



***Division of Public Defender Services
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**COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN
FEBRUARY 28, 2017**

**RAISED BILL 894, AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE STATE OVERSIGHT COUNCIL ON
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.**

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports passage of *Raised Bill 894, An Act Establishing the State Oversight Council on Children and Families*. As the agency responsible for providing legal representation to children and parents involved in the child welfare system, the Office of Chief Public Defender is well positioned to provide insight and practical information to the Council. Our staff and assigned counsel lawyers work on the ground with the families every day and give feedback to OCPD on how the policies of the Department of Children and Families assist individuals and on what can be improved. As a long time participant on the Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Committee (CJPAC) and the Juvenile Justice Policy Oversight Committee (JJPOC), OCPD knows firsthand that there needs to be a forum for discussion, problem solving and collaboration between all stakeholders in a state system. The child protection system will benefit from the creation of this Council and the Office of Chief Public Defender thanks this Committee for including us.