

2014 -- S 2504

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

SENATE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND
FAMILIES TO ENHANCE THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM'S CAPACITY TO COLLECT
AND UTILIZE DATA

Introduced By: Senators Sheehan, Nesselbush, Cool Rumsey, Satchell, and Miller

Date Introduced: February 27, 2014

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

1 WHEREAS, State child welfare agencies increasingly turn to robust systems to support
2 their strategic planning, actions, and investments. Targeted data collection and analyses have
3 allowed state child welfare agencies to identify gaps in services, to monitor the status of children
4 served in child welfare systems, to track outcomes, and to direct resources to programs that
5 demonstrate their effectiveness. These activities often result in publicly available reports that
6 provide additional transparency in government spending; and

7 WHEREAS, The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) currently
8 compiles a great deal of information related to its child welfare activities, through data collected
9 in response to Child and Family Services Reviews, Title IV-E foster care eligibility reviews, the
10 Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System assessment reviews, the Statewide
11 Automated Child Welfare Information System, and the Quarterly Program Improvement Plans to
12 the Federal Administration for Children and Families; and

13 WHEREAS, DCYF has worked closely with the Office of Management and Budget
14 (OMB) and the Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative to establish a cost-benefit model to
15 examine policies and procedures in the state's criminal justice system. As part of this effort,
16 DCYF has reported on a number of indicators related to the child welfare system, but certain
17 other measures that are critical to documenting children's well-being remain uncollected; and

18 WHEREAS, In 2013, the Senate's Health and Human Services Committee conducted
19 hearings on DCYF which included extensive testimony on how DCYF's data collection and

1 reporting could support better policy and decision-making; now, therefore be it

2 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
3 hereby respectfully requests that DCYF enhance the child welfare system's capacity to collect and
4 utilize data to inform programmatic and policy decisions for children, youth, and families
5 involved in the system; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That this Senate respectfully requests that DCYF include in its reporting to
7 the extent practicable the five measures identified in the November 2013 report of the Senate
8 Health and Human Services Committee oversight of DCYF, including the incidence of
9 maltreatment in foster care (on an annual basis), incidence of advance transition plans for youth
10 transitioning from care, timeliness of achieving permanent child placements (on a semi-annual
11 basis), median length of stay in congregate care, and average open cases per social worker; and be
12 it further

13 RESOLVED, That this Senate respectfully requests that DCYF, the Family Court, the
14 Department of Behavioral Health, Development Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH), the Rhode
15 Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and other agencies continue to work
16 together to identify and report common measures on youth in the foster care system, those
17 entering the juvenile justice system, and children and families receiving preventative services;
18 and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That this Senate respectfully requests that DCYF and BHDDH enter into a
20 memorandum of agreement by December 31, 2014, which specifically provides for youth who
21 are identified with Severe Emotional Disturbance/Developmental Disability to be referred to
22 BHDDH five years prior to their transition, and that specifically outlines the responsibilities of
23 both DCYF and BHDDH to ensure the effective transition of youth identified as eligible for
24 BHDDH services on or before their 21st birthday; and be it further

25 RESOLVED, That this Senate respectfully requests that DCYF relate system-level
26 measures to strategies, actions, and outcomes in its annual reporting to the General Assembly, to
27 see how system-wide results can be strengthened; and be it further

28 RESOLVED, That this Senate respectfully requests that DCYF present a report to the
29 Senate detailing additional costs and resources that relate to the requested data collection and
30 reporting, for those measures that are not readily available; now, therefore be it

31 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
32 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Governor, the Director of the Department of
33 Children, Youth, and Families, The Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human
34 Services, the Director of the Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, and

1 Hospitals, and the Commissioner of Education.

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