



State of Connecticut

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT

Testimony by Representative Laura Hoydick

Submitted to the Human Services Committee

House Bill 5436, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE TO STUDY METHODS FOR IMPROVEMENT THE COLLECTION OF PAST DUE CHILD SUPPORT

March 3, 2016

Co-Chairs Abercrombie and Moore, Vice-Chairs McGee and Slossberg, Ranking Members Wood and Markley, I appreciate you convening a public hearing for House Bill 5436, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE TO STUDY METHODS FOR IMPROVEMENT THE COLLECTION OF PAST DUE CHILD SUPPORT

Thank you for your continuous support and efforts to improve the collection of child support in the State of Connecticut. As of last year the arrearage for child support collection was \$1.5 billion which represents great hardship to Connecticut families. This composes approximately 14,000 cases where no child support is being paid and forcing many families to require public assistance in order to survive.

HB 5436 addresses some of the suggestions made by the Child Support Collection Task Force whose intent was to identify the barriers Connecticut has to improving child support collection and outline steps to raise Connecticut from 38th nationally and last in New England in collecting child support. From our study we learned that:

- Child support is an economic lifeline to families with children second only to Husky
- Child support collected annually in Connecticut is \$3 million
- Families participating in the IV-D program totals 500,000 people

In the early 90's we were among the top ten programs in the country but we did not invest in technology or staff which would have resulted in better collection performance than we are experiencing today.

The investment in technology is critical to our improving child support collection in Connecticut and as we know from our precarious financial status as identified again by OFA last week, we are not addressing any of the improvements as recommended in prior legislation previously discussed by this committee. Commissioner Bremby obtained a grant and has authorized a feasibility study to identify options for improvement in our collection technology. As we know 66% of any investment we make toward child support collection in Connecticut is reimbursed by the federal government.

Listed below are some of the task force suggestions that may be forwarded to the bonding sub-committee should the department set these items as a priority. These items would facilitate immediate improvement to Connecticut's families by creating a Windows interface over the 1980 legacy system while the Department of Social Services further investigates technology and operational improvements for child support collection.

The task force proposals which are all 66% reimbursable by the federal government are:

- Purchase a web-based customer service portal (\$2.5 million)
- Purchase graphic user interface (\$4.2 million)
- Purchase replacement services and associated hardware (\$500,000)
- Planning for replacement of Child Support Enforcement case management system (\$200,000)
- Purchase web based Investigation tool used to locate obligors and their assets

I encourage you to pass HB 5436 and thank you for your continued support to improve child support collection in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Rep. Laura Hoydick