



State of Connecticut

DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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**TESTIMONY OF CHRISTINE RAPILLO
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SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN
MARCH 1, 2011**

**S.B. No 1043, AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESS TO RECORDS OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

The Office of the Chief Public Defender supports passage of **Raised Senate Bill 1043, An Act Concerning Access to Records of the Department of Children and Families**. This bill makes a number of technical and minor changes to the law on confidentiality of child abuse and neglect records in an effort to clarify when and to whom records can be released. The goal of this proposal is to create a more streamlined set of standards so that employees of the department can more easily navigate the rules on confidentiality. The changes will also ensure that members of the public and those who deal directly with DCF will be able to ascertain which records will be available and will have easier access to the records that can be legally released.

Subsection (g) of section 17a-28, as amended, would provide 27 different circumstances where the Department of Children and Families is required to release child abuse and neglect records without the consent of the person who is the subject of the record. Most of these exemptions are already scattered throughout our statutes. Subsection (h) of section 17a-28, as amended, would provide 8 different circumstances where the Department may in its discretion release records without the consent of the person who is the subject of such records. These are similar to the mandatory release sections already in our state law and do not provide any significant expansions of DCF current policy.

This proposal will enable both DCF and the public to have a clearer understanding of when child welfare records can be legally released. The Office of the Chief Public Defender supports its passage.