



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
Department of Children, Youth and Families
Director's Office
101 Friendship St.
Providence, RI 02903

May 22, 2025

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chairman
House Committee on Finance
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: 2025 H-5995 – Relating to State Affairs and Government – Department of Human Services

Dear Chairman Abney:

I am writing on behalf of the Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF or “the department”) regarding H 5995, which would provide \$3,000 stipends for individuals who successfully complete a job training program and the department’s probationary period. Please consider the additional information below when evaluating this legislation.

This bill identifies to two specific positions: Social Caseworker I and Child Protective Investigators (CPI). Please note, however, that there are no Social Caseworker I positions at DCYF – there are Social Caseworker II (SCWII) positions.

Next, the department already provides a job training program for individuals hired into the CPI or SCWII positions. There is no determination regarding which new-hires are eligible for it, though, as mentioned in this bill – all new CPIs and SCWII go through this 23-week program. It is unclear if H 5995 would apply to individuals who complete this program or if it would require the department to develop something new that is only available to certain “eligible” persons.

Finally, providing a \$3,000 stipend to individuals would require additional financial resources from the department. At the end of the 2023 legislative session, the General Assembly enacted a pilot program that changed the hiring process at DCYF for these two positions. DCYF now conducts Civil Service Exams – the exam that a person must pass before being hired – on a monthly basis. This increased frequency means that DCYF hires new individuals regularly, and requiring this stipend could cost close to \$200,000 per year.

Thank you for allowing the department to submit testimony outlining its concerns regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,

Ashley Deckert, MSW, MA
Director

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance
The Honorable David Morales
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy