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ATTORNEY GENERAL



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**TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
MARCH 20, 2006**

I appreciate the opportunity to support Senate Bill 674, An Act Concerning Confidentiality Of and Access to Records Maintained by the Department of Children and Families.

This proposal makes a number of technical and minor changes to the law on confidentiality of child abuse and neglect records.

These statutes have been amended many times during the past 10 years, resulting in a confusing conglomeration of exemptions from the basic rule that such records are confidential. Contradictory provisions of existing law have led to court cases dealing with release of confidential information. Moreover, there have been needless judicial orders when common sense would dictate that records should be provided to the person requesting them. My office has worked with the Department of Children and Families and the Judicial Department on this legislation.

The goal of Senate Bill 674 is to create a more streamlined set of standards by which such information may be released. Subsection (g) of section 17a-28, as amended, would provide 27 different circumstances where the Department of Children and Families is required to release child abuse and neglect records without the consent of the person who is the subject of the record. Most of these exemptions are already scattered throughout our statutes.

Subsection (h) of section 17a-28, as amended, would provide 8 different circumstances where the Department may in its discretion release records without the consent of the person who is the subject of such records. Similar to the mandatory release section, most of these exceptions are already in our state law.

Finally, the subsequent sections are reorganized to provide a clear, easily-understood judicial process to facilitate the disclosure of such records.

I urge the committee's favorable consideration of Senate Bill 674.