

Select Committee on Children

PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA

Tuesday, February 8, 2011

Testimony of Carolyn Signorelli
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SB No. 198: Opposed
As drafted

Good Morning Senator Musto, Representative Urban and esteemed Committee Members. My name is Carolyn Signorelli, Chief Child Protection Attorney for the State of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony regarding Senate Bill 198, AN ACT CONCERNING RIVERVIEW HOSPITAL, calling for its closure.

Based upon the current draft of this bill, I am opposed to its enactment. I agree that it is essential to ensure that each child placed at Riverview is receiving appropriate and necessary treatment in the least restrictive setting possible. It is also critical that this state ensure that we have sufficient facilities and community services available to provide services to children with mental health needs in their communities and homes whenever possible. However, it does not follow that each child currently or potentially placed at Riverview can be appropriately transitioned to a private facility. Without knowing which private facilities are being proposed or whether they are adequate to meet the needs of children with severe psychiatric disorders that may place them or others at risk of substantial harm, it is premature to simply authorize the closure of Riverview.

Whether or not private facilities, particularly for-profit facilities, can and will adequately and safely care for children with serious mental health needs, requires further study.

Therefore, I respectfully request that this bill be opposed by the Committee as currently drafted. Thank you for this opportunity to be heard. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carolyn Signorelli