

Testimony Opposing Raised Bill 855, An Act Revising Certain Social Services Statutes

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Human Services Committee

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Senator Slossberg, Representative Abercrombie, and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee:

I am testifying on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based public education and advocacy organization that works statewide to promote the well-being of Connecticut's children, youth, and families.

We **oppose** the revisions to Sections 2 and 3 of Raised Bill 855, *An Act Revising Certain Social Services Statutes* **because it would reduce legislative oversight and accountability in regard to applications for federal Medicaid waivers, and the implementation of federal block grants.**

The proposed change to Section 2 would eliminate the opportunity for the committees of cognizance for appropriations and human services 1) to review a Medicaid waiver application to be submitted to the federal government, 2) to hold a public hearing on the details of the application, and 3) to accept, reject or amend the waiver in the situation where there is a state statute that authorizes the administration to develop the waiver.

We oppose the proposed change to Section 2, because the legislative committees and the public should have an opportunity *after* the waiver is developed by the Department of Social Services but *before* it is submitted to the federal government to review the application. During the development of the waiver proposal changes may have to be made to comply with federal requirements or for other reasons not known or contemplated at the time that the authorizing statute was enacted. It is not practical to write into authorizing legislation all the details of the waiver application that would then need approval by the entire General Assembly. The current scheme should not be altered.

We also oppose the proposed deletion of paragraph (c) of Section 3. The bill would eliminate the requirement the Department of Social Services report annually to the Governor and the legislature how social services and community service block grants are allocated to programs, including expenditure data, and whether the Department recommends changes to the state legislation in order to maximize the receipt of federal funds. Again, this proposal would reduce accountability and oversight by the legislature and the public.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to Raised Bill 855.