



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 25, 2008**

The Department of Children and Families would like to offer comments on four of the bills before the Judiciary Committee today.

The Department of Children and Families supports **S. B. No. 37 AN ACT CONCERNING COMPUTER CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN**. Governor Rell has offered this legislation to strengthen laws aimed at individuals who solicit minors over the internet and then coerce them into providing inappropriate images of themselves or performing lewd acts over webcams or cell phones. The Department of Children and Families is committed to the safety and well-being of all children in Connecticut and we believe that this bill provides additional tools for law enforcement to combat child pornography.

Regarding, **S. B. No. 325 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE COMMISSION ON CHILD PROTECTION**, DCF supports the intent of this legislation. We would point out that DCF has submitted similar modifications to §17a-28 of the General Statutes (contained in §5 of this bill) in **H.B. No. 5131**, which is currently before the Select Committee on Children. The Department does suggest a modification to Section 3, line 113: DCF requests that it be changed to read "If the court or any party....." as opposed to: "counsel for the child."

The Department of Children and Families has some concerns regarding **H. B. No. 5529 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH WHO RUN AWAY**. While the Department is supportive of providing foster parents with whatever assistance they may need with the children in their care, we don't believe that permitting foster parents to have independent discretion in filing a Youth in Crisis petition is appropriate. As the legal guardian, DCF should be the entity that formally files and advocates this legal course of action, consistent with the child's best interests and in concert with the provisions of the child's treatment plan. To allow foster parents to be added as potential petitioners in Youth in Crisis matters raises the potential for conflict between the independent actions of foster parents and the child's treatment plan, which is developed with input from all providers, attorneys and the court.

Finally, DCF supports **H. B. No. 5530 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING MANDATED REPORTERS OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**. This bill adds persons who service or repair personal computers to the list of those professionals mandated by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect. Currently, the States of Missouri and South Carolina have similar provisions in their reporting statutes.