

PA 11-120

HB6352

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**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**SELECT
COMMITTEE
ON CHILDREN
PART 2
308 - 621**

2011

THE HON. PAUL J. KNIERIM: Thank you.

REP. URBAN: And next on our list to testify will be Commissioner Katz, DCF. Welcome, Commissioner.

SENATOR MUSTO: Hi, Commissioner. Did you submit, did your Department submit written testimony?

COMMISSIONER JOETTE KATZ: (Inaudible).

SENATOR MUSTO: A little late? Okay. And thank you so much for waiting. As you know, things get a little crazy around here, so I did want to hear what you have to say and I was stuck in another meeting, so I do appreciate the Courtesy. Please go on.

A VOICE: Commissioner, could you just put on your microphone, please, so we can hear you? Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOETTE KATZ: Thank you. Good morning, Senator Musto, Representative Urban, Representative Wood and members of the Select Committee on Children. I am Joette Katz, Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families and am pleased to appear before you today to provide testimony on several bills.

First, I'd like to thank the Committee for raising two bills in particular, House Bill 6352 and Senate Bill 980 that are on today's public hearing agenda.

The first bill, which is House Bill 6352 entitled AN ACT CONCERNING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND MODIFICATIONS TO STATUTES CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

The first section of the bill modifies the composition of the State Advisory Council on

HB 6336
HB 6340
SB 320
SB 322
SB 323

Children and Families to resolve a conflict in the language of the current statute by expanding the membership of the Advisory Council by two members and it also provides that foster parents should be included on the Council.

The other sections repeal a planning requirement regarding youth at the Connecticut Juvenile Training School and a requirement for the adoption of regulations that relate to procedures for dealing with high risk, newborns and birthing hospitals.

DC has also submitted, DCF has also submitted Senate Bill 980, which is entitled AN ACT CONCERNING PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL STUDY FOSTER PARENTS.

That bill eliminates the age restriction for special study foster homes. As you know, special study foster homes are foster parents not related by birth or marriage but who have had a significant and positive relationship with the child.

Such individuals may include Godparents, parents, previous step-parents, clergy, close family friends and others with an established relationship with the child. This will provide additional placement resources for children that are both appropriate to, and in the best interest of our children.

Similar to our support of Senate Bill 980 AN ACT CONCERNING PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL STUDY FOSTER PARENTS, DCF also supports House Bill 6336 entitled AN ACT CONCERNING KINSHIP CARE.

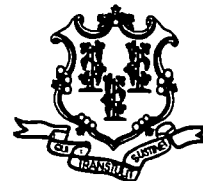
This bill encourages the placement of children who are in the care and custody of DCF with

P. 3, line 9



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Public Hearing Testimony
Select Committee on Children
February 22, 2011



**S.B. No. 320 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN UNDER THE CARE OF
THE COMMISSIONER OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

The Department of Children and Families **supports the intent behind SB 320**, An Act Concerning Children under the Care of the Commissioner of Children and Families. This bill would require DCF staff to visit children in foster homes at least once every ten days and to visit children with behavioral health needs not later than thirty days after they are placed in the care and custody of the Commissioner of Children and Families.

Visitation standards for both out-of-home cases and in-home cases are a requirement of the *Juan F. Exit Plan*. Outcome Measure 16 requires DCF to visit at least 85% of all out-of-home children at least once a month, except for probate, interstate or voluntary cases. All children must be seen by their DCF social worker at least quarterly. For the most recent evaluation period (4th Quarter 2010), the Department met this measure 98.9% of the time. Outcome Measure 17 requires the Department to visit at least 85% of all in-home family cases at least twice a month, except for probate, interstate or voluntary cases. This measure was met 89.7% of the time during the most recent evaluation period (4th Quarter 2010).

The Department fully appreciates the benefits of increased visitation by our staff and is committed to making this a priority for our case-carrying, front-line staff.

**S.B. No. 322 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING THE QUALIFICATIONS OF
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES EMPLOYEES**

The Department of Children and Families is **opposed to SB 322**, An Act Concerning the Qualifications of Department of Children and Families Employees. This bill would require that each applicant for a Social Worker and Social Work Supervisor to possess, at a minimum, a master's degree in social work or a closely related field on and after January 1, 2012 and that on and after January 1, 2017, to require that all employees have such degrees. Further, the bill requires the individuals in these positions be licensed as a master or clinical social worker on and after January 1, 2020.

While we appreciate the intent behind this legislation, we would point out that for the Department only hires individuals into the Social Work career series with a minimum of a Bachelors Degree in Social Work or a closely-related field. In addition, a significant percentage of our staff already hold a Masters in Social Work or closely-related field. While we don't have updated information available at this time, a 2005 survey of revealed the following educational information for DCF social work staff.

SB 323 SB 324
SB 980 SB 981
HB 6336 HB 6340
HB 6352

**H.B. No. 6340 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN
IN OUT-OF-STATE TREATMENT FACILITIES**

The Department of Children and Families supports HB 6340, An Act Concerning the Placement of Children in Out-of-State Treatment Facilities. This legislation would require the return of children placed in out-of-state residential facilities by July 1, 2013, unless such placement is approved by the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters. It would also prohibit new placements out-of-state after April 1, 2013 unless a similar Court determination is made. The bill also requires a plan to reallocate funds and seek new funds to increase in-state, community-based services for children transitioning from out-of-state facilities. Also, the bill would require the Department to track race in its annual report regarding at-risk children.

Commissioner Katz is committed to a significant reduction in the number of children placed out-of-state. As of February 1, 2011, we had 357 children placed in out-of-state programs. The Department would request that the Committee modify the requirements of the legislation to recognize that some out-of-state placements are appropriate to the treatment needs of children and also some programs are in close proximity to child's town of residence. Currently 281 of these placements (79%) are in New England states.

We would suggest that this legislation be amended to provide alternative means of signing off on such placements rather than seeking a judicial determination, particularly since not all of the children have cases pending in the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters. Several years ago there was a practice of requiring formal sign off of each out-of-state placement by the Commissioner of DCF, the DCF Court Monitor and the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management. This process provided an effective check on out-of-state placements. While we're not suggesting the OPM Secretary be involved, perhaps the Committee could consider a similar structure in this legislation.

**H.B. No. 6352 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND MODIFICATIONS TO
STATUTES CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

The Department of Children and Families has submitted HB 6352, An Act Concerning the Membership of the Advisory Council on Children and Families and Modifications to Statutes Concerning the Department of Children and Families to the Select Committee on Children for your **favorable consideration** and we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for raising this bill on our behalf.

This proposal repeals several obsolete reporting requirements and advisory boards and commissions and makes various modifications to DCF statutes.

Section 1 amends § 17a-4 to modify the composition of the State Advisory Council on Children and Families. The current statute needs clarification because it provides that "no less than fifty per cent of the council's members shall be parents or family members of children who have received, or are receiving" services from DCF, however the number of designated appointments of other members exceeds fifty per cent of the membership. This proposal resolves this conflict

by expanding the membership of the SAC by two members and also provides that foster parents should be included on the Council.

Section 2 repeals a planning requirement in § 17a-3 regarding youth at the Connecticut Juvenile Training School that dates back to the school's origins in 1998. The plan at that time was for longer length of stays for the youth at CJTS, but currently the average length of stay at CJTS is approximately 5 to 6 months. It should be noted that CJTS is part of the continuum of care and that the young men continue their treatment while in other residential programs and while in the community under Parole supervision.

Section 3 deletes a requirement for the adoption of regulations in § 17a-102a which relates to procedures for dealing with high-risk newborns in birthing hospitals. The Department had worked with the Connecticut Hospital Association in the development of regulations but both DCF and CHA believe that it makes more sense to require the dissemination of the information to the birthing hospitals rather than the promulgation of regulations and we request this change to this statute.

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On page 35 -- excuse me, page 42, calendar 237,
House Bill number 6352, AN ACT CONCERNING THE
MEMBERSHIP OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND
FAMILIES AND MODIFICATIONS TO STATUTES CONCERNING THE
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES. Favorable report
of the committee on government administration and
elections.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The distinguished Chair of the children's
committee, Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move the joint
committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Questions on acceptance of passage. Will you
explain the bill please, Ma'am.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Yes, Mr. Speaker. This bill seeks to repeal
several obsolete reporting requirements and advisory
boards and commissions and various modifications to
DCS statutes. The most significant, Mr. Chairman, is
expanding the membership of the State Advisory Council
on Children and Families by two members from 17 to 19.
And those two members are very significant members

because we are going to be going to foster parents for those members. And we know that we are trying to expand the amount of foster parents that we have in the State of Connecticut and we want our foster parents to be a very big part of this advisory council so that they feel well represented and that we can urge them and our -- our residents of Connecticut to become foster parents.

It does repeal a 1998 planning regulation of the Connecticut Juvenile Training Center and that's simply because we have noticed that the stay there is four to five months and it is a continuum of care and that report has become obsolete as well as adopting -- not adopting regulations for procedures dealing with high risk newborns and that is because DCF and the Connecticut Hospital Association have met and decided that it works far better to require dissemination of that information rather than promulgating regulations. I move -- I urge adoption. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Madam. Gentlewoman from Monroe, Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

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SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Good afternoon.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

And thank you. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation. I think the addition of foster parents in the advisory council is extremely important. We rely on foster parents so often and they are so vital to the support for our children in this state that they should have a voice and that voice should count where it -- where it counts.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I just had a question about the care of the high risk newborns.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, sir. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I see that it changes the protocol for follow up with that population and if the good lady could just explain that a little bit better to me I'd really appreciate it. Thank you, sir.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Urban, do you care to respond.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Certainly. To the good Representative who I know

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has a significant background in this area. What happened is that the DCF and the Hospital Association got together and talked about promulgating regulations but it became very obvious that it would be much better to use nursing and nurses aids with follow up throughout this procedure in disseminating the information rather than going with regulations. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, sir. So rather than institute law and regulation it's now left to the commonsense of the nursing profession to follow up and follow through on specific cases that they deem they need to? Is that correct? Through you, sir.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

It's a little more involved. Through you, Mr. Speaker. It does require DCF to coordinate with these birthing hospitals so there is oversight. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, sir. And that was the piece that I just wanted to be clear about that DCF still was the body of cognizance over this particular area and would be held accountable for the -- I guess the effectiveness of the program. Thank you, sir.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Ma'am.

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill and I do want to thank the Chairwoman and the ranking members also of the Committee for passing this bill. And I'd also like to acknowledge the hard work that Commissioner Katz has done with this bill because she's done exactly what we're asking the commissioners to do is to look at these statutes, do away with what is no longer needed in the statutes and improve the statutes and highlight those things that we need to change in order to make the system work better.

And again regarding the advisory council I think it's a wonderful idea that now we're having a foster

parent represented on that council as again the dynamics of a family unit and the family issues have changed over time. And I'm happy to see that our laws are also changing over time. So once again I wanted to congratulate the committee for doing their hard work and also the Commissioner and ask that my colleagues support this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Ma'am.

Representative Betts.

REP. BETTS (78th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just briefly I too also rise in support of this bill, particularly for those foster parents who have experienced a lot of difficulty over the years. It is very nice to see them be part of this council.

And I know the Commissioner is very committed to trying to have a better working relationship with them. And for those reasons and the reasons that were stated before I support it and I also want to congratulate the Chair and the committee for adopting what is obviously a good common sense proposal. Thank you, sir.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

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Thank you, sir.

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do rise in support of this bill as well. But through you, I do have a question to the proponent of the bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the proponent of this bill, if you could -- you could clarify to me the duties of the DCF in terms of discharged planning and those components that have to be done eventually. If DCF is not going to be do this -- is not going to be doing this for the bill, who will be relegated to do those duties? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

If I -- thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you, if I understand the question correctly the nursing and nursing assistants will be doing the daily direct care

for the high risk newborns and they must follow up and participate in the discharge planning process and then DCF will be the one that will -- be the oversight agency to ensure that there is follow up. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you, Mr. Speaker, so the nurse and the nursing aid you said is the one who's going to be involved in the day to day planning as well as the discharge summary which will then be overseen by DCF finally.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. I use nursing and nursing assistants as an example but with any principal providers that were engaged with this newborn, high risk child. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, sir.

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Will you remark further on the bill? Will you remark further on this bill? If not, staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Members please take your seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the Chamber. The House is voting by roll call. Members to the Chamber.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Have all the Members voted? Have all the Members voted? If so, the machine will be locked. And Mr. Clerk, if you'd kindly announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Bill 6352.	
Total Number voting	142
Necessary for adoption	72
Those voting Yea	142
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	9

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The bill is passed.

Mr. Clerk, please call 396.

THE CLERK:

On page 22, calendar 396, Senate Bill number 851,

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Continuing on that page, Calendar 534, House
Bill Number 6352.

Madam President, move to place this item on the
Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Also, Calendar 536, House Bill Number 5300.

Move to place the item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

A final item on calendar page 17, Calendar 537,
House Bill Number 5482.

Move to place this item on the Consent
calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

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Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call's been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber. Immediate roll call's been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

THE CLERK:

Madam President, the items placed...

THE CHAIR:

I would ask the Chamber to be quiet please so we can hear the call of the Calendar for the Consent Calendar.

Thank you.

Please proceed, Mr. Clerk

THE CLERK:

Madam President, the items placed on the first Consent Calendar begin on calendar page 5, Calendar 336, House Bill 5697.

Calendar page 7, Calendar 421, Substitute for House Bill 6126.

Calendar page 8, Calendar 449, Senate Bill 1149.

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Calendar page 10, Calendar 470, Substitute for House Bill 5340. Calendar 474, Substitute for House Bill 6274. Calendar 476, House Bill 6635.

Calendar page 12, Calendar 499, Substitute for House Bill 6638. Calendar 500, House Bill 6614. Calendar 508, House Bill 6222.

Calendar page 13, Calendar 511, House Bill 6356. Calendar 512, Substitute for House Bill 6422. Calendar 514, House Bill 6590. Calendar 515, House Bill 6221. Calendar 516, House Bill 6455.

Calendar page 14, Calendar 517, House Bill 6350. Calendar 519, House Bill 5437. Calendar 522, House Bill 6303.

Calendar page 15, Calendar 523, Substitute for House Bill 6499. Calendar 524, House Bill 6490. Calendar 525, House Bill 5780. Calendar 526, House Bill 6513. Calendar 527, Substitute for House Bill 6532.

Calendar page 16, Calendar 528, House Bill 6561. Calendar 529, Substitute for House Bill 6312. Calendar 530, Substitute for House Bill 5032. Calendar 532, House Bill 6338.

Calendar page 17, Calendar 533, Substitute for House Bill 6325. Calendar 534, House Bill 6352.

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Calendar 536, House Bill 5300. Calendar 537, House
Bill 5482.

calendar page 18, Calendar 543, House Bill 6508.

Calendar 544, House Bill 6412. Calendar 546,
Substitute for House Bill 6538. Calendar 547,
Substitute for House Bill 6440. Calendar 548,
Substitute for House Bill 6471.

Calendar page 19, Calendar 550, Substitute for
House Bill 5802. Calendar 551, House Bill 6433.
Calendar 552, House Bill 6413. Calendar 553,
Substitute for House Bill 6227.

Calendar page 20, Calendar 554, Substitute for
House Bill 5415. Calendar 557, Substitute for House
Bill 6318. Calendar 558, Substitute for House Bill
6565.

Calendar page 21, Calendar 559, Substitute for
House Bill 6636.

Calendar page 22, Calendar 563, Substitute for
House Bill 6600. Calendar 564, Substitute for House
Bill 6598. Calendar 566, House Bill 5585.

Calendar page 23, Calendar 568, Substitute for
House Bill 6103. Calendar 570, Substitute for House
Bill 6336. Calendar 573, Substitute for House Bill
6434.

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Calendar page 24, Calendar 577, Substitute for
House Bill 5795.

Calendar page 25, Calendar 581, House Bill
6354.

Calendar page 26, Calendar 596, Substitute for
House Bill 6282. Calendar 598, Substitute for House
Bill 6629.

Calendar page 27, Calendar 600, House Bill
6314. Calendar 601, Substitute for House Bill 6529.
Calendar 602, Substitute for House Bill 6438.
Calendar 604, Substitute for House Bill 6639.

Calendar page 28, Calendar 605, Substitute for
House Bill 6526. Calendar 608, House Bill 6284.

Calendar page 30, Calendar number 615,
Substitute for House Bill 6485. Calendar 616,
Substitute for House Bill 6498.

Calendar page 31, Calendar 619, Substitute for
House Bill 6634. Calendar 627, Substitute for House
Bill 6596.

Calendar page 32, Calendar 629, House Bill
5634. Calendar 630, Substitute for House Bill 6631.
Calendar 631, Substitute for House Bill 6357.
Calendar 632, House Bill 6642.

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Calendar page 33, Calendar 634, Substitute for
House Bill 5431. Calendar 636, Substitute for
House, correction, House Bill 6100.

Page 34, Calendar 638, Substitute for House
Bill 6525.

Calendar page 48, Calendar 399, Substitute for
Senate Bill 1043.

Calendar page 49, Calendar 409, Substitute for
House Bill 6233. Calendar 412, House Bill 5178.
Calendar 422, Substitute for House Bill 6448.

Calendar page 52, Calendar 521, Substitute for
House Bill 6113.

Madam President, that completes the item placed
on the first Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

We call for another roll call vote. And the
machine will be open for Consent Calendar number 1.

THE CLERK:

The Senate is now voting by roll on the Consent
Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the
Chamber. The Senate is now voting by roll on the
Consent Calendar, will all Senators please return to
the Chamber.

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Senator Cassano, would you vote, please, sir.

Thank you.

Well, all members have voted. All members have voted. The machine will be closed, and Mr. Clerk, will you call the tally?

THE CLERK:

Motion is on option Consent Calendar Number 1.

Total Number Voting	36
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar Number 1 has passed.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

We might stand at ease for just a moment as we prepare the next item..

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will stand at ease.

(Chamber at ease.)