



## State of Connecticut

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DEPUTY REPUBLICAN LEADER

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PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

February 28, 2011

Good morning Chairs Slossberg and Morin, Ranking Members McLachlan and Hwang, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee.

On behalf of the House Republican Caucus, I'd like to thank the committee for holding this hearing on Senate Bill 1059, *An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Commission on Enhancing Agency Outcomes*.

Back in January, Legislative Republicans came together to announce what we feel are fundamental, "Common Sense" Principles that our government should abide by especially during these trying times. These are the same principles our families are living by and we should follow their example. One of the Principles we feel important to highlight while commenting on SB 1059 is, "You should have all the government you need, but only the government you need."

Too often, when there are a lot of different interest groups pulling in all different directions, we in the legislature lose focus, complicate things, and confuse the public. If section 21 of SB 1059 were to become law, we will eventually have not one, but two plans regarding what do to with Riverview Hospital. Last year, the legislature required the Department of Children and Families to craft a similar plan, which is due less than two months from now.

Section 21 requires a lot of people to consider a lot of things. And, that's fine; the futures of vulnerable children are at stake. But, let's commit to one simple thing: let's commit to

getting the State of Connecticut out of the business of trying to take care of children with severe mental illness.

There is not doubt that extensive planning will be necessary. Whether it's DCF, DMHAS, OPM, or any other state agency creating a plan, it should unequivocally focus on finding better alternatives for these children. Finding alternatives and appropriately placing children in other settings will not happen overnight. But, we need to take the first step.

Therefore, we ask the Committee to consider SB 198, a bill Legislative Republicans proposed which would close Riverview Hospital and relocate patients to privately run facilities in the state.

Industry experts believe that private institutions across Connecticut can provide the same or better quality of care for about half the cost, potentially saving taxpayers more than \$30 million annually.

For example, workers compensation claims for one year at Riverview were \$2.5 million compared to \$2,500 for the same period at the privately run Glenholme School in Washington, CT. The Commission on Enhancing Agency Outcomes acknowledged that it is difficult to imagine that even the most expensive community-based care would approach the current cost per child at Riverview Hospital. Further savings could be realized if the Riverview campus were repurposed or sold.

Should the committee decide to take further action on SB 1059, we ask that Section 21 of this bill be amended to actually close Riverview Hospital and privatize the patient services currently provided there, rather than continuing to "plan and study" its closure. The Commission on Enhancing Agency Outcomes concluded that "at a time when the State is struggling to balance its budget and more people are in need of services, it is appropriate to finally answer the question of how, without compromising care, the State can move away from caring for its citizens in state-run institutions."

Sections 294 & 295 require the Secretary of OPM to evaluate all purchase of service contracts for five state agencies and devise a system to consolidate these contracts. The Secretary also must review existing personal service agreements of state agencies with a term of three or more years and determine whether such agreements are a good value to the state. The Secretary must then recommend changes to contracting practices with the goal of achieving 10% savings in the costs to the state for all personal service agreements.

While we support any movement toward greater efficiencies in contracting and privatization, we would also ask the Committee to consider Legislative Republicans proposed HB 5894 that requires DCF to privatize the Connecticut Children's Place, the Connecticut Juvenile Training School, and as mentioned above, Riverview Hospital.

HB 5894 also proposed that DDS privatize services for community living arrangements, supported living and day programs; and lastly that the DEP contract with the Connecticut

Forest and Park Association to maintain state parks, forests and boat launches. To be clear, we are not proposing to sell these assets.

I think we all agree that as public servants to our constituents, we should be doing all we can to continue to create an efficient government so that we can provide improved customer service to every citizen.

Thank you again for the opportunity to come before you and we look forward to working with the Committee.

If you have any questions, I would be happy to take them now.