

Select Committee on Children

PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA

Tuesday, February 8, 2011

Testimony of Carolyn Signorelli  
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**SB No. 746: In Support**  
with suggested modification

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Good Morning Senator Musto, Representative Urban and esteemed Committee Members. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony regarding Senate Bill 746, AN ACT REQUIRING AN INVESTIGATION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WHEN A PERSON IS ARRESTED FOR DRUNKEN DRIVING WITH A CHILD IN THE VEHICLE.

I support this bill, because a parent who drives under the influence with a child or children in their vehicle has, at least on that occasion, neglected the child or children and placed them at risk of imminent danger. The lack of judgment exercised renders it necessary to ensure that whatever issues lead to the behavior are identified and addressed.

I would simply offer two comments in relation to the language of the bill:

- The use of the phrase "shall investigate" could be interpreted as foreclosing a decision by the Department to place the case on the Differential Response (DRS) track, which is not considered an "investigation." The legislation could instead require that "the Department shall *accept* the report..."
- In addition, the standard of determining "whether any children in such person's custody are safe and *cared for*" constitutes the introduction of a slightly new standard through the use of the term "cared for" which is not defined. In order for this statute to be consistent with existing legislation and the introduction of Differential Response, the language should reference determining "whether a child has been abused or neglected" as required by C.G.S. §17a-101g(b) or whether the family is eligible to receive voluntary services offered through DRS.

Therefore, I respectfully request that this bill be voted on favorably, but that the language is amended to ensure that these referrals can be handled through DRS once it is implemented and that such referrals are not treated

differently than other cases due to the introduction of the undefined standard of "cared for."

Thank you for this opportunity to be heard. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carolyn Signorelli