

McCall, Brandon

From: Paul Kosowsky <PKosowsky@youthcontinuum.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 9:14 AM
To: HSGTestimony
Subject: Raise Bill No. 258

Good morning,

I am writing to express serious concerns about raised Bill No. 258, An Act Broadening the Definition of Child Care Facility. As the Vice President of Program Operations at Youth Continuum, and as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with over 35 years of experience, the idea of allowing young adults up to age 25 to be housed with and effected by regulations intended for youth generally under 18 (with noted exceptions for some youth up to age 21) I believe to be an unsound practice. The developmental issues and programming for these different age groups require unique and separate services and facilities. Services must be designed to meet the needs of each group. The potential age and developmental needs of these groups is quite different. For many years, Therapeutic Group Homes have served youth from 14-21 years of age (younger groups were placed in programs serving youth up to age 13, for the same reasons being articulated here). Even with this design, it has long been the practice to keep the populations in a specific home distinct, separating programs with either the younger or older segments of this 14-21 year old range. Housing 22-24 year olds with 14-15 year olds posses significant risks to younger teens who are much more likely to be taken advantage of, and would subject them to manipulation and exposure to young adult development that would not be prepared for. Exposure to adult sexuality, issues related to gangs and drugs are far more prevalent in older teen and young adult populations. Lastly, we are very concerned that this bill would push DCF to become responsible to take on new licensing responsibilities. Currently, programs serving young adults (over age 18) not involved with DCF, do not require licensing by The Dept. Were this legislation to take effect it would seem to open the door for DCF to regulate programs that not only are not currently under its jurisdiction or mandate, but also for which they do not fund, and do not currently have standards for. There would be an overlap in services provided by the Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services creating confusion regarding standards and services to be provided. Licensing of congregate housing programs seems to be another area not being considered. Housing complexes are often used for transitional housing for homeless youth. While they are not congregate in intent, it could be argued that such programs should be regulated, opening up a risk of negatively impacting the efforts to end homelessness across Connecticut.

While the intent of this bill may appear harmless, the implications and details needed to insure it works to improve services for homeless youth are lacking. This raise serious concerns about how such a bill would be interpreted and implemented. Without such details I would strongly urge that this bill be rejected as currently written.

Sincerely,

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