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**TESTIMONY OF  
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN  
FEBRUARY 19, 2009**

I appreciate the opportunity to support House Bill 6420, An Act Concerning a Leadership Audit of the Department of Children and Families.

This proposal allocates \$300,000 to conduct a legislative audit of the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) organizational leadership and management. The audit will review the skills, education and experience necessary for leadership position, examine current staff for appropriate skills, education and experience, and establish performance measures for each leadership position.

This audit -- long overdue -- was one of my recommendations to the committee in October, 2008. The current DCF organization consistently fails Connecticut's children. This review can help ensure that DCF management is responsive and responsible, and that leaders with the right skills are in the right positions, establishing appropriate criteria to measure the effectiveness of each leadership position.

I urge the committee to consider one important additional task for this audit -- to review whether the existing management structure is efficient and effective. DCF is replete with overlapping layers of bureaucracies, from office supervisors to regional supervisors to bureau chiefs. Necessary structural change should be implemented as soon as possible to improve DCF management's effectiveness and efficiency.

Further, the agency pays millions of dollars to private contractors for critical services to children in need -- without effective oversight or quality assurance review. Do we really know whether our scarce tax dollars are paying for the most efficient and effective delivery of critical services to children in need? Are there services -- Riverview Hospital costing over \$860,000 per year for each resident, for example -- that could be provided in a more cost-effective way? Are there areas where enhanced community-based supports could provide more appropriate services at a lower cost? These critically important issues should be addressed as soon as possible.

I strongly urge the committee's favorable consideration of House Bill 6420 with the suggested additional task for the audit.