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February 18, 2009

Good morning Chairmen Musto, Urban and the members of the Select Committee on Children. I am here to testify on behalf of HB 877, 878, 879. The reality of it is that I submitted HB 5692: An Act Requiring the Department of Children and Families to notify noncustodial parents of certain abuse and neglect investigations.

It is my understanding that a series of bills and recommendations will be passed by this committee and I would like to suggest that somehow, somehow we include language which will require DCF to notify noncustodial parents of certain abuse and neglect investigations.

The reason why I submitted this bill is because I have a constituent who ran into a problem with DCF. The noncustodial parent was paying his child support and his child was living with his mom who had re-married and had her own family. Unfortunately, a situation occurred which resulted in a DCF investigation. The noncustodial parent was not aware of the investigation because the mother of the child threaten the child about going to his dad with any information. In the meantime, DCF conducted an interview of his child and because the child could not handle the situation his grades in school suffered and not until he finally broke down was the noncustodial parent able to understand what was going on.

What I am asking this committee to do is to ensure that a noncustodial parent who is living up to his/her obligation to be informed if DCF is conducting any investigations to which their child will be involved. Our families are not the "traditional" families which one might be accustomed to. IF any interviews are going to be conducted then both parents have a right to know and be there for the support of the child(ren) who are involved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andres Ayala, Jr.