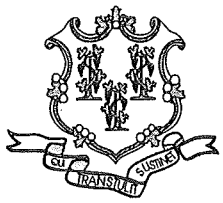
STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



Public Hearing Testimony

Judiciary Committee
April 5, 2013

H.B. No. 5666 AN ACT CONCERNING THE FORFEITURE OF MONEYS AND PROPERTY RELATED TO SEXUAL EXPOLOITATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) **supports** H.B. No. 5666, An Act Concerning the Forfeiture of Moneys and Property Related to Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking. This bill would expand the offenses that are subject to forfeiture of money and property used in, or obtained or derived from the commission of, sexual exploitation and human trafficking, to include prostitution and promoting prostitution in the third degree.

Sadly, we have seen a dramatic increase of trafficking of minors in Connecticut over the past several years. In response, DCF has increasingly sharpened its focus on the growing issue of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking afflicting children involved with the child welfare system. Human Trafficking is the third most profitable criminal industry in the world, generating an estimated $32 billion per year.[1] Most simply, Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking constitutes modern day slavery. The reaction of moral outrage that is prompted in the face of such child victimization has fueled considerable work here at the Department to galvanize a systemwide collaborative effort to combat it.

While much attention has been paid to this human rights violation in other countries, including Cambodia and Thailand, it is perhaps less widely understood that child trafficking is occurring in the United States at an alarming rate. The United States Department of Justice estimates that 200,000 American children are potentially trafficked each year into the sex trade. The United States Department of State "Trafficking in Persons Report 2010" found that the majority of domestic victims enslaved in the sex industry are runaway and homeless youth. Nationally, 450,000 children run away from home each year. One of every three teens on the street will be lured toward prostitution within 48 hours of leaving home. This means at least 150,000 children are lured into prostitution each year. The average age of children victimized by pornography and prostitution in the United States is 12 years old.[2] Data shows that children who are involved with child welfare services and in the foster care system are at a much higher risk to be recruited into the sex industry and prostitution.

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[1] *ILO, A global alliance against forced labor: 2005.*
[2] *National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Throwaway Children/NISMART-2.*

DCF has been and remains committed to addressing the issue of trafficking within our borders. Since 2008, when collaborative efforts in Connecticut significantly increased -- both internally at DCF and externally with the community -- there have been approximately 100 children who have been identified and confirmed as victims of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking. Of the victims identified, **ninety-eight percent** have been involved with child welfare services in some manner. Many of these children have been victimized while in foster care or congregate care. Connecticut DCF has put forth tremendous efforts to end the sale of our children. These efforts fall within three main categories: Identification and Response; Awareness and Education; and Restore and Recovery.

We urge your support for this legislation.