

Public Hearing : Proposed Bill #306 and 307, An Act Establishing an Independent Department of Children and Families Ombudsman, and An Act Implementing a Quality Assurance Program for Department of Children and Families Programs and Facilities. 2/5/15

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban and members of the Children's Committee. My name is Carolyn Goodridge and I am in support of both SB 306 and SB 307.

I am a social worker and have worked in the child welfare field for over thirty years in various positions. I have always been surprised that the Department of Children and Families has its own quality assurance department and ombudsman when there is no outside entity to oversee the department. DCF licenses all private child-placing agencies and oversees them and also contracts with them, yet there is no entity that oversees DCF. When I have referred families to the ombudsman's office, I have never heard back from a family that they had any success. Either calls were never returned or the decision was made in DCF's favor with little or no investigation.

It seems that a separate licensing department to license agencies, screen grievances and to provide quality assurance to all agencies, public and private, would be a more practical solution.

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