



State of Connecticut

DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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Testimony of the Office of Chief Public Defender Renee Cimino, Director of Delinquency Defense and Child Protection

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE - MARCH 20, 2024

Raised Bill No. 5506

AN ACT CONCERNING FAMILIES WITH SERVICE NEEDS

Consistent with its position in the past, The Office of Chief Public Defender (OCPD) would urge this committee to not support *Raised H.B. 5506, An Act Concerning Families with Service Needs*. This legislation would reestablish juvenile court jurisdiction over Family with Service Needs petitions.

As this committee is aware, Connecticut eliminated juvenile court jurisdiction over Family with Service Needs (FWSN) cases to promote increased diversion, remove school-prison pipelines and gain timely access to community-based services for behaviors that are not criminal.

The progressive sunseting of FWSN jurisdiction concluded during the pandemic on June 30, 2020, and children and families are now receiving these services through Youth Services Bureaus without the unnecessary delay and stigma of being processed through the court system.

Raised Bill 5506 would result in counterproductive backsliding on a long-overdue and effective reform effort. Therefore, this office requests that this Committee take no action on this bill. Thank you.