

**TESTIMONY OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY  
IN OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSAL IN H.B. 6824, TO TRANSFER CSSD  
FUNCTIONS TO DCF AND OTHER SPECIFIC CUTS TO DCF BUDGET**

Appropriations Committee

March 5, 2015

Submitted by Martha Stone, J.D.

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am the Executive Director of the Center for Children's Advocacy, a nonprofit law firm dedicated to protecting the legal rights of Connecticut's most vulnerable children and youth. I was also plaintiffs' counsel in the case of Emily J. v. Weicker and Juan F. v. O'Neill, the two consent judgments which involve juvenile justice and child welfare systems run by Court Support Services Division (CSSD) and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) respectively.

We testify in opposition to the transfer of CSSD to DCF as proposed in H.B. 6824 for the following five reasons:

1. As a result of the consent judgment in Emily J., CSSD improved the conditions of confinement and instituted an array of diversion and other mental health services which have been successful. CSSD was able to exit the consent judgment, including the extension granted in 2005, and since its expiration, has been able to maintain its commitments with an outstanding array of community-based services that have diverted thousands of youth from the juvenile justice system.

2. In contrast, DCF, for the last 24 years, continues to be under a consent judgment in Juan F. Despite numerous attempts, a Court Monitor and continual federal oversight, DCF has been unable to reach compliance on many outcome measures, including two of the most important—case planning and needs met.

3. The Governor's plan to move pretrial male and female juvenile detainees and place them on the campus of CJTS may violate the provisions of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act which has "sight and sound" prohibitions from confining pretrial and sentenced youth at the same institution. It also violates CGS § 46b-140 (k) which prohibits the placement of girls at CJTS.

4. There is no evidence that better outcomes will be achieved as a result of the transfer. The recidivism rate for DCF committed youth is concerning. Almost one-half of the youth who were in the community are now being incarcerated at CJTS. The latest DCF Report shows that of the 252 new admissions to CJTS between January and December 2014, 28% were unsuccessful in congregate care facilities and came into CJTS, 18% were returned as parole revocations and 3% returned as relocations.



*Board of Directors*

Mario Borelli, Chair  
Douglas Colosky, Vice Chair  
Robin P. Keller, Secretary  
Jill J. Hutensky, Treasurer  
Elizabeth A. Alquist  
Claudia Connor  
Timothy Diemand  
Kathryn Enimelt (ex officio)  
Alma Maya  
Nichelle A. Mullins  
Ilia O'Hearn  
Rosalie B. Roth  
Paul Sarkis  
Martha Stone (ex officio)  
Antonia Thompson  
Natalia Xiomara-Chieffo

*Advisory Board*

Miriam Berkman  
John Brittain  
Brett Dignam  
L. Philip Guzman  
Wesley Horton  
Elizabeth Morgan  
Eileen Silverstein  
Preston Tisdale  
Stanley A. Tivady, Jr.  
Stephen Wizner

*Executive Director*  
Martha Stone, Esq.

5. CSSD has been nationally recognized as having exemplary programs. For instance, Connecticut has been lauded and singled out for its accomplishments in achieving a “marked decline in juvenile placements.” See “A Handful of States Lead the Way on Juvenile Crime Prevention”. *The Crime Report*, Ted Gest, President of Crime Justice Matters, December 4, 2012, <http://www.thecrimereport.org/news/inside-criminal-justice/2012-12-juvenile-best-practices>:

*See also Juvenile Justice Reform in Connecticut: How Collaboration and Commitment Have Improved Public Safety and Outcomes for Youth, Executive Summary*, Justice Policy Institute, February 2013, [http://www.justicepolicy.org/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/juvenile\\_justice\\_reform\\_in\\_ctexecutive\\_summary.pdf](http://www.justicepolicy.org/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/juvenile_justice_reform_in_ctexecutive_summary.pdf)

*The Comeback States: Reducing Youth Incarceration in the United States*, The National Juvenile Justice Network and the Texas Public Policy Foundation, June 2013, [http://www.njjn.org/uploads/digital-library/Comeback-States-Report\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.njjn.org/uploads/digital-library/Comeback-States-Report_FINAL.pdf);

*Common Ground: Lessons Learned from Five States that Reduced Juvenile Confinement by More Than Half*, Justice Policy Institute, February 2013, <http://www.justicepolicy.org/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/jpicommonground.pdf>

For these reasons, we respectfully request that this Committee oppose the transfer of CSSD functions to DCF.

Respectfully submitted,



Martha Stone, Executive Director