



STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Public Hearing Testimony
Committee on Children
March 3, 2015



H.B. No. 6899 AN ACT EXPANDING GUARDIANSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS OF THE FEDERAL PREVENTING SEX TRAFFICKING AND STRENGTHENING FAMILIES ACT

The Department of Children and Families **supports** H.B. No. 6899, An Act Expanding Guardianship Opportunities for Children and Implementing Provisions of the Federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act.

This bill expands guardianship opportunities for children in foster care by permitting subsidized guardianships for fictive kin. It also makes a number of changes to state statutes to comply with the requirements of Public Law 113-183, the federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act. This new federal law makes many important improvements to the child welfare system that will help improve permanency outcomes for children and youth in foster care.

This bill includes the following provisions:

- § 1 - NEW section that includes definitions and establishes a criteria for a "reasonable and prudent parent standard" (PL 113-183 requirement).
- § 2 - amends § 17a-11 to limit permanency goal of another planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA) to youth age 16 or older (PL 113-183 requirement).
- § 3 - amends § 17a-111b to limit permanency goal of another planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA) to youth age 16 or older (PL 113-183 requirement).
- § 4- amends § 46b-129 to: limit permanency goal of another planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA) to youth age 16 or older; allow children the ability to engage in age or developmentally appropriate activities; requires court determination that an APPLA goal is the best permanency plan for the child and to identify the compelling reasons why it is not in the best interest of the child to be in a permanent placement with a parent, relative, legal guardian or adoptive parent; require court to ask any APPLA child about his or her desired permanency outcome (PL 113-183 requirement).
- § 5 - amends § 46b-141 to: limit permanency goal of another planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA) to youth age 16 or older; allow children the ability to engage in age or developmentally appropriate activities; requires court determination that an APPLA goal is the best permanency plan for the child and to identify the compelling reasons why it is not in the best interest of the child to be in a permanent placement with a parent, relative, legal guardian or adoptive parent; require court to ask any APPLA child about his or her desired permanency outcome (PL 113-183 requirement).

- § 6 - amends § 17a-114 to: change definition of "special study" to "fictive kin"; authorizes licensed caregivers to apply a "reasonable and prudent parent standard" on behalf of a child (PL 113-183 requirement).
- § 7 - amends § 17a-145 to require licensed homes and institutions to designate an on-site staff person to apply a "reasonable and prudent parent standard" on behalf of a child (PL 113-183 requirement).
- § 8 - amends § 17a-117 to: reinstate references to "Court of Probate" which were inadvertently omitted last year; change the name to the Adoption Subsidy Review Board to the Subsidy Review Board (technical changes).
- § 9 - amends § 17a-118 to change the name of the Adoption Subsidy Review Board to the Subsidy Review Board (technical change).
- § 10 - amends § 17a-120 to change the name of the Adoption Subsidy Review Board to the Subsidy Review Board (technical change).
- § 11 - amends § 17a-126 to allow subsidized guardianships for fictive kin and allows transfer of subsidy to a successor guardian if the guardian dies or becomes incapacitated and the successor is named in the subsidy agreement.
- § 12 - amends § 17a-10b to require notification of a child's siblings when a child is placed in care (PL 113-183 requirement).
- § 13 - amends § 17a-114b to provide annual copies of a child's credit report and assistance with correcting errors beginning at age 14 (PL 113-183 requirement).
- § 14 – NEW section requires DCF to report any missing or abducted child in the legal custody of the Department to the law enforcement for entry into the national crime information database of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.
- § 15 – amends § 17a-15 (a) to implement required changes to a child's case plan (PL 113-183 requirement).
- § 16 – amends § 17a-28(g) to allow the sharing of information with any person for the purposes of identifying resources that will promote the permanency plan of a child approved by the court (PL 113-183 requirement).
- § 17 – amends § 17a-6a to require each vendor or contractor of the department or an employee of a vendor or contractor who has access to criminal background check information to submit to state and national criminal history records checks (PL 113-183 requirement).

Public Law 113-183 requires states to adopt a number of statutory and policy changes to comply with the new federal law and such changes must be in place on or before September 29, 2015.