



## 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  
Chris Oakley, Assistant Public Defender**

**COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN - FEBRUARY 6, 2025**

#### **Raised Bill No. 1215**

#### **AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN NEGLECTED, UNCARED FOR AND ABUSED CHILDREN AND YOUTHS**

The Office of Chief Public Defender (OCPD) supports *Raised S.B. 1215, An Act Concerning Certain Neglected, Uncared For and Abused Children and Youths*. The legislation would allow a child or youth who is the subject of a petition alleging neglect, uncared for or abuse to be considered a child for the purposes of the adjudication of such petition if such child turns eighteen years of age prior to such adjudication.

As the law now exists, neglect, uncared for and abuse petitions may be filed in Juvenile Court prior to a child's eighteenth birthday. However, if the child turns eighteen prior to the adjudication, the petition is dismissed for lack of jurisdiction. S.B. 1215 would modify the current statute to allow a petition filed before the child's eighteenth birthday to proceed to adjudication and disposition even after the youth's eighteenth birthday.

Young adults come to the attention of the Juvenile Court through these petitions for a variety of reasons including abandonment, Human Trafficking, domestic violence and/or specialized needs. The seventeen-year-old youth subjected to these conditions may have reached maturity to remove themselves from the situation for self-preservation but find themselves without any support or housing.

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**February 6, 2025**

**Testimony of Renee Cimino, Director of Delinquency Defense and Child Protection**

However, any party to neglect petitions, including parents or guardians, can object to an adjudication finding and seek a trial on the matter. Depending on the Court location, a trial may be scheduled months in the future despite the Court's best efforts. If the child's eighteenth birthday falls on a date before the trial, then that petition would be dismissed.

S.B. 1215 will provide these identified vulnerable young adults with the same protection, essential services and support as other youths who were identified and adjudicated before their eighteenth birthday. These essential services include housing, post-secondary education and voluntary continuation of care services by the Department of Children and Families up to age twenty-three. Thus, this change in the statutes would have a significant positive impact upon those youth who turn eighteen prior to the adjudication.

Thank you for your consideration of this office's position on this bill. This office remains available to discuss this further and requests that this bill be voted favorably out of the committee.