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COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN
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**RAISED BILL 653, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND
OUT OF STATE PLACEMENT FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE PURVIEW OF SUCH AGENCY**

The Office of Chief Public Defender opposes passage of *Raised Bill 653, An Act Concerning the Department of Children and Families and Out of State Placement for Children under the Purview of Such Agency*. This bill unnecessarily restricts the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families ability to place children committed as abused or neglected in an out of state facility. Statutorily restricting the Commissioner's ability to send committed children out of state is unnecessary and will result in children being denied the most appropriate treatment. Under this proposal, the Commissioner could only send a child committed as a delinquent to an out of state facility. DCF has made a concerted effort to keep children who require congregate care in state. There were recently fewer than 80 children placed outside of Connecticut and most of them were in facilities in neighboring states.

Out of state placements are used in the most difficult situations and should not be restricted to delinquency cases. Connecticut lacks sufficient facilities to provide for children requiring treatment for issues like problem sexual behavior and severe aggression. This is especially true for girls and young women suffering from trauma and mental health issues. The Commissioner should be able to use discretion to decide the best placement for any child in her custody. This Committee should not report favorably on this proposal.