

# Senate Children and Family Law Committee

*Joshua Schauer 271-3077*

**SB 161**, providing that in-state placements may include placements in New England in certain circumstances and addressing particular statutory technical defects.

**Hearing Date:** February 20, 2025

**Time Opened:** 9:45 a.m.

**Time Closed:** 9:57 a.m.

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Abbas, Sullivan and Long

**Members of the Committee Absent :** None

**Bill Analysis:** This bill requires out-of-state placements for children to be licensed in the accordance with the laws of the state in which they operate and be certified by the department of health and human services. This bill replaces references to placements for children "contracted" with the department of health and human services with placements "certified" by the department.

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**Sponsors:**

Sen. Birdsell

Sen. Long

Sen. Carson

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**Who supports the bill:** Senator Birdsell (SD19), Senator Carson(SD14), Senator Long(SD20), Susan Larrabee(DHHS), Cassandra Sanchez (OCA), Lissa Mascio(OCA), Emily Lawrence(Waypoint), Sarah McCarthy, Darci McCarthy.

**Who opposes the bill:** Amanda Azad (ACLU NH),Dawn McKinney(NH Legal assistance), Lisa Wolford(Childrens Law Center), Emma Sevigny(New Futures).

**Summary of testimony presented in support:**

**Senator Birdsell: Senate District 19**

- Senator Birdsell introduced SB 161.
- This bill was at the request of the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. It is a remedial legislation to SB417 last year. It is consistent with the intent of the past bill, SB 417.

**Susan Larrabee: Department of Children, Youth and Family Legislative Liaison**

- She spoke on the replace-all amendment (2025-0514s).

- During the last legislative session, HB 1573 and SB 417 enhanced, expanded, and codified the oversight of children in residential treatment at all levels of the process. Expanded certification process and treatment placements.
- She stated that the court now must approve and order residential treatment placements which are specific to that specific child and enhance the oversight in the facility. As well as increased reporting on a monthly basis from meetings with the child in the facility.
- She said that DCYF and OCA worked to update policies and operations of the former bills to create a more enhanced and expanded system which is seen in this legislation.
- They noticed some inconsistencies in those past bills which is addressed in this replace-all bill.
- She pointed out that HB 1573 and SB 417 had the intention to replace the term *contract* with the language *license in accordance with the laws of the State in which they operate and are certified by a department*. However, inadvertently two sections were not changed and thus a replace-all was needed.
- Ms. Larrabee noted this will make the amended sections consistent and out-of-state placements more concise and thorough.

**Cassandra Sanchez: Child advocate Director and Lissa Mascio, Policy directory (OCA)**

- Both women support the legislation with the replace-all amendment. They remarked that it does its best to make the corrections from the Committee of Conference last legislative term.