



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

## *TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE*

*March 4, 2014*

*Anne Foley, Chair*

*Child Poverty and Prevention Council*

Testimony Supporting House Bill No. 5323

### AN ACT CONCERNING THE CHILD POVERTY AND PREVENTION COUNCIL

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Senator Slossberg, Representative Abercrombie and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of House Bill No. 5323, An Act Concerning the Child Poverty and Prevention Council.

The Child Poverty and Prevention Council, created in 2004, is tasked with the development and promotion of a ten-year plan to reduce the number of children living in poverty in state. The Council also produces a report annually on the state's progress in prioritizing expenditures for the funding of prevention services, including: a summary of measurable gains made toward child poverty and prevention goals; examples of successful interagency collaborations to meet child poverty and prevention goals; recommendations for prevention investment and budget priorities, with consultation with experts and providers of services to children and families; and agency reports detailing prevention services provided by the agency.

Current law requires that the Governor include a prevention report in the Governor's biennial budget document. The production of this report requires significant state resources and is duplicative of the reporting efforts performed by the Council. In our continued effort to streamline government, promote efficiencies, and eliminate redundancy, this bill seeks to consolidate the requirements of the Governor's prevention report into the annual report produced by the Council. The Council's production of this report makes the separate biannual prevention report unnecessary and duplicative. The proposal streamlines both the reporting frequency (annually) and submission date (January 1st) of the two reports, and includes the pertinent data from the prevention report into the more comprehensive Council report.

Under current law, the prevention report requires all agencies that provide prevention services to report estimated prevention services expenditures based on the Governor's budget. Reporting the information in this way does not accurately depict the actual investment the state is making in prevention services. Requiring this information,

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instead, to be reported based on actual expenditures on an annual basis through the Council report will provide a more accurate and useful picture of the prevention services implemented within the state.

Finally, the original intent of the prevention report in the Governor's biennial budget was to raise the level of awareness and importance for primary prevention programs. This work is currently being accomplished through the Child Poverty and Prevention Council, which provides a forum for interagency collaboration on prevention initiatives, establishes prevention goals and recommendations, and measures prevention service outcomes. As such, it makes sense for the prevention data required in the prevention report to be collected, analyzed, and discussed in this setting, rather than produced separately in a report that does not seem to be fully utilized. In the four prevention reports the Office of Policy and Management has produced, the agency has not received any formal inquiries regarding its contents.

This bill also adds the agency heads of the Department of Housing (DOH), Department of Agriculture (DoAg), and the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), or their designees, to the Council. These additions were recommended by the Council at their November 19, 2013 meeting to reflect the creation of DOH and OEC as new state agencies and DoAg's jurisdiction over certain federal nutritional programs.

I would like to again thank the committee for the opportunity to present this testimony, and I respectfully request that the Committee act favorably on this bill.