

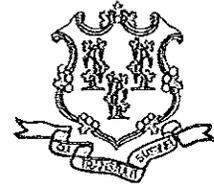


**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

Public Hearing Testimony

Judiciary Committee

March 18, 2016



**S.B. No. 347 - AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PROGRAM FOR COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES
IN CERTAIN JUVENILE COURT MATTERS**

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) supports S.B. No. 347, An Act Establishing a Program for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) in Certain Juvenile Court Matters. This bill would formally establish a court appointed special advocate program in juvenile court.

Currently, there are two CASA programs operating in Connecticut, Children in Placement and the Child Advocates of Southwestern Connecticut. Since 1994, section 51-10b of the General Statutes has recognized Children in Placement for their role of providing "services to assist the court in preparing and monitoring expectations to promote permanency planning for children." While there are currently only a small number of Court Appointed Special Advocates utilized in Connecticut, DCF believes that there is considerable potential for expansion and this bill would permit that.

Court appointed special advocates, comprised of trained volunteers, provide valuable assistance to our children in DCF care. These advocates provide an added voice on behalf of children on matters before the Juvenile Court, providing important support at a very difficult time.