

To Appropriations Committee – 2/19/13

Governor's Proposal to Consolidate Legislative Commissions

Dear Honorable Senators and Representatives,

My name is Christine O'Grady, I am providing testimony to you today in response to Governor Malloy's proposal to consolidate the Legislative Commissions. My position is that this would result in a great disservice to you, the legislators. The Commissions serve as experts in their respective fields and provide cutting edge focused non-partisan information and data to legislators so you may make prudent decisions. Blending the commissions would dilute the efficacy and integrity of their work making their messages watered down,

In particular, the Commission on Children has provided expertise in the area of family policy issues facing the legislature since 1985 and continues to do so even after mandated furloughs have it functioning at less than optimal capacity.

The Commission brings into the state \$1.45 for every dollar invested in its budget. That money goes to support initiatives focusing on children and families throughout the state. It also helps the public participate in state government with 2500 graduates of Parent Leadership Training Institute. These graduates have generated more than a million dollars in volunteer time.

The Commission is also a keystone for targeted policy research on children's issues. Such research includes First Words, First Steps, kindergarten through 3 literacy tool assessments, a study on the impact of natural disasters on children and the Commission determined the impact of parent engagement on child outcomes in the community. Most importantly, for me anyway, it made me take a good hard look at my community and how it treats our children. I went from a person whose voice didn't matter to an activist for children's issues and an active participant on local boards, councils as well as my local town committee.

Please keep the Commissions intact. Consolidating them will only hurt your effectiveness as legislators.

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