



Children in Placement

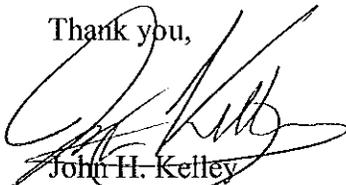
Advocacy and Empowerment for Connecticut's Children

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While I appreciate the efforts to create a new court appointed special advocate program in Connecticut, this is unnecessary. Children in Placement first began operations in the Hartford juvenile court in 1980. In 1982 two Children in Placement (CIP) programs (one in New Haven and the other in Hartford) were founding members of the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association. Children in Placement has been the Connecticut Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program since then. Raised Bill No. 347 mistakenly asserts the need for legislation to establish a court appointed special advocate project in certain juvenile court matters. It is unnecessarily duplicative of a program already in place. It will also result in costs to the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch that are not only avoidable but insupportable at this time.

Second, the sentence in Raised Bill No. 347 that declares: *Nothing in this section shall permit a court appointed special advocate to supplant or interfere with any counsel or guardian ad litem appointed to represent the best interests of a child in such proceedings.* In October 1995, legislation came into effect allowing Children in Placement to establish a volunteer guardian ad litem program. This allows the Children in Placement Court Appointed Special Advocate Guardian ad Litem to present the best interest recommendation of the child in the superior court for juvenile matters. This ensures that the court's decisions are made in the child's best interest. For over 20 years Children in Placement Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteers have worked to provide the children they are championing in court opportunities to find and live in a safe, loving and nurturing home that is free from fear, abuse and neglect. In addition, since then 1244 men and women have become Children in Placement volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate Guardians ad Litem. They have represented over 5,000 children.

Thank you,



John H. Kelley
Executive Director



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