



Office of the Child Advocate

State of Rhode Island

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

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Thank you, Chair Murray and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of Senate Bill 2886 which establish a joint commission to study ways to maximize revenue for child welfare and children's behavioral health services.

My name is Katelyn Medeiros, and I am the Child Advocate for the State of Rhode Island. I am the Director of the agency which serves as the oversight agency to the Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF). As the oversight agency, we monitor the case of each child and young adult open to the Department to protect their legal rights and to promote policies and practices which ensure that youth are safe, and that their physical, mental, medical, educational, emotional, and behavioral health needs are met.

Currently, a joint initiative is underway between the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and DCYF to establish stronger alignment between DCYF and Medicaid funded services including congregate care, in-home, and community based. The proposed Joint Commission would explicitly review the Medicaid transformation work with a key focus on maximizing financial strategies across Medicaid state plan funding, grants, and various federal funding streams administered by state agencies specific to initiatives impacting children and families. The OCA supports the broad membership of the Commission, including our office, and is particularly encouraged to see public testimony is built into the structure and scope which is critical to ensure the interim and final reports are truly comprehensive.

The OCA urges support for Senate Bill 2886 and thanks you for your continued support of children and families impacted by child welfare and children's behavioral health in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Katelyn Medeiros, Esq.
Child Advocate