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Good afternoon Sen. Bartolomeo, Representative Urban and members of the Committee on Children. I would like to offer my support for SB 181, AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESS TO RECORDS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

Clearly there is a need for robust confidentiality to protect children who receive DCF services. However, the policy requiring strict confidentiality must have at its core the protection of these children and not the shielding of others who do not need this protection. The confidentiality policy should not become a barrier for parents who are looking for answers regarding care that their children have received.

This bill would create a narrow<sup>1</sup> exception to the confidentiality of certain information only when there has been a criminal conviction of specific crimes (child abuse or neglect, risk of injury to a child, or sexual assault) and the conduct of DCF staff is in question. This would seem reasonable since if there has been a conviction in criminal court, DCF would have to have allowed access to this information for the purposes of the prosecution. When that is the case, parents should, in general, have access to this information as well.

Thank you for hearing this important bill.

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<sup>1</sup> Person is defined quite narrowly in Sec. 17a-28. (Formerly Sec. 17-431). Definitions. Confidentiality and access to records; exceptions. Procedure for aggrieved persons.

(a) As used in this section:

(1) "Person" means (A) any individual named in a record, maintained by the department, who (i) is presently or at any prior time was a ward of or committed to the commissioner for any reason; (ii) otherwise received services, voluntarily or involuntarily, from the department; or (iii) is presently or was at any prior time the subject of an investigation by the department; (B) a parent whose parental rights have not been terminated or current guardian of an individual described in subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, if such individual is a minor; or (C) the authorized representative of an individual described in subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, if such individual is deceased