



*Written Testimony before the Committee on Children
Submitted by the Department of Social Services
March 6, 2018*

S.B. 312 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

This bill requires the Commissioner of Children and Families, in collaboration with the Commissioners of Early Childhood, Developmental Services and Social Services to develop investigation, assessment and case-planning procedures that are responsive to the needs of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Department appreciates the intent of this bill. However, the Department also feels this bill is duplicative of current efforts. Public Act 16-142 created the Developmental Disabilities Work Group, a subcommittee of the Medicaid Assistance Program Oversight Council (MAPOC), to bring together the aforementioned state agencies to work collaboratively on improving the services delivered to children with intellectual and developmental disabilities in addition to other items.

DSS has developed and continued relationships with all of the previously mentioned agencies over the years. The Department also has the administrative flexibility and Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) with the other state agencies mentioned to achieve the broad mandates outlined in this bill. For these reasons, the Department feels this bill's requirements are unnecessary at this time.

S.B. 322 (RAISED) ACT CONCERNING GUARDIANSHIP SUBSIDIES FOR GRANDPARENTS CARING FOR GRANDCHILDREN

This bill would require the Commissioners of Children and Families and Social Services to study the establishment of a subsidized guardianship program for the benefit of children living with grandparents who have been appointed guardian or coguardian of such children by a court of competent jurisdiction. The study would consider the provision of monthly subsidy amounts and a comparison of such amounts to benefits for children receiving temporary family assistance, the possible establishment of a clearinghouse of information regarding services available in the state for relative caregivers and the provision of training offered to caseworkers employed by the Departments of Children and Families and Social Services.

In previous legislative sessions there have been proposed bills that would require the Department to increase the payment standard for child only assistance units in the Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) program to seventy-five percent of the foster care rate paid by the Department of Children and Families. While the Department appreciates the goal of achieving equity in these benefits, based on SFY 16 data, we estimate the cost of such a change to be approximately \$14.4 million.

The Department has a contract with United Way 2-1-1 to provide information on services available to not only relative caregivers, but to all Connecticut residents. As this comprehensive resource already exists the Department would view the creation of a separate clearing house of information as duplicative.

In the current fiscal climate, the Department has limited resources to conduct and participate in studies as well. For these reasons, the Department opposes the bill.