



*Division of Public Defender Services  
State of Connecticut*

ATTORNEY CHRISTINE PERRA RAPILLO  
DIRECTOR OF DELINQUENCY DEFENSE & CHILD PROTECTION

**TESTIMONY OF CHRISTINE RAPILLO  
DIRECTOR OF DELINQUENCY DEFENSE AND CHILD PROTECTION  
DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES**

**COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN  
FEBRUARY 14, 2013**

**RAISED BILL 822, AN ACT CONCERNING INTERVIEWS IN CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES**

The Office of Chief Public Defender is concerned that this proposal creates a broad expansion of the Department of Children and Families' right to interview children during the investigatory phase of a child welfare case. The Office of the Chief Public Defender believes that our current statutes provide sufficient protections are to allow investigation and still keep children safe. Conn. Gen. Stat. Sec. 17a-101h already allows the Department to interview a child without parental consent if they believe the parent is the perpetrator of the abuse. The Department also has extensive powers to protect children where an allegation of abuse has been made. Conn. Gen. Stat. Sec. 46b-129 allows DCF to take temporary custody if they have reasonable cause to believe that a child is in danger. This is a low evidentiary standard and would generally not require a statement from a child.

The bill proposed infringes on a non abusing parent's rights prior to any judicial finding that there is a reason to believe abuse or neglect occurred. This state has an absolute obligation to keep its children safe but family integrity and the rights of parents must also be respected. The Office of Chief Public Defender requests that this committee not act on this proposed bill.