

March 16, 2009

Testimony of: Emma Jones, ESQ

Good Morning, Honorable Committee Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard on the issue of the Governor's proposal to eliminate the Children's Trust Fund.

My name is Emma Jones. I work for the Honorable John A. Keyes. I am the Executive Director of the Probate Court Service Center located in Hamden, CT. I am responsible for the Probate Court Kinship and Respite Programs that awards grants to support children living with court appointed grandparents and relative legal guardians.

I appear before you today in support of the Children's Trust Fund and in opposition to Bill No. 839 an Act Concerning Merger and Consolidation of various state agencies and the Governor's Proposal to Eliminate the Children's Trust Fund.

In the year 2000 about 65,000 children were living with grandparents, relatives and court appointed legal guardians in Connecticut. These numbers have continued to increase. I've had the opportunity to work with the guardians and in collaboration with the Children's Trust Fund for more than ten years. **These families have developed an outstanding and trusted relationship with the Children's trust Fund.**

These guardians elected to forgo foster care support which grants over \$1,200.00 per month per child (depending on needs) and they receive a once a year onetime \$250.00 per child grant through the Probate Court Kinship (Children's Trust Fund) Program.

These guardians and grandparents do this in order to avoid as much as possible DCF involvement. **They value their relationship with the Children's Trust Fund and the agency's personable, family oriented approach.**

The Children's Trust Fund's Kinship Program is the most cost efficient and effective child supported program in the state. It has a proven track record of being tremendously successful.

Over ten years ago, I piloted the first Kinship program in this state with a small \$25,000.00 grant administered through the New Haven Probate Court. The program expanded about five years ago to include the Regional Probate Court for Children's Matters. We have touched the lives of thousands of children by

- ❖ Paying for application fees for colleges and universities. (Notation: we had one grandmother send 4 children to college at the same time last year)**
- ❖ Purchasing baseball, football and other sport uniforms.**
- ❖ Helping to buy wheel chairs, eyeglasses, hearing aids, other supportive devices and computers.**
- ❖ Paying for music, dance, and karate classes.**

We also helped pay for many other developmental, enrichment, and other healthy child oriented activities that relative guardians and grandparents could not afford on their social security or transferred income.

The Kinship fund has been so successful it is now reaching families all across the state. It would be a terrible mistake to eliminate the Children's Trust Fund and transfer its programs into DCF because of all the reasons I have cited herein. Further and most critically for the following 3 (three) reasons:

- 1. The Children's Trust Fund is doing a great job; the people who are receiving their services like them and have a positive, supportive and nurturing relationship with them. The agency has proven that it gives the best value for your dollar.**
- 2. "Bigger Is Not Better" The perception is that DCF is too big and impersonal; it is a huge bureaucracy!**
- 3. Transferring a small program into a huge bureaucratic organization most likely will generate substantial hidden cost while losing other core family values. (The Trust Fund staff is already trained to work with the Kinship Program, as well as other**

programs across the state. DCF would have to hire and/ or train staff to facilitate this role.

Some of these families would fall through the crack because of fear and the perception that DCF has a reputation for being punitive. This may or may not be true, but the perception is widespread among grandparents and other caretakers. There would be a cost associated with the transfer of programs to DCF involving training and possibly rehiring staff to do what the Trust Fund is already doing so well

There is also a systemic question surrounding DCF at this time; as I understood it, the future of the Agency is uncertain given the recent scrutiny by its **own leadership** and state lawmakers. So it seems to me that while DCF is going thru this period of uncertainty and transition it hardly makes sense to take an already well known respectful and successful organization and collapse it into one that is being redefined.

In summation I recommend that as you ponder this issue, please consider the impact of your decision on some of our most vulnerable citizens i.e. relatives, caregivers, grandparents who are taking care of children while their parents are struggling with substance abuse, mental illness, incarceration, economic hardship and other challenges. I respectfully request that as you deliberate to also keep in mind that the Children's Trust Fund is the one organization in this state that is doing a good job stabilizing and helping families and children to stay together and grow.

Thank you!

Please note I have attached hereto a copy of an open letter to the Governor, OPM Secretary and Lawmakers.

RELATIVES, CAREGIVERS, AND GRANDPARENTS PILOT PROJECT PROGRAM AND CONCERNED CITIZENS

Respond to Mary Williams 98 Shelton Avenue Apt # 2 New Haven, Connecticut 06511 (203) 507-1312

February 13, 2009

<p>To:</p> <p>The Governor of the State of Connecticut, Honorable Governor Jodi Rell OPM Secretary, Robert L. Genuario Chairs of the Appropriations Committee, Honorable Toni Nathaniel Harp, State Senator Honorable John C. Geragosian, State Rep. and; Members of the Appropriations Committee</p>	<p>Chairs of the Select Committee on Children, Honorable Anthony J. Musto, State Senator Honorable Diana S. Urban, State Rep. and; Members of the Select Committee on Children Chairs of the Committee on Human Services Honorable Paul R. Doyle, State Senator Honorable Toni E. Walker, State Rep and; Members of the Committee on Human Services</p>
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This open letter signals our support for the Children's Trust Fund and its staff.

The Children's Trust Fund is an invaluable resource for relatives, caregivers and grandparents, while the parents of these children are struggling with substance abuse, mental illness, incarceration, economic hardship, divorce, and other challenges. But for the support and help of the Children's Trust Fund many of these families would not be able to function as well as they are today. The Children's Trust Fund has been helping families to stay out of the child welfare and other systems while ensuring positive growth and development. We respectfully request your help and consideration in sustaining the Children's Trust Fund and its staff in the interest of our most vulnerable citizens, relatives, grandparents and children.

Signed by the following, caregivers, grandparents, and concerned citizens:

<u>name</u>	<u>Signature</u>	<u>address</u>
MARTIN WHITE	<i>Martin White</i>	27 HILLTOP RD N.H. CT 06515
Deborah Hernandez	<i>Deborah Hernandez</i>	135 Derby Ave #210 NH CT 06511
Carolee H. Napoleon	<i>Carolee H. Napoleon</i>	67 Bristol St. N.H.C.
Carolyn Jackson, Director	<i>Carolyn Jackson, Director</i>	122 Formiston St Newtown, CT 06511
Emma Wright	<i>Emma Wright</i>	13 Botten Terrace, Newtown, CT 06511

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Date
Rachel A/ke	Rachel Allen	49 Stevens St	2/10/09
Roxann Blue	Roxann Blue	163 Dew. H St.	2/10/09
Delores Jones	Delores Jones	"	2/10/09
Patricia Blue	Patricia Blue	50 Front St. n.	2/10/09
Anthony Blue	Anthony Blue	"	2/10/09
Elyse Followway	Elyse Followway	77 Dickerman St #4 N.H	2/10/09
Mark oha Gibbs	Mark oha Gibbs	257 west Hazel	2-10-09
Crystal Gibbs	Crystal Gibbs	196 Henry street	2-10-09
Kena Smith	Kena Smith	194 Henry street	2-10-09
Janice McKenzie	Janice McKenzie	495 Sherman Hill	2/10/09
Mary E. Jones	Mary E. Jones	50 Delrio Dr	2/12/09
Kisha Lawrence	Kisha Lawrence	110 Finway Dr	2/12/09
Lorraine Cannon	Lorraine Cannon	82 Howard Ave Apt 2	2/12/09
TAVIS Henderson	TAVIS Henderson	495 Sherman Pkway	2-12-09
Pat Gibbs	Pat Gibbs	149 Dixwell Ave	2-12-09

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Date
Clinton Robinson	Clinton Robinson	25 Fountain Ter NH CT 06515	2/12/09
Daphne Johnson	Daphne Johnson	49 Olando St W HAVEN CT	2-12-09
FRANK ZUHOUSKI	Frank Zuhowski	16 Steven St. N.H. CT 06519	2-12-09
Sherry Miller	Sherry Miller	14 Clover Place	2-17-09
TESIDEE SIRS	Tedesee S	1152 CHIMERIC ST	2-17-09
Larry Narwin	Larry Narwin	1 New Ave New Haven CT	2-17-09
Jane Harlow	Jane Harlow	UNION AVE NEW HAVEN	2/17/09
BENAZINK	BENAZINK	118 DEWITT ST NH	2-17-09
Wayne Sim	Wayne Sims	191 Whalley Ave Ste 101	02/17/09
Pedro Guzman	Pedro Guzman	159 FANCY	
OLIMAR GUSTO	Olimar Gusto	284 Putnam Ave	2-17-09
Deborah J. Bowen	Deborah J. Bowen	246 HOWARD ST	2-17-09
Robena L Lane	Robena L Lane	188 New Lambrook CT	2-17-09
		112 Hartford St	2-17-09

Sign In Sheet 2-17-09

VIVIAN Parker 82 Day St #1014 776-7820 - 901-5032

Edith Hunter 18 Clover Pl - 772-2736 / 535-0890 ^{Daughter Home Bd}

MARIAN WHITE 27 HILTOP ROAD 928-8123
NEW HAVEN, CT 06515

Ida Carr 173 Franklin St #1014 891-5076

Hazel Glasper 365 Orchard St A-5 752-1177

Suanita Gregg-Hunter 56 Wayfair St 203-747-0961
203-498-0885

Laura Brewer 278 James St New Haven

Margaret Roberson 173 Pine St New Haven 203 809-1745

Deborah Hernandez 135 Derby Ave #210 New Haven CT, 06511 5681935

Ann Roberson 29B Richard St. New Haven, Ct. 06513 435-6983

Funil Johnson 733 Congress Ave New Haven 06519 915-5421

Ale Side Schlep 60 Newton St. Hamden, Ct 407-1230

Maud Jones 241 Downing New Haven 466 3286

Jaura Watts 135 Edgewood Ave New Haven Ct 06514 752-0601

Laura Stephens 235 Rowsett St. New Haven 772-4404

Shirley Gaye - 123. County street, New Haven. 503-0467

Judee Richards 16 Cassius St New Haven 782-9193

Sheila Ford 241 Columbus Ave New Haven 809-0062

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Date
Lakeisha Gullett	<i>Lakeisha Gullett</i>	17 Cassius St New Haven CT	2-9-09
Dumaine	<i>Dumaine</i>	834 Congress	2-9-09
MARY MARY WILSON	<i>Mary Wilson</i>	72 Truman St	2-9-09
Virginia Moore	<i>Virginia Moore</i>	201 Westinghouse Ave	2-10-09
Mark Child	<i>Mark Child</i>	149 William St Apr 22 New Haven	2-10-09
KEVIN SNARE	<i>Kevin Snare</i>	14 COVER PL NEW HAVEN CT	2-10-09
ROAND SNARE	<i>Roland Snare</i>	14 COVER PL NEW HAVEN CT	2-10-09
Rose Reja	<i>Rose Reja</i>	284 Putnam St NEW CT 06519	2-11-09
Torie Myers	<i>Torie Myers</i>	107 BURLINGAME	2/11/09
Chermy Brandi	<i>Chermy Brandi</i>	175 Frank St	2/12/09
Levi Ross	<i>Levi Ross</i>	175 Frank St 2nd Fl Engle 2/12/09	2-12-09
Stuart Carroll	<i>Stuart Carroll</i>	154 Frank St.	2-12-09
Gregory Abraham	<i>Gregory Abraham</i>	154 Frank St.	2-12-09
Susette Alicea	<i>Susette Alicea</i>	71 Truman St.	2-12-09
Dorothy Hall	<i>Dorothy Hall</i>	61 Truman	2-12-09
	<i>[Signature]</i>	15 Clark Pl	2-12-09

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Date
Antonio Graime	<i>Antonio Graime</i>	93 S. Cliff St, Ansonia Ct	2/10/09
Tiffany Brown	<i>Tiffany Brown</i>	31 Stuyvesant Court (back of)	2/10/09
Montee Coners	<i>Montee Coners</i>	655 Fifth St, New Haven, Ct	2/10/09
	<i>[Signature]</i>	50 [unclear] New Haven	2/10/09
	<i>[Signature]</i>	[unclear]	2/10/09
	<i>[Signature]</i>	[unclear]	2/10/09
	<i>[Signature]</i>	[unclear]	2/10/09
Jeff Edwards	<i>Jeff Edwards</i>	175 Frank St	2/10/09
ALAIN JARRY	<i>Alain Jarry</i>	175 Frank St	2/10/09
PA Romanco	<i>PA Romanco</i>	New Haven Ct	2/10/09
JOSEPH THREATT	<i>Joseph Threatt</i>	122 MUNSON ST	2/10/09
JAMMY Varney Baines	<i>Jammy Varney Baines</i>	56 TICCIELY ST New Haven Ct	2/10/09
LaShell Coners	<i>LaShell Coners</i>	67 Fulton street	
Katrice Coners	<i>Katrice Coners</i>	7502 - Bailey St Columbia Sc. 29203	2/10/09
Marcelle Campbell	<i>Marcelle Campbell</i>	586 E. T. GRASS BLVD	2/11/09
Kenneth Drifflin	<i>Kenneth Drifflin</i>	86 Auburn St New Haven,	2/11/09

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Date
Jamie Waines	<i>Jamie Waines</i>	1089 Elk Grass Blvd	2/11/09
Hanan Turner	<i>Hanan Turner</i>	31 Waverly New Haven	2-11-09
Shirley Warren	<i>Shirley Warren</i>	31 Waverly New Haven	2-11-09
Kymesia White	<i>Kymesia White</i>	228 Greenwich Ave	2/11/09
Christina Harrison	<i>Christina Harrison</i>	7 Waverly Street	2/11/09
Sandra Williams	<i>Sandra Williams</i>	11 Pennicpac	2/11/09
Marcie Banks	<i>Marcie Banks</i>	2 Waverly St.	2/11/09
Dorothy Johnson	<i>Dorothy Johnson</i>	37 Howe St. ^{ct} New Haven	2/11/09
Curtis Galloway	<i>Curtis Galloway</i>	241 Guinness Ave	2/11/09
Stephanie Sumler	<i>Stephanie Sumler</i>	98 Day Street	2-11-09
M. Hunter	<i>M. Hunter</i>	279 Waverly	2-11-09
Derrick Clark	<i>Derrick Clark</i>	66 Day St.	2-11-09
Nancy Lopez	<i>Nancy Lopez</i>	14-A Circle Green	2/11/09
Rosa Ortiz	<i>Rosa Ortiz</i>	15 Waverly	2/11/09
DAVID LEE	<i>David Lee</i>	13 Waverly	2-11-09
FRANK DOUGHLY	<i>Frank Doughly</i>	49 UNION AVE	2-11-09

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Date
Doreen Foster	[Signature]	239 Sheffield	FEB 11, 09
TRAVIS JAMES	Travis James	101 Orchard St	Feb 11, 09
James Jones	James Jones	92 Day St	Feb 11, 09
CRAIG WILLIAMS	Craig Williams	320 Edgewood Ave	2-11-09
Alexis Bigelow	Alexis Bigelow	111 Park St 125	2-12-09
Jeff Erbe	[Signature]		2-12-09
Shane Giercz	[Signature]	Round Hill Rd. Guilford	2-12-09
Gary Ferdinand	Gary Ferdinand	111 Attucks Newtown	2-12-09
Kathryn Armstrong	Kathryn Armstrong	41 Bishop St Newtown	2-12-09
Walter Goodwell	[Signature]	1/2 Cambridge Street	2-12-09
Tracy Matthews	Tracy Matthews	90 Park of Newtown	2-12-09
Edg Wells	Edg Wells	90 Park St	2-12-09
LLISE COBIAN	LLISE COBIAN	90 PARK ST	2-12-09
Maudessa	Mo Smelling	40 Park St	2-12-09
Deborah A. Jones	Deborah A. Jones	90 Park St Apt #128	2-12-09
Vinnie Smith	Vinnie Smith	100 Day St	2-12-09

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Date
Patricia Burt	<i>Patricia Burt</i>	163 Beavitt St ^{no #}	2/9/09
Lillian Williams	<i>Lillian Williams</i>	28 Brewster St	2/9/09
Adelaide Schütz	<i>Adelaide Schütz</i>	60 Newton St. Haverhill	2/9/09
Mary Anderson	<i>Mary P. Anderson</i>	171 Katherine Dr. Haverhill	2-9-09
Elizabeth W. Antrum	<i>Elizabeth W. Antrum</i>	309 Howard Ave. New Haven Ct. 06519	2-9-09
Robert Gibson	<i>Robert Gibson</i>	55 Cement St #9 New Haven Ct 06511	2/9/09
Virginia Barnes	<i>Virginia Barnes</i>	254 meadowland rd	2/9/09
JANNIE GLOVER	<i>Jannie Glover</i>	398 Whalley Ave Ct	2/9/09
Mary	<i>DeStefano</i>	430 Blatley AVE N.H.	2-9-09
James	<i>DeStefano</i>	436 Blatley Ave	2-9-09
Emma Wright	<i>Emma Wright</i>	13 Batter terrace	2-9-09
Edith Harper	<i>Edith Harper</i>	18 Caves Place	2-9-09
Virian Parker	<i>Virian Parker</i>	82 Day St	2-9-09
Mary Williams	<i>Mary Williams</i>	98 Shelton Ave	2-9-09
Julie Johnson	<i>Julie Johnson</i>	733 Congress Ave	2-9-09
Abu Bakr	<i>Abu Bakr</i>	68 West Prospect St	2-9-09

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Date
SUSIE EVANS	Audie Elynd	APT 5306 339 EASTON ST NEW HAVEN	2/17/09
Margaret Roberson	Margaret Roberson	173 Pine St New Haven	2-17-09
Laura Brewer	Laura Brewer	278 James St New Haven	2-17/09
Jada Carr	Jada Carr	173 Franklinst 1014	2/17/09
MARIAN WHITE	Marian White	NEW HAVEN 27 HENRIOT RD. ST 06515	2/17-09
Hazel Calasper	Hazel Calasper	365 Orchard St A-5	2/17/09
Quanita Greg Hunter	Quanita Greg Hunter	56 wayfarer St NY	2/17/09
Deborah Hernandez	Deborah Hernandez	135 Derby Ave. #310 NH	2-17-09
Lynn Roberson	Lynn Roberson	29B Richard St. 06511	2-17-09
Laura wa As	Laura wa As	135 Foxwood Ave	2/17/09
Mary E. Evans	Mary E. Evans		2-17-09
Mary E. Evans	Mary E. Evans	2600 Bussett St	2-17-09
Shirley Gray	Shirley Gray	133. Cority Street	2-17-09
Audrey Richards	Audrey Richards	16 Cassio St	2-17-09
William Ferriss	William Ferriss	29 Greiner St	2-17-09
Candyn Jackson	Candyn Jackson		

Deborah Hernandez

Beverly B. Herbert
54 Benham Rd.
Groton, Ct.

I would like to thank the Judiciary Committee for allowing me to speak on behalf of the New Haven probate court. As I stated in my testimony, during my years working with incarcerated parents I had the opportunity to interact with grandparents, other relatives, as well as judges, social workers that were working diligently to find safe loving homes for children. The New Haven probate court did it well. Over the years I had heard so much about judge Keyes junior and senior, so many caretakers of children expressed gratitude for their assistance. Hearing so much about the excellent service I finally got the opportunity to meet Judge Keyes at a kinship fund dinner. Found out that he was a mere mortal. I was so impressed with the people who came to the dinner, the lawyers, judges, caretakers, and volunteers, that I wrote a letter to the New London Day. I will include the letter.

Ms. Jones, along with the rest of the staff has done an excellent job in finding caring guardians for children. She and her workers, volunteers know the community, which is invaluable when doing this kind of work. I do not think that the work that they do could be done by an organization like DCF. I do not think it could be done on the same budget.

The kinship program is a very special program that should be kept on the local level with people who live in the community. They certainly have the best interest of the children because they are relatives, friends and neighbors. Not only should their budgets not be cut but it should be increased. I think this program should be duplicated in every state in the country. I think this is the kind of program that President Obama had in mind when he talked about people working together in their communities to improve the lives of children. This program exemplifies that spirit. Children need to know that they are valued and wanted and need to stay in their own communities whenever possible. There is no greater work than caring for our most vulnerable citizens who will be our future leaders if we care for them properly. I think it would be a grave mistake takes this service from the local community. I hope that you consider the children as well as the cost when you are making your decision.

Thank you very much.

Marian White
27 Hilltop Road
New Haven, CT 06515

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February 18, 2009

The Governor of the State of Connecticut, Honorable Governor Jodi Rell OPM Secretary, Robert L. Genuario Chairs of the Appropriations Committee, Honorable Toni Nathaniel Harp, State Senator Honorable John C. Geragosian, State Rep. and, Members of the Appropriations Committee Chairs of the Select Committee on Children, Honorable Anthony J. Musto, State Senator Honorable Diana S. Urban, State Rep. and, Members of the Select Committee on Children Chairs of the Committee on Human Services Honorable Paul R. Doyle, State Senator Honorable Toni E. Walker, State Rep and, Members of the Committee on Human Services

This letter is in regards to Honorable Jodi Rell proposal to give The Children's Trust Fund to DCF. I'm a grandparent raising one of my grandchildren. I received custody when DCF and Police brought her to me. I was in the midst of moving out of state at the time after raising my two sons. I stopped my life to take care of my grandchild, this decision I will never regret. DCF gave me nothing to provide for this child. I'm very upset with DCF because they could at least given me a box of pampers for this child and I would have been glad for that. I feel that it would have cost DCF a lot more than a box of pampers to place my grandchild in their system. DCF did nothing for me and I truly believe that if The Children's Fund is placed in their hands not one dime will go to the relatives, caregivers, and grandparents. It's sad when we find ourselves after raising our own children, must turn around and raise our grand and great grand or other family members children and now DCF wants to take our programs away. This is unacceptable.

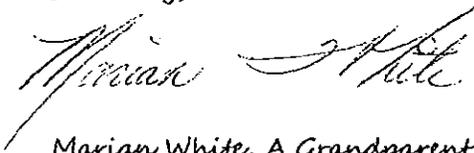
I and my grandchild have received awesome support from the Probate Court in times when I didn't have anyone else to turn to. If it wasn't for the love and support from the Probate Court who knows if I would have been able to continue to care for my grandchild. Each time I found myself getting stressed out, worrying about how I was going to have enough money for my grandchild a winter coat, shoes or even to allow her to participate in any extra activities

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that she enjoys, doing the Probate Court came to my rescue. These funds need to and should be left with the Probate Court because they are doing a hell of a job for me, my grandchild and all other persons raising someone else's child.

In ending this letter I would add that the Honorable Governor Jodi Rell needs to sit down and talk with us caregivers who are raising our children. Once she hears our stories concerning DCF I have faith that she will indeed throw out this proposal and support the Probate Court.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marian White". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Marian White, A Grandparent Raising Her Grandchild