

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC HEARING  
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**SB 1164**

Testimony of Carolyn Signorelli  
Chief Child Protection Attorney



Commission on Child Protection  
State of Connecticut

Office of the Chief Child Protection Attorney  
330 Main Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Hartford, CT 06106  
860/566-1341

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Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and esteemed Committee Members, for the record, my name is Carolyn Signorelli, Chief Child Protection Attorney for the State of Connecticut.

I respectfully submit the following testimony concerning **SB 1164, AN ACT DELAYING IMPLEMENTATION OF PROVISIONS TO RAISE THE AGE OF JUVENILE COURT JURISDICTION FOR YOUTH SEVENTEEN YEARS OF AGE.**

As many of you are aware the Commission on Child Protection and my office are responsible for the system of legal representation for children and parents in cases of abuse, neglect and termination of parental rights brought by the Department of Children and Families in Juvenile Court. My office is also responsible for providing Guardians ad Litem in delinquency proceedings and also reimburses attorneys for representing individuals provided with counsel through discretionary "interest of justice" appointments who don't pay for their services. It is my responsibility to ensure that children and parents receive quality legal representation consistent with the Standards of Practice that the Commission on Child Protection has established pursuant to its enabling legislation.

While I agree with the policies behind Raise the Age and believe that funding the short term costs to the system should be prioritized due to the short and long term reduction in overall system costs and the benefits to Connecticut youth who are involved with the criminal justice system, I want the legislature to be aware that these measures will result in a cost increase for my agency

According to the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance (CTJJA), 4000 16-year-olds were removed from the adult system in 2010 as a result of Raise the Age legislation. Our office made approximately 400 assignments for Guardians ad litem and

*"interest of justice" attorney appointments in relation to those 16-year-olds for a total additional cost to our agency of approximately \$357,600.00. CTJJA is estimating that 6000 17-year-olds will be removed from the adult system in 2012. If we apply a 10% increase to our assignments once the 17 year olds are brought into the system, as we experienced with the 16-year-olds, this will mean another 600 assignments or \$536,400.00 as a result of Raise the Age going into effect.*

*. Unfortunately, we have no other program reductions to experience or budgetary sources from which to fund this new expenditure. Therefore, it will be important that if Raise the Age does proceed on schedule, that the Commission receive additional funding as well.*

*Thank you for this opportunity to be heard. If you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them.*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Carolyn Signorelli*