



STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Public Hearing Testimony

Committee on Children

March 5, 2019



To: Sen. Mary Daugherty Abrams, Chair
Rep. Liz Linehan, Chair
Sen. Kevin Kelly, Ranking Member
Rep. Robin Green, Ranking Member
Distinguished Members of the Committee on Children

From: Vanessa Dorantes, Commissioner
Department of Children and Families

Re: Senate Bill 929 - An Act Concerning the Inclusion of Additional Mandated Reporters, the Duration of Child Abuse and Neglect Investigations and the Repeal of Certain Reporting Requirements of the Department of Children and Families.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) **supports** Senate Bill 929, which is the Department's omnibus bill. The Department would like to thank the Children's Committee for raising this bill, and for the opportunity to testify on it.

Section 1 adds DCF providers who have regular contact with children to the list of mandated reporters. Due to the recent transfer of juvenile justice programs to the Judicial Branch, relevant employees and private providers are being added to the list of mandated reporters as well. Additionally, the Judicial Branch did request a change in the bill, which we support. The bill currently refers to "victim services supervisors" and the Branch would like to amend this to read "victim services advocates." According to the Judicial Branch, supervisors do not conduct assessments nor carry a caseload, and therefore have no supporting documentation or personal experience to support or refute any allegations.

Section 2 changes the maximum number of days to complete an intake investigation from 45 calendar days to 33 business days. DCF continuously monitors worker caseloads to ensure critical deadlines are being met. However, due to holidays, poor weather, etc., the number of business days in a given 45 calendar day period can vary depending upon the time of year. In one such case, there were only 25 business days within the 45 calendar day period. When this occurs, investigations may not be done as thoroughly as possible, which could result in more cases being transferred to ongoing services to meet the deadline. This proposed change will allow for the investigation process to be completed in the appropriate amount of time.

Section 3 repeals obsolete reporting requirements. DCF does not collect the data required for the report under C.G.S Section 17a-62. The reporting required under C.G.S. Section 17a-103c pertained to committed delinquents, for whom the Department no longer has jurisdiction.

The Department respectfully requests that an additional section be added to the bill. Under current law, the Commissioner of Children and Families is mandated to be a member of the Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission (C.G.S. Section 18-18j). Since the juvenile justice mandate has been transferred from DCF to the Judicial Branch, the Department no longer has jurisdiction in the criminal arena. The Department's influence and guidance is much better presented through our participation on the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (C.G.S. Section 46b-121n).

The Department thanks the Committee for consideration of this testimony.