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Select Committee on Children
Testimony re: S.B. No. 53 "An Act Requiring the Department of Children and Families to Notify Noncustodial Parents of Certain Abuse and Neglect Allegations"

Good afternoon Chairwoman Urban and Chairman Musto:

I want to thank you for raising S.B. No. 53 "AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO NOTIFY NONCUSTODIAL PARENTS OF CERTAIN ABUSE AND NEGLECT INVESTIGATIONS". Last year this bill was passed by this committee but unfortunately it did not get passed by the House or the Senate. I am here again to testify once again about the importance of this bill.

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 threatened 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.

Thank God nothing happened to the son of the noncustodial parent but here is why it is so important to let the noncustodial parent know about what is going on in the life of their children. Although there was no physical harm which came to the noncustodial child, but I would venture to say that some psychological harm did occur. The child was threatened by the custodial parent to not tell his noncustodial parent anything about the interview or about the happenings in the house. The child was confused and was hurt because he could not tell anyone about what was going on. This child went from an honor roll student to a student who was just about failing. This child went from a child who was very confident to a child who questioned who he was and what he believed in.