



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**Public Hearing Testimony**

**Higher Education & Employment Advancement Committee**

**March 1, 2012**



***S.B. No. 146 AN ACT CONCERNING FOSTER CHILDREN IN HIGHER EDUCATION***

The Department of Children and Families **supports** section 1 of S.B. No. 146 An Act Concerning Foster Children in Higher Education. This would provide a priority for former DCF foster children for class registration at public institutions of higher education.

This bill recognizes that many youth who pursue post-secondary educational opportunities from the DCF foster care system, are behind many of their peers academically when they begin college or apprenticeship programs due to many challenges that they have faced in their young lives.

The Department provides financial assistance for post-secondary school education expenses<sup>1</sup>, within available DCF budget appropriations, to students up to their 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday, or the end of the educational semester/trimester/quarter immediately following their 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Last year, there were 494 former foster children receiving financial assistance for college tuition from DCF. Total expenditures for these youth in FY 2011 totaled \$4,006,075.

To be eligible for assistance with post-secondary school education expenses, young adults shall:

- be adjudicated neglected, abused or uncared for and committed to the Department of Children and Families by the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters pursuant to C.G.S. §46b-121 and §46b-129 at the time the child turns 18 years old;
- have obtained a high school diploma or a Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED);
- have exhibited adequate social, behavioral and life skills, as assessed by the adolescent social worker assessment and the case history;
- have indicated their desire to continue receiving services through their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday;
- have successfully completed a DCF-approved Life Skills Program;
- maintain cooperation and compliance with the Department through an individual post-majority contract;
- begin full-time post-secondary education for the first semester/trimester/quarter (excluding summer sessions) immediately after receiving his or her high school diploma or GED; and
- be in good standing (pursuant to the standards of the educational institution) in a full-time educational or vocational-education program, including Job Corps.

The Department welcomes the opportunity to work with members the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee to expand educational and employment opportunities to young adults who have come out of the DCF foster care system.

<sup>1</sup> DCF Policy 36-94