



***Division of Public Defender Services
State of Connecticut***

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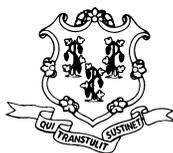
**TESTIMONY OF CHRISTINE RAPILLO
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OFFICE OF CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER**

**COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN
MARCH 3, 2015**

RAISED BILL 1007, AN ACT CONCERNING PERMANENCY PLACEMENTS

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports passage of ***Raised Bill 1007, An Act Concerning Permanency Placements***. When a child is committed to the Department of Children and Families, DCF is constantly looking for a permanent placement for the child. Many options are available, including reunification with biological parents, guardianship being transferred to relatives, adoption or long term foster care. This proposal encourages the subject child's participation in the planning process. Children should be engaged in making the important decisions that will impact his or her life. This proposal will teach children in DCF care to become good advocates and can establish decision making skills that will carry over in to adulthood.

Under Raised Bill 1007, Children over the age of 12 would be able to have two adult advisors to help them advocate for their desired permanency outcome. The advisor could not be the social worker or foster parent. This would allow a child to bring in a trusted friend or relative to support the child's wishes and opine on what might be in his or her best interests. The child is not required to identify an adult and it appears that the attorney for the child could act as one of the advisors. Raised Bill 1007 would also require that efforts be made to hold permanency planning meetings at times when the child, caregiver and foster parent could attend. Children would also be asked to identify up to 3 relatives who they want identified as possible placement resources. When the permanency plan includes an alternative planned living arrangement (APLA) this proposal would require the court to inquire as to efforts to find a permanent living situation and ask the child what he or she wishes.



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This proposal also supports sibling visitation, requiring DCF to report annually on the number of siblings in care and the number of visits. It also provides the court the authority to order sibling visits post adoption and sets out the criteria for the court to consider when ordering post adoption visitation. The proposals contained in RB 1007 represent important efforts to keep children who are in DCF care engaged with family and important non relatives. The Office of Chief Public Defender supports passage of this bill.