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February 22, 2016

Children's Committee Members

RE: S.B. 184 (An Act Concerning Children in Need of Special Services)

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Margaret Doherty. I have the privilege of serving as Executive Director of Connecticut Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents ("CAFAP"). CAFAP supports S.B. 184 and urges that you pass it out of committee.

For several years I have heard from many adoptive parents about their worries that should they need to request certain special services for their children, they would be exposed to having their children being legally committed as "uncared for", with all the adverse legal consequences thrust upon them as parents.

As a public policy, especially for parents who agree to adopt the children they have fostered through Department of Children and Families ("DCF"), they should not be demonized or criminalized for advocating for their children. Children with special needs should not be adjudicated "uncared for" when their parents love and care for them and are desperately trying to obtain services for them. While the proposal is not limited to adopted children, these children often develop the need for special services. They deserve care and compassion, not adverse legal findings.

I am very happy to answer questions or to provide additional information.

Thank you for your consideration. I urge you to pass S.B. 184.


Margaret Doherty
Executive Director