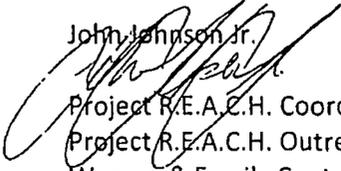
We implore you to **support Bill No. 6482** and assist us in supporting Connecticut's runaway and homeless youth.

169 Colony Street ■ Meriden, Connecticut ■ 06451-3283 ■ Phone: 203-235-9297 ■ Fax: 203-237-7571

Women and Families Center
www.womenfamilies.org



Respectfully submitted,


John Johnson Jr.

Project R.E.A.C.H. Coordinator
Project R.E.A.C.H. Outreach & Shelter Services
Women & Family Center
169 Colony St.
Meriden, CT 06451



March 14, 2013

I am writing to support Raised Bill No. 6482, An Act Concerning Birth Certificates For Homeless Youth.

As the Chairperson of the Waterbury Homeless Youth Committee for the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, I believe it is important for unaccompanied homeless youth to be able to access their birth certificates without a parent/guardian or grandparent. This change is needed because without access to their birth certificates unaccompanied homeless youth are limited in many activities which can lead to self-sufficiency, such as:

- Working, as most employers require long-form birth certificates
- Access to mental health treatment
- Complications in school registration
- Obtaining a state issued identification or driver's license

All of these activities can assist youth in bettering themselves in order to end their homelessness, and yet they are unable to do so due to the current law.

This bill makes sense as it is in line with the process of the federal College Cost Reduction Act, which gives unaccompanied homeless youth access to federal financial aid without requiring parental financial information.

I therefore urge you to please pass Raised Bill No. 6482 so unaccompanied homeless youth may access work, health and support services.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jill G. Schoenfuss, MBA, OTR
 Waterbury Homeless Youth Committee Chairperson
 Grants Manager
 StayWell Health Center
 80 Phoenix Avenue
 Waterbury, CT 06702
 203-756-8021 x3113
 jschoenfuss@staywellhealth.org

Phone: 203 756 8021 Fax: 203.596 9038 www.staywellhealth.org

<p>Our Centers</p> <p>StayWell Health Center 80 Phoenix Avenue, Waterbury, CT 06702 StayWell South End Health Center I & II 1309 & 1302 South Main Street, Waterbury, CT 06706</p>	<p>Driggs School-Based Health Center 77 Woodlawn Terrace, Waterbury, CT 06710 Open Arms at St. Vincent DePaul Shelter 114 Benedict Street, Waterbury, CT 06706</p>	<p>Open Arms at Western CT Mental Health Network 95 Thomaston Avenue, Waterbury, CT 06702 Open Arms at Salvation Army Family Shelter 74 Central Avenue, Waterbury, CT 06702</p>
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Center for Children's Advocacy

University of Connecticut School of Law, 65 Elizabeth Street, Hartford, CT 06105

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF RAISED BILL NO. 6482,
AN ACT CONCERNING BIRTH CERTIFICATES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH**

March 15, 2013

This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Center for Children's Advocacy, a private, non-profit legal organization based at the University of Connecticut School of Law. The Center provides holistic legal services for poor children in Connecticut's communities through individual representation and systemic advocacy. I am an attorney at the Center and the Director of the Center's Teen Legal Advocacy Project, which provides legal services to teens throughout the state. In addition, I am the Chair of the Connecticut Team on Runaway and Homeless Youth,¹ a statewide group of professionals interested in improving access to services and supports for runaway and homeless youth in the state of Connecticut. The Team is comprised of state agencies including the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Court Support Services Division, and the State Department of Education, as well as private providers throughout the state including The Center for Children's Advocacy, The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, RYASAP, CT Coalition to End Homelessness, True Colors, Partnership for Strong Communities, as well as others.

I am testifying today to urge you to support Raised Bill No. 6482, "An Act Concerning Birth Certificates for Homeless Youth." This bill will amend current statutes to allow homeless youth who are under eighteen years old to access their birth certificates. The proposed change would allow certain professionals including school district homeless liaisons and the director or designees of youth and adult shelters to certify that a youth is homeless, thus allowing a youth to directly request a copy of his/her birth certificate. This process mirrors the process outlined in the federal College Cost Reduction Act which allows unaccompanied homeless youth to access federal financial aid for college.

The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth states that parental abuse and neglect is a primary cause of homelessness among unaccompanied youth (homeless youth who are on their own).² The National Network for Youth estimates that according to studies of a homeless youth sample, 33% had been in foster care, 51% had been physically abused, and 60% of girls and 23% of boys had been sexually abused.³ We also know that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth are over-represented among the homeless youth population. Multiple studies have found that one out of every five homeless youth (20 percent) is LGBT-identified. This is highly disproportionate to the



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¹ The Connecticut Team on Runaway and Homeless Youth was convened in the summer of 2008 in response to a request by the American Bar Association's Committee on Homelessness and Poverty as well as the National Network for Youth that each state bring together advocates to affect systemic change on behalf of runaway and homeless youth.

² "Using What We Know: Supporting the Education of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth" 39, Julianelle, Patricia, The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, February 2008, available at http://www.naehcy.org/dl/unvkw_youth.pdf.

³ "Unaccompanied Youth: Fast Facts" National Network for Youth, citing YouthCare, Inc., 1998, available at http://www.nn4youth.org/media/factsheets/FactSheet_Unaccompanied_Youth.pdf.

estimated percentage of LGBT youth in the general population, which is approximately 10 percent.⁴

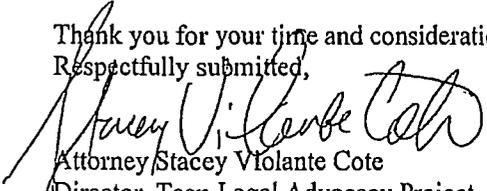
The data we have in CT is insufficient. (Please see attached summary.) The CT Team on Runaway & Homeless Youth and The Partnership for Strong Communities have commissioned a study which is currently underway and will give a fuller picture of the number and needs of homeless youth in our state.

Removing barriers for homeless youth to access supports and services is critical. The dangers for minors who are living on their own are many. Homeless youth are targets to be lured into the life of prostitution (also called domestic minor sex trafficking). They are at risk for physical abuse, sexual abuse, illness and suicide.

For some homeless youth, school may be the only safe and stable environment available. Yet, without a parent or guardian to assist them, enrollment in school may be denied or delayed, particularly when the youth does not have access to required enrollment documents like a birth certificate. Connecticut State Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths has indicated that the proposed changes would help both school districts and homeless students to expedite school enrollment. The American Bar Association and the National Network for Youth recently published a book entitled "Runaway and Homeless Youth and the Law: Model State Statutes," where they emphasize the importance of homeless youth having access to identification documents, including birth certificates. The book also notes other states which have provided for flexibility in birth certificate requests (Pennsylvania, Maryland, Mississippi, and Texas).⁵

This bill would remove one of the many obstacles faced by unaccompanied homeless youth who are attempting to access supports to move out of homelessness. I get the calls from youth who are on their own and cannot get copies of their birth certificates in order to seek employment, register in school, get a state identification card, apply for food assistance or cash assistance, or become involved in a job training opportunity. Providers for homeless youth also tell us that youth who cannot access their birth certificates can experience delays in accessing health insurance and thus needed mental or medical health care. Please support Raised Bill No. 6482. This bill provides a no-cost way to eliminate obstacles for homeless youth.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Respectfully submitted,


Attorney Stacey Violante Cote
Director, Teen Legal Advocacy Project
Chair, CT Team on Runaway and Homeless Youth

⁴ "Incidence and Vulnerability of LGBTQ Homeless Youth," National Alliance to End Homelessness, Solutions Brief, December 8, 2008.

⁵ Horton-Newell, Amy, Meyer, Katie & Trupin, Casey. "Runaway and Homeless Youth and the Law: Model State Statutes," pp 111-113 (2009).

Connecticut's Invisible Population: Homeless Children and Youth

- This is the invisible population because no one knows how many unaccompanied homeless youth (youth who are on their own) are in CT.
- Most youth are "couch surfing" and staying with others for short periods of time.
- Homeless youth are counted differently by each state agency, or not counted at all.
- Homeless youth are at risk for sexual abuse, being lured into prostitution, physical abuse, illness and suicide.

How many homeless youth are there?

Homeless children/youth enrolled in public school.

2804 Students in 2011/12 School Year (CT State Department of Education)

Many children/youth run away from DCF care.

1002 Incidents in 2012 (CT State Department of Children & Families (DCF))

Many depend on getting food and hygiene products from outreach services.

1774 Youth Provided with Health & Hygiene Products Through Street Outreach Programs in CT

5414 Youth Provided with Food or Drinks Through Street Outreach Programs in CT

(National Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System (RHYMIS))

Without a safe place to go, children/youth become victims of prostitution.

136 Children/Youth Who Are Victims of Prostitution In CT (April 2008-Dec 2012) (CT DCF)

Where do they go?

Minors are turning to:

The streets: 8666 CT Street Outreach Contacts (Sept 2011-Aug 2012) (RHYMIS)

The few youth shelter providers in CT: 87 Minors in Youth Shelters (Sept 2011-Aug 2012) (RHYMIS)

Couch surfing: No Data

18-21 year old's in adult shelters: 743 in Fiscal Year 2012, 666 in Fiscal Year 2011

(CT Homeless Management Information System)

What are their needs?

Access to safety and services. Current obstacles:

- Not enough safe places to sleep: There are only 15 shelter beds statewide for youth under 18 years old.
- Not enough providers: Only 4 agencies in CT provide crisis intervention, respite services or street outreach services for minors who are homeless. None are in Hartford.
- Access to employment, health care and school is complicated when minors cannot access their birth certificates, required by many agencies and providers, without parent/grandparent consent.
- Not enough data about the number of unaccompanied homeless youth and the barriers they face in our state systems.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF RAISED BILL NO. 6482, AN ACT CONCERNING BIRTH
CERTIFICATES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

March 15, 2013

My name is Ashleigh Eubanks, I am a Homeless Youth Coordinator working at Burns Latino Studies Academy. I work with youth at Burns School and from all over Hartford. My position was created in order to address the lack of awareness around youth homelessness in the Hartford area, as well as the limited resources available to these youth. In my position I perform outreach to homeless and youth who are on their own, working with them to get their basic needs met while also providing them with opportunities to self-advocate for much needed services and supports. I also organize workshops and presentations to raise awareness to the broader community around the needs of unaccompanied and homeless youth. Prior to my position as Homeless Youth Coordinator at Burns, I had the opportunity to participate in a Doctoral research Project lead by educator Monica Brase, through which we interviewed Hartford youth who had been unaccompanied at some point in their high school career. Dr. Brase's research was the first of it's kind to take a closer look at unaccompanied youth homelessness in Hartford. I was selected to participate in this research because, as a former Hartford youth, my home became a "safe haven" for friends and peers who were fleeing unsafe and unstable living environments. In my highschool years alone, my family took in somewhere around 15 unaccompanied youth for various periods of time.

This bill would eliminate one of the major challenges faced by unaccompanied and homeless youth. In cases where youth have fled the home due to abuse or neglect, needing parental permission to access their birth certificates may require them to interact with their abuser, thereby jeopardizing their physical and mental health. In other cases where a youth's parent or guardian is homeless themselves or unable to be reached, the process of obtaining parental permission could be indefinite. It is crucial in our efforts to solve youth homelessness that these youth are able to act independently in obtaining their birth certificates. **Please support Raised Bill No. 6482. It is an immediate solution to one of the many challenges faced by homeless and unaccompanied youth.**

Day to day survival is an immense struggle for unaccompanied and homeless youth. The main causes of youth homelessness are: abuse and neglect by a parent or guardian; a parent's intolerance of a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender youth's sexual identity; a parent's intolerance of teen pregnancy or parenting as well as the breaking up of a family unit due to poverty and financial instability. The inability to access one's birth certificate prolongs and in some cases even prohibits youth from enrolling in school, gaining employment, receiving state assistance and accessing health care. These are the same resources and support systems that can contribute to ending a youth's homelessness

This testimony is to strongly urge you to support Raised Bill No. 6482, "An Act Concerning Birth Certificates for Homeless Youth", which amends the current statutes to allow homeless youth who are under eighteen years old to access their birth certificates .

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Sincerely,
Ashleigh Eubanks
Homeless Youth Coordinator
Burns Latino Studies Academy
(860) 906-6272

Written testimony of Tracy Choomack, Homeless Ally
Before the Public Health Committee
March 15, 2013

Honorable members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Tracy Choomack and I am here today to urge that you support H.B. 6482, An Act Concerning Birth Certificates for Homeless Youth, and take action to protect youth experiencing homelessness. A friend of mine grew up a young woman making her way through the system and the world. Born into a family of addiction and chaos, she made the choice, the safer choice, to navigate through society and find a roof over her head. At 15, she had few resources. She was not of age to do much of anything to support herself. She learned how to barter: how to find choices, face choices, and make choices no one should have to make in order to survive. She was able to stay in an apartment under wraps and secure a job that was flexible to her schooling. These are our youth! Too many youth are born into incredibly difficult circumstances. Maybe a youth is dealing with a parent's drug addiction, or abuse, or even old fashioned disapproval. Regardless of the issue, too many youth are faced with the realities of homelessness; and of the world. Only it's worse. When young people are forced to figure out survival skills on their own, not only are they subject to people who see them as vulnerable targets, but they become of greater vulnerability due to the lack of protection under law. They are forced into an adult situation, into adult life—yet they are without the resources adults have or can easily attain. Without access to a birth certificate, youth face housing and income instability and face impossible, unnecessary choices. Please support Bill 6482 and protect the youth experiencing homelessness.

Sincerely,

Tracy Choomack

TESTIMONY IN-SUPPORT OF RAISED BILL NO. 6482, AN ACT CONCERNING BIRTH
CERTIFICATES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

March 15, 2013

My name is Ashleigh Eubanks, I am a Homeless Youth Coordinator working at Burns Latino Studies Academy. I work with youth at Burns School and from all over Hartford. My position was created in order to address the lack of awareness around youth homelessness in the Hartford area, as well as the limited resources available to these youth. In my position I perform outreach to homeless and youth who are on their own, working with them to get their basic needs met while also providing them with opportunities to self-advocate for much needed services and supports. I also organize workshops and presentations to raise awareness to the broader community around the needs of unaccompanied and homeless youth. Prior to my position as Homeless Youth Coordinator at Burns, I had the opportunity to participate in a Doctoral research Project lead by educator Monica Brase, through which we interviewed Hartford youth who had been unaccompanied at some point in their high school career. Dr. Brase's research was the first of it's kind to take a closer look at unaccompanied youth homelessness in Hartford. I was selected to participate in this research because, as a former Hartford youth, my home became a "safe haven" for friends and peers who were fleeing unsafe and unstable living environments. In my highschool years alone, my family took in somewhere around 15 unaccompanied youth for various periods of time.

This bill would eliminate one of the major challenges faced by unaccompanied and homeless youth. In cases where youth have fled the home due to abuse or neglect, needing parental permission to access their birth certificates may require them to interact with their abuser, thereby jeopardizing their physical and mental health. In other cases where a youth's parent or guardian is homeless themselves or unable to be reached, the process of obtaining parental permission could be indefinite. It is crucial in our efforts to solve youth homelessness that these youth are able to act independently in obtaining their birth certificates. **Please support Raised Bill No. 6482. It is an immediate solution to one of the many challenges faced by homeless and unaccompanied youth.**

Day to day survival is an immense struggle for unaccompanied and homeless youth. The main causes of youth homelessness are: abuse and neglect by a parent or guardian; a parent's intolerance of a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender youth's sexual identity; a parent's intolerance of teen pregnancy or parenting as well as the breaking up of a family unit due to poverty and financial instability. The inability to access one's birth certificate prolongs and in some cases even prohibits youth from enrolling in school, gaining employment, receiving state assistance and accessing health care. These are the same resources and support systems that can contribute to ending a youth's homelessness.

This testimony is to strongly urge you to support Raised Bill No. 6482, "An Act Concerning Birth Certificates for Homeless Youth", which amends the current statutes to allow homeless youth who are under eighteen years old to access their birth certificates .

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Sincerely,
Ashleigh Eubanks
Homeless Youth Coordinator
Burns Latino Studies Academy
(860) 906-6272

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**PUBLIC
HEALTH
PART 11
3377-3693**

2013

Written testimony of Tracy Choomack, Homeless Ally
Before the Public Health Committee
March 15, 2013

Honorable members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Tracy Choomack and I am here today to urge that you support H.B. 6482, An Act Concerning Birth Certificates for Homeless Youth, and take action to protect youth experiencing homelessness. A friend of mine grew up a young woman making her way through the system and the world. Born into a family of addiction and chaos, she made the choice, the safer choice, to navigate through society and find a roof over her head. At 15, she had few resources. She was not of age to do much of anything to support herself. She learned how to barter: how to find choices, face choices, and make choices no one should have to make in order to survive. She was able to stay in an apartment under wraps and secure a job that was flexible to her schooling. These are our youth! Too many youth are born into incredibly difficult circumstances. Maybe a youth is dealing with a parent's drug addiction, or abuse, or even old fashioned disapproval. Regardless of the issue, too many youth are faced with the realities of homelessness; and of the world. Only it's worse. When young people are forced to figure out survival skills on their own, not only are they subject to people who see them as vulnerable targets, but they become of greater vulnerability due to the lack of protection under law. They are forced into an adult situation, into adult life—yet they are without the resources adults have or can easily attain. Without access to a birth certificate, youth face housing and income instability and face impossible, unnecessary choices. Please support Bill 6482 and protect the youth experiencing homelessness.

Sincerely,

Tracy Choomack

S - 665

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2013**

**VOL. 56
PART 14
4130 - 4472**

THE CHAIR:

Seeing and hearing no objection, so ordered.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On page 24, Calendar 619, House Bill Number 6482, AN ACT CONCERNING BIRTH CERTIFICATES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH, Favorable Report of the Committee on Public Health.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

Acceptance and passage in concurrence. Will you remark?

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Yes, thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, this bill before us has been before us before, and now I am hoping that it will pass out of the Senate. This bill allows certified homeless youth and emancipated minors to access or receive their birth certificates. There has been quite a challenge, and many, many people came and advocated for the bill who work with and know about our youth that are homeless and some of the challenges that they have being in that state and status.

Some of the testimony talked about because they don't have access to birth certificates here in the State of Connecticut that they may not be able to attend school or get other services. So this legislation, of

course, will establish a process through a school district homeless liaison or a director of an emergency shelter or director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center to go with the person, the minor, and accompany them to get a birth certificate providing they've met the definition of certified homeless youth.

Thank you, Mr. President. I move --

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

(Inaudible).

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator Gerratana.

I, this is a bill that I've struggled with for a while now. And frankly, even as I stand before you all holding this microphone, I'm still struggling. And let me share with you why that is. On the one hand, I completely, completely see the need for legislation like this for a certain situation, and here's that situation, where you have a, a, a young person, in this case, they have to be at least 15 years of age, that are homeless.

They either don't have a parent or a guardian that they can turn to, or turning to that parent or guardian would make a bad situation worse, for indeed that is why they are homeless. They've, are in a situation that is completely intolerable. And so they have a need to get a car. They have a need to get a job. They have a need to, to do what the rest of us can do, but they are inhibited from that, because they don't have access potentially to a birth certificate.

I, I draw some comfort from this bill in that nobody can walk up to a registrar in the Department of Public Health and request it. They actually have to be certified homeless. They have to be a certified

homeless youth, and then they need to be accompanied by one of three individuals. So I get that.

Now on the other side is potentially a very different situation, and that situation is, you have a young person, same kind of age, has left home, but that home happens to be a loving home, a caring home, a home that if they were to go back would be a resource to them to kind of overcome whatever troubles, demons, or struggles they might, they might have.

And in a situation like, like that, I would have to say that more often than not, the best solution is not for them to go get a birth certificate and for them to get a job and get a car but for them to go home and work through those things and have their mom or their dad be the one to help them get a car and get a job as well. And so my, my dilemma is how do we craft legislation that adequately gets to the right conclusion in both of those situations?

And I, I'm beginning to think that this comes close. And, and the reason why is because there, this bill requires in lines 78 through 88 that a certified, that a certified homeless youth, one, be certified as such by a school district homeless liaison, director of an emergency shelter, or director of a runaway or homeless youth center.

And beyond that, when the youth presents himself or herself to get a, a copy of their birth certificate at the registrar or, I guess it's just the registrar in this case, that individual needs to have the person who is certifying them as certified homeless youth to be present as well. And that's found in, in lines 162 through 165. The person who is certifying the certified homeless youth as homeless shall present to the registrar or the Department, the Department of Public Health.

So I find, I think, some comfort that we're not dealing with a situation where we have an individual who potentially is making very important, very difficult decisions without some intervention whatsoever. But I think as a Legislature, we're putting a lot of faith in these three categories of individuals to make the right decision, to assess the

situation and decide that counseling one to get a birth certificate so they can do all these things is the right decision versus counseling somebody to go home to their parents and have their parents help them to do it.

So there it is, Mr. President. I laid it all out. That's my struggle. That's the difficult place that I find myself, because I see two very difficult yet different situations, and I see a need for legislation like this, but I also see a danger with legislation like this.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Through you, a few questions to the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Senator Gerratana, if you could just take me through a, a couple of scenarios, a, and maybe you have the statistics, I'm hoping, or some data or just remember the public hearing testimony. But a homeless youth, first of all, were, is it assumed that they were always homeless or someone that became homeless due to economic conditions or family conditions, what have you?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Senator Kane, I think that's a good question. I was also listening to what Senator Welch said. This, as I said, is not the first time that this bill has been before us in the Chamber. And it took me a long time also to try to understand who are we talking about here? And if you read some of the testimony of some of the advocates, and indeed they are people who run the shelters, the -- also talked about in the bill is a school district homeless liaison -- they will tell you stories.

Fortunately -- because the stories are usually not very good -- but fortunately, there's not a large population of youth in our state that would be certified homeless as I understand it. But there's enough so that certainly they want to be able to lead what I would call more normal lives. These individuals very often -- and we do have the federal definition which you can read -- I believe it's in the summary, as a matter of fact -- here it is, federal definition of homeless youth -- you will find that very often they don't have a place to sleep at night, so perhaps they're seeking that kind of accommodation in a shelter.

They usually come from homes that for one reason or another there has been perhaps incidences of abuse. Sometimes it's sexual abuse. Sometimes they run away because of physical abuse. There are many, many different reasons, and they end up homeless. Being a certified homeless youth actually is a recognition of the individual, and the people that we're talking about in this bill can actually take action to help and assist them.

And I just want to go to Senator Welch's point too, and that is in talking with -- and as I said, this isn't the first time the bill has been here -- but in the past when I was co-chair of the Children's

Committee, and also on my first term of the Judiciary Committee, I talked with some of the people who would be involved, those who run the homeless shelters and, and so forth there. I delineate it in the bill. And they described for me the situations that these children are in.

And Senator Welch is right. Finally, they seek health instead of being exploited perhaps also on the streets and by getting the birth certificate, of course, a little bit of normalcy in their lives. So I hope that helps you in trying to understand who we are talking about here.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And, and that was a, a very detailed explanation, actually. Thank you. Actually, what I'm looking more towards is -- I, I agree with you, they end up homeless. I'm trying to ascertain how they begin, meaning were they born homeless, did, you know, or did they become homeless as they age or progress? That's, that's the, the difference, I guess, is what I'm trying to understand. Take me from the beginning.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Through -- Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Through you, Mr. President.

Well, as I understand it, those children who are born and may be abandoned, I guess, could technically considered to be homeless, but we do have other laws that are in our statutes that would address that.

We're talking about, and I think the, the bill talks about 15-, 16-, and 17-year-olds, that they have gotten to the point -- and in fact it also, by the way, addresses emancipated, so they may have gone through a court procedure to become emancipated youth, in which case, you know, they are now not living in a home, and actually getting the birth certificate will help them get to a more stable situation.

And the reason being is because if they did go through a court procedure, very often the parents have, it's usually an unhealthy situation one way or the other, and I think I went through and delineated that. Others may be runaways, and I do know in talking with the advocates and talking with the people who run the shelters that they are counseled in a variety of ways.

Sometimes there may be other reasons for being a runaway, but how one gets to that state -- I have tried to explain to you how a child or a minor in this situation may get to that state. I think it would be difficult to go through the ages of a child and say, you know, how did, how did this child become a runaway? I've described it to you I think the best that I can.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I apologize. Maybe I'm not asking the question properly, and, and let me, let me retrace my steps.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Okay.

SENATOR KANE:

What I'm -- let's, let me ask you this. When a child is born, are they required to have and/or get a birth certificate?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Through you, Mr. President.

I think in our statutes, it does delineate how one can obtain a birth certificate. I do know, being a mother, that I did obtain a birth certificate for my children when I went to our town hall to our registrar, or I'm sorry, our town clerk there and asked for a copy of a birth certificate. I believe there are other ways. And, in fact, last year, we did some changes to access to vital statistics such as birth certificates through the Department of Health.

I was trying to think of the incident where a child was abducted, and then the abductor was able to get a birth certificate through our Department of Health. So those are the two ways, Mr. President, that I know of that you can obtain a birth certificate. The bill actually has, I think in the first part, Section 7-36 -- aside from all the definitions, it also goes through the way that birth certificates can be obtained, I believe.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I guess my question is if a parent has a child, and they are provided a gift certificate, two scenarios, A, if they are a homeless individual and have a child,

are they able to get a birth certificate for the child that they bear?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

So, through you, Mr. President, so I am clear, if a person is homeless in this state, was born in this state, and has a child who is also considered to be homeless, can that parent, the parent can, if the parent can produce documentation. I think you go to city hall, and you say I am who I am, and they look it up there, and you can obtain, so a homeless mother or father would be able to obtain a birth certificate. That's not who we're talking about in this legislation, but I believe you can, providing you were born in the State of Connecticut, I believe.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I guess what I, where I'm going with this is that -- and every mother that bears a child is able to be provided with a birth certificate for the child that they have. I believe that's correct. And whether they are homeless or not, they are able to get a birth certificate. So each child that is born, the town or city has that certification, registration, whatever word you want to use, at town hall that says, Joe Smith, John Smith, whatever, Jane Doe, you know, you know, whatever the name, was born on May 31st, 2013, in the, Hartford, Connecticut.

So if that person becomes homeless, then whether, let's say it's the child that we're speaking about -- I know we're not talking about the adult with the parent -- we're talking about the child -- why can't

the child then go to town hall, city hall, and get their birth certificate?

Through you.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

I believe --

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I believe, through you, currently for a minor to access or get their birth certificate, their parents, guardians, or certain other family members can obtain birth certificates for them.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

So a, an, a, a youth under 18 years old is not allowed to obtain their birth certificate?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Through you, Mr. President.

I'd have to look at existing statutes, but I think the bill addresses that problem.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Can, can Senator Gerratana point to me where it addresses that?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Mr. President, if the Chamber will stand at ease just for a minute, I'll go through the bill to see the process.

THE CHAIR:

Senator, the Senate will stand at ease, Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Thank you.

(Chamber at ease.)

THE CHAIR:

Senate will come back to order.

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I have been helped here. Section 7-51 of the General Statutes, Senator Kane. And if you go to lines 91 through 116, it describes the process of the Department and Registrar of Vital Statistics shall restrict access to and issuance of a certified copy of birth and fetal death records and certificates less than 100 years old. And then it delineates the eligible parties.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And on line 95, it says over 18 years of age. So it, does that mean that someone under 18 years of age cannot obtain their birth certificate?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Through you.

Yes, I believe that's the purpose of the bill.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

This is where I'm getting at. So if a person is under 18 and not able to obtain their birth certificate, can their parent get the birth certificate for them?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Through you, Mr. President.

I did describe these situations where a parent could not, would not, may not want to obtain a birth certificate for a, a minor, but, yes, it is my understanding under the law that, of course, the parent of the child could get the birth certificate. However, the parent may not give the birth certificate to the child.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Understood. Thank you, Mr. President.

Then if, so in your scenario, the child is still under the custody of the parent, am I correct?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Through you, Mr. President.

No, this is a certified homeless child, and I believe if we look at the definition that it may be an emancipated child or a child that may, probably is not under -- and I'm trying to understand exactly -- under the, you said under the custody of, I'm sorry, under

the custody of a parent? I'm sorry, if you would clarify that.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane, could you rephrase your question?

SENATOR KANE:

Yes, Mr. President.

I guess what, what you offered was that the parent may not wish to get the birth certificate for the child or may -- that was the scenario you offered, so I'm sticking with that scenario for now. My question was, can they get the gift, the birth -- I keep saying gift certificate -- the birth certificate for the child? So legally, whether they choose to or not, maybe they're, they don't want to, or they decide not to give it to them, but can they obtain the birth certificate for the child if they are in custody of that child?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Through you, Mr. President.

Well, the law does say if that, if the child is, the parent of the child, the guardian of the child -- I think I went through that scenario -- they can obtain a birth certificate.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

If a child is not under the custody of the parent and is under the custody of the state -- DCF or what have you -- can the state obtain the gift certificate, birth certificate for the child?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Through you, Mr. President.

That, I don't know. That's in other parts of the statute. I do not know whether DCF has that ability. Sometimes in foster homes, that may happen, but I am sorry, I cannot answer that question.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

So thank you, Mr. President.

The, these children may, may be homeless, but are they not under the custody of someone, whether it be the parent or the state? I mean, certainly they have, you know, have not emancipated. They must be under the custody of someone. Am I not correct?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Through you, Mr. President.

They are being certified as homeless, which, if you read this federal definition, puts them or describes them in a particular class. I would probably look at this as saying that if you are a certified homeless youth -- and I don't know if it will be helpful to read exactly what that is -- that you have separated yourself, if you will, from a parent, and usually, and primarily it's because of a situation that is not healthy for the child. This is usual and customary.

You know, Senator Kane, as I mentioned, there are fortunately not a lot of individuals in this particular situation. We're not saying that anything would preclude the child from reuniting with a parent. I also mentioned to you -- if that is your concern -- I also mentioned to you that the counseling, once the child is identified as certified homeless, that the counseling that I heard that advocates offer and offer to the child very often will help either to reconcile the relationship between the parent and the child -- that doesn't always happen, because very often I would consider that sometimes that relationship has become toxic, and I mentioned what that is. That could be sexually abused, physically abused, and that is why a child, or a minor in this case, leaves home.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

The definition of a homeless youth speaks to the child not having housing due to economic hardship, living in motels, trailer parks, camp grounds, don't have a primary nighttime residence, living in cars, public parks. I'm not speaking about their living arrangements. We, I understand they're homeless. I get it. I, I, I understand that part. My part is in relation to the custody of that child. The child has to be under the custody of someone, whether it be the state or the parent. Am, am I not correct in that understanding, Mr. President? I mean, doesn't every

child have to be under the custody of either the state or the parent or someone?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Through you, Mr. President.

Actually, Senator Kane, I'm going to direct you to line 80 so we can clarify this. And actually it begins on line 78. Certified homeless youth means a person who is at least 15 years of age but less than 18 years of age, is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian. I think that clarifies for you specifically the question that you have been asking.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

We're halfway there -- thank you, Mr. President -- because it, it clarifies that the youth is not under the custody of the parent. But whose custody are they under then? They can't not be under someone or something's custody, correct? Am I, am I not, you know, I guess what I'm asking is if this youth is not under the parents' custody, they must be the custody of the State of Connecticut then. Am I not correct in that assumption?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Through you, Mr. President.

I do know that this is a point of time for these particular youth where they are in transition, so they may or may not. If they are emancipated, or maybe they're seeking help to go to court, if they're looking for some stability in their life in a resolution where maybe it would be appropriate to be in the custody of DCF, that could be a possibility also. But at, without knowing a particular case or an individual case or a particular scenario, I, I wouldn't know who has custody.

Homeless to me would mean that, at least under the definition of what we're talking about, there is no parent or legal guardian. So they're in flux, transition, however you want to put it. And, you know, if you think of a situation where a child has run away, perhaps from an abusive situation involving a parent, and that child goes to the street, the child has left custody, if you will, of the parent by physically leaving the home. And that child hopefully will look to a shelter or maybe in the school system and seek some help to find a solution to what has happened in home, in the home.

So I guess my interpretation would be this is a child that has been identified as now being homeless, may be in transition, and may be seeking either for some way to reconcile with their parents or look for an alternative.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And that child who seeks help in the shelter and/or through school, is the shelter and/or school a mandated reporter so that this child is able to be

entered into a program such as DCF or helped with state care?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Through you, Mr. President.

I know all the statutes come into action, particularly if it's a determination of abuse. There's a whole process that does happen. They are under our statutes but where I cannot site for you. I would have to do a lot of research to find exactly. But I, I do know that there is -- just from memory -- that there is certainly a process to address your scenario.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I guess what I'm getting at is if this child is in need of their birth certificate, I would imagine it's not during this interim period that you speak of, this transient period. At that point, they're looking for help, they're looking for shelter, they're looking for a meal, they're looking for a school, they're, things like that.

I, my, my question is, at some point, they must be assisted by some type of state or federal program, and once they are, why can't the state at that point obtain the gift, the birth certificate for them? I guess what, you know, what I'm trying to say is the, the scenarios that you paint for me, understood, they're not in their parents' custody. They may have run away. They may be living in the streets.

They're, they're living in the park, as it states in here.

But at some point, if they are interacting with an organization, whether it be a shelter or their school, then why isn't it at that time that even for identification purposes the individual would be allowed to get their gift, their birth certificate through the agency?

I, I guess this is -- you know, so -- and, and maybe if I'm not just portraying that, I apologize, but this is where I'm, I'm trying to wrap my arms around the legislation, because it seems to me that either the parent -- and we've, we've taken the parent out, because they're no longer in parental custody -- that if they're seeking help through some type of program or organization, then through that organization or through that agency we should be able to help them and get, provide them with that birth certificate so they can, you know, move on, so to speak, or, or help them in, with different things.

So I guess what I'm trying to ascertain is these individuals that we speak of in this legislation, why isn't anyone helping them with that currently? Why isn't our state agency helping them as opposed to them needing the ability to get it on their own? Is, is that, I know I took a long way to describe that situation, Mr. President, but I hope that explains what I'm trying to get at. If it doesn't, then I'm, I'm willing to do it again, but I'll give you the opportunity.

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Gosh, I thought that's what we were doing here with this legislation. You know, very often I've tried to describe -- just as a side comment -- I've tried to

describe to you the situation that these children might be in. You know, if they seek help, if they want to go to school, if they seek help in a shelter, it's a long process. It's a process where very often it may be reportable to DCF, and DCF may assist. It may be that once that transition has been met, they want to go to school. Well, I believe you need a birth certificate to prove that you, and also establish some sort of residency so you may go to school. It may get you to a foster home. It may be that they temporarily live in a shelter.

I can't cover every single scenario, Senator Kane, but this is the process that we think is appropriate certainly with the bill that I am today proposing and asking for your approval, that they would be able as one of the steps to going back to school to perhaps getting a job to attain some sort of, some sort of normalcy that they would be able to obtain the birth certificate, which is important. So I hope that, I hope that helps you. I can't go through every single scenario, but I tried to give you some examples.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I thank Senator Gerratana for her answers, and, yes, I mean, it, that does help, and, and we, you've taken me through a number of scenarios. I guess what, what, what I'm trying to figure out is whether it be through the parent, and in this case, they're, they're not under parental custody. And I get that they may be in between that time, but once they look for help or look to get or obtain that birth certificate, there must be someone in that chain that is helping them with something.

You know, I, I, I can't imagine a scenario where the, this person who has no place to live is probably thinking about their next meal let alone, oh, you know

what, I need my birth certificate. So I have to imagine that the, the priority is more basic, and at the point when they need to obtain that birth certificate, they will have been entered or entering some type of program or assistance or an organization or a, a, a faith-based group, what have you.

And at that point, that organization should be helping that individual obtain the birth certificate and whatever else they may need in order to set their live on the right path. So that's where I'm trying to figure out the necessity of the legislation. But I will listen to the remainder of the debate, and I appreciate the Senator for answering my questions.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further on the bill? Will you remark further on the bill?

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I just want to thank Senator Kane for his questions, actually, because I understand, it, it took me quite a while too to understand the danger, if you will, and the unsettledness and how profound it is for these children, for these minors. So I, I believe this is one step along the way, if you will, that will help them attain the life that I think will be good and wholesome and healthy. Mr. President, if there's no objection, I ask that this item be placed on our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Is there objection to placing this item on the Consent Calendar? Going once, going twice.

Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. Clerk.

Madam President, if the other items marked go would now be marked passed retaining their place on the Calendar, and if the Clerk would read the items on the second Consent Calendar so that we might proceed to a vote on that second Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On the second Consent Calendar for the day, page 6, Calendar 348, House Bill 5767; Calendar 352, House Bill Number 6452; also on page 6, Calendar 354, House Bill 6388; on page 7, Calendar 368, Senate Bill 900; page 18, Calendar 573, House Bill 6524; page 20, Calendar 591, House Bill 5727; Calendar 592, House Bill 5979; Calendar 593, House Bill 6523; Calendar 594, House Bill 6596; page 21, Calendar 605, House Bill 6567; page 23, Calendar 615, House Bill 6638; on page 24, Calendar 618, House Bill 6433; and Calendar 619, House Bill 6482; on page 33, Calendar 125, Senate Bill 906; and page 39, Calendar 422, House Bill 5718.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, will you call for a roll call vote. Oops, hold on a moment.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, Madam President.

Just I wanted to indicate did we get the item on Calendar page 33 --

THE CHAIR:

Yes, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

-- Calendar 125, Senate Bill 906?

THE CHAIR:

Yes, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Good. Thank you very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Yeah.

SENATOR LOONEY:

I appreciate it and move that we vote the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.
Senators please return to the Chamber. Immediate roll call on Consent Calendar 2 has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

The machine is open.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

No problem.

Senator Maynard.

Thank you.

If all members have voted, all members have voted, the machine will be closed.

Mr. Clerk, will you call the tally.

THE CLERK:

On the second Consent Calendar for today,

Total Number Voting	34
Necessary for Adoption	18
Those voting Yea	34
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	2

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. The Consent Calendar, second Consent Calendar passes.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President, first of all for a, a journal notation.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, Senator Coleman was absent today due to illness. We hope that he will be back with us next week, missed votes today. And also for a point of personal privilege, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you.

Madam President, two of our wonderful caucus colleagues on the, the Democratic staff in great