



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

**RAISED BILL 895, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES'
STANDARDS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.**

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports passage of *Raised Bill 895, An Act Concerning the Department of Children and Families' Standards and Reporting Requirements*. This proposal would require the Commissioner of Children and Families to establish protocols for the investigation of reports of child abuse or neglect of very young children, mandate that DCF regularly report to the Superior Court on a committed child's placement and well being progress markers and report annually to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children regarding foster care licensing practices.

Standardized protocols are always helpful to provide a baseline of practice for child abuse investigations. This is particularly important where the subject of the abuse investigation is a very young child, under the age of three, who cannot reliably provide information to the workers. A protocol guides the workers who provide the first line of defense for the children and assists the lawyers for the children, parents and DCF as they ensure that due process is given to the parties and that the best interest of the child are always protected.

The Superior Court maintains jurisdiction over child protection matters after a child is committed to DCF. This proposal requires DCF to provide the court with updates on the child's placement that includes any identified concerns. Requiring that DCF provide regular, detailed reports on the child's placement insures that everyone involved in the case is aware of any problems or issues and that all responsible parties are working to keep the child safe and to resolve problems. This proposal also requires formal updates to the court on a committed child's medical, educational and developmental needs and the plan to address those needs. Again, this ensures that everyone involved in the case is aware of the child's needs and able to take steps to ensure the child's wellbeing.



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These are important proposals that will improve the oversight of children in placement by providing the court and the advocates for the children and families with necessary information in a formal manner. The Office of the Chief Public Defender urges this Committee to favorably report on this proposal.

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