

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE: 3/17/08: PUBLIC HEARING

Testimony of Carolyn Signorelli
Chief Child Protection Attorney

RB: 5926 - Support



Commission on Child Protection
State of Connecticut

Office of the Chief Child Protection Attorney

Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and esteemed Committee Members, my name is Carolyn Signorelli, Chief Child Protection Attorney.

I respectfully submit the following testimony in support of Sections 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7 of Raised Bill 5926 concerning technical amendments necessary to implement the new Family with Service Needs (FWSN) procedures and to support a truancy prevention pilot.

The amendments contained in Sections 1 through 3 of this proposed act are necessary in order to ensure that our state's procedures for handling children who are adjudicated from a Family with Service Needs are consistent with the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act and due process. It is important that these changes are enacted independent of the remainder of this proposal to ensure that appropriate procedural safeguards are in place as the juvenile courts address the needs of children subject to FWSN Petitions.

Sections 6 and 7 establishing truancy prevention grants administered by the Department of Education for the benefit of selected school districts support a crucial component of a comprehensive strategy to assist children at risk for entering the juvenile court system. Without addressing issues of truancy in our schools, the efforts to properly support children adjudicated from a Family with Service Needs and prevent further involvement in the juvenile justice system will be less effective given the significant role truancy plays in the behaviors of the at risk children the new FWSN laws seek to serve.

I respectfully request that the Committee act favorably in relation to the portions of this bill essential for implementing P.A. 05-250 and achieving its intended outcomes of appropriately meeting the needs of at risk children and preventing their involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Thank you for this opportunity to be heard. If there are any questions, I welcome them at this time.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Carolyn Signorelli'.

Carolyn Signorelli