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*Member*  
**Connecticut Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee**

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March 23, 2016

Good morning, Chairmen and members of the Committee. I am Attorney Deborah G. Stevenson, a member of the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee representing the interests of parents and juveniles. I was part of the discussions resulting in H.B. 5642, which contains many good ideas, however, I am here today to voice my **OPPOSITION TO H.B. 5642 in part.**

My main concerns are as follows:

1. **Section 2** - contains a provision for the Court Support Services Division to develop and implement a detention risk assessment instrument to be used to determine whether there is: (1) Probable cause to believe that the child will pose a risk to public safety if released to the community prior to the court hearing or disposition, or (2) a need to hold the child in order to assure the child's appearance before the court. While it may be advisable to make those determinations, the risk assessment instrument must be a validated instrument based on empirical evidence, and the current discussions on the type of instrument proposed, I believe, is not up to those standards, is subjective, and will not accomplish what is proposed.

There also is no provision in the bill to require written parental informed consent prior to any risk assessment being given. In addition, there is no provision in the bill to protect the rights of the individual against self incrimination when the information provided by the child is given prior to adjudication.

2. **Sections 14, 26, and 27** - provide for data collection, tracking of individuals throughout the various systems, and for allowing access to children's educational records throughout various agencies. There is no provision in the bill that specifically will provide for informed written parental consent, or consent of an individual 18 years old or over, prior to collection of any data or dissemination of any data, including educational records, to any agency or agencies. There is no privacy protection, at all, regarding any of the data collected. In addition, much of the data proposed to be collected is psychological data, data of the utmost privacy concern, which will be distributed to agencies including the Department of Children and Families, the Labor Department, and the State Department of Education. At least in the case of the State Department of Education, that data is uploaded into the P20 WIN database, which is distributed to the federal government through the U.S. Department of Education and other federal agencies, and it is distributed also to third party entities, such as the American Institute for Research in California. In other words, private psychological data on vulnerable children, will be disseminated far and wide, with absolutely no protection for the privacy of the individual child or parent. While the goals may be laudable, this part of the bill is highly premature and should not be adopted at this time, at least until adequate legal protections for the individual and families are solidly in place.

3. **Section 8** - provides for the closing of the Connecticut Juvenile Training School. This, also, is an extremely poor decision at this time. While CJTS may have had its problems, right now, it, or an entity such as it, is sorely needed for those children who require long term residential placement in order to turn their lives around. A four month community based program is wholly insufficient for many who require more regimented services in a structured environment. Right now, there are very few options for these individuals because of the state's continuing policy to close down residential facilities. Please reconsider closing CJTS. Amend the bill perhaps, to re-purpose CJTS, and other facilities such as the Southbury Training School, and make it a better facility.

In addition, the Juvenile Justice and Policy Committee has not completed its review and investigation on several other issues. Therefore, for all of these reasons, I urge you to amend the bill, and if not amended, to **vote No to H.B. 5642.**