

As a juvenile justice professional with over 20 years experience working in Juvenile Probation, I wanted to state my objections to the Governor's proposal to move Juvenile Probation to DCF. As part of CSSD, Juvenile Probation is a nationally accredited Juvenile Justice agency that has been the model for many other states over the past decade. Not only do we utilize nationally recognized evidenced based programs and the latest in juvenile justice technological advances, we have the highest trained professionals in the industry. Our success is measured not only in the millions of dollars saved to Connecticut tax payers by reducing the number of incarcerated youth and reducing recidivism, but by increasing the strengths, assets and resources of the children and families that come before the court so that they have the opportunity for upward mobility that all residents of Connecticut enjoy.

As the proposed move is about cost savings, there are many other ways in which the state can realize savings on top of what has already occurred without a wholesale restructuring of one of the best Juvenile Probation Departments in the country. There are programs that are not fully utilized where funding can be diverted to better utilized programs. There are assets within Juvenile Probation that are not being used that can be redistributed to other agencies for savings. Staffing can also be shifted from one court location to another so as to lessen the need for new hires for courts that do not show the need for current staffing levels. Additionally, as a result of the significantly lowered number of children needing placement, there is much less of a need for a contracted agency to provide placement oversight, namely; the Connecticut Behavioral Health Partnership. This is a six figure savings alone and a function that Juvenile Probation Officers handling for decades before this responsibility was turned over to an outside agency. The legislature/ and our Judicial Branch can also charge fees for the families that don't qualify for public defender services for many of the programs, urinalysis testing, electronic monitoring that the court system uses which would not only offset the cost, but may act as a deterrent and or incentive for families to take a more active role in the lives of their children to prevent their involvement in delinquent behavior.

So please, do not approve the Governor's proposal when there are other alternatives to address state funding issues and certainly don't dismantle what has become the model for a state run Juvenile Justice agency nationwide.

Michael Federici, MSW
47 Cathy Drive
Shelton CT. 06484
Mikeyfed@att.net
203-218-3791