

**CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCACY PROJECT**

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Select Committee on Children  
Connecticut General Assembly

Re: H.B. 6419, An Act Concerning Transparency and Accountability  
of the Department of Children and Families

Honorable Members of the Select Committee on Children:

I am an attorney with 20 years' experience in child protection cases. I am currently the supervising attorney of the Child and Youth Advocacy Project of New Haven Legal Assistance, which provides representation to young people who are the subjects of abuse and neglect petitions filed by DCF.

I am writing to comment on H.B. 6419, which would create a task force to study a number of very specific proposals relating to DCF's programs and services. The proposals listed in the bill have, for the most part, already been recommended by the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee (2007 report) or by the Court Monitor in connection with the settlement of the Juan F. case. I am concerned that establishing a task force would only delay implementation of much-needed improvements in the oversight of the care that is provided by our State to children.

For example, a task force should not be needed to study whether DCF should determine measurable outcomes for every child in its care who receives services from a private provider, and incorporate such outcomes in DCF's contract with each such provider (Sec. 1.(a)(1)(D)). Millions of dollars are spent each year on such services, and I am not aware of any current method of assessing their effectiveness for individual child clients.

The case and service needs review process described in Sec. 1(a)(1)(C) is very similar to what is already taking place as the result of the Juan F. settlement. The service needs reviews are having a beneficial effect, according to the Court Monitor. This process should continue without the delay involved in setting up a task force.

Given the beneficial nature of the substantive measures that are listed in the bill, it would be appropriate to amend the bill, to provide for the implementation of the measures that are listed in Sec. 1(a)(1).

I appreciate the opportunity to provide my comments to the committee. Please feel free to contact me at (203) 776-3838, ext. 103.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mildred Doody".

Mildred Doody  
Attorney at Law