

Testimony to the Appropriations Committee
February 19, 2013
On Proposal to Merge Commission on Children

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Good evening.

My name is Rachel Pawloski and I am a 14 year old active member of the East Hampton High School community.

As an adolescent my trust is with you, the general assembly to make the right decisions that could alter my future and the help me as a developing member of society to make the best of what I can be.

In 2006 my mom – Kimberley Fontaine and I went through Parent Leadership Training Institute and its children's program, CLTI, and she graduated 20 weeks later with new hope and newly acquired knowledge to not only be an even better parent to me and my 5 siblings, but how to help those who desperately need a voice and make changes in our community for kids and families.

PLTI is a program that the Commission on Children created to help parents learn to become community leaders and become engaged in civics in their community and state. Without PLTI or an independent Commission on Children, I fear that my voice could be lost.

Many of you sitting in this room right now might not take what I say to you under consideration because of the clothes I wear or how I may speak, but most of all because of my age.

It is important to me that you continue to keep the Commission on Children intact as an independent commission that represents me and my interests because, I am able to feel that my rights and needs would be protected as I do not yet have the right to vote.

There is no other entity that exists to ensure that what is best for me and other kids is not forgotten under the weight of meeting budget goals, spending caps, or partisan politics.

If you take away or in any way change the Commission on Children, you deny me a seat at your table.

I urge you to reject this proposed change now and in the future.

Thank you.