

# Senate Judiciary Committee

*Pete Mulvey 271-4063*

**SB 142-FN**, establishing the department of children's services and juvenile justice.

**Hearing Date:** February 18, 2025

**Time Opened:** 1:05 p.m.

**Time Closed:** 1:12 p.m.

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Carson, Reardon and Gannon

**Members of the Committee Absent :** Senators Abbas and Altschiller

**Bill Analysis:** This bill establishes the department of children's services and juvenile justice and transfers the powers and duties of the department of health and human services, division for children youth and families to the new department.

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**Sponsors:**

Sen. Carson

Sen. Sullivan

Rep. Rice

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**Who supports the bill:** Daniel Richardson

**Who opposes the bill:** Holly Stevens, Traci Fowler, Leigh Hutchinson, and Emma Sevigny.

**Who is neutral on the bill:** Patricia Tilley and Lisa Wolford.

**Summary of testimony :**

**Senator Sharon Carson**

**Senate District 14**

- SB 142-FN sought to establish the Department of Children's Services and Juvenile Justice, to assume the duties of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) which were typically reserved to the Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF).
- Sen. Carson asked the committee to re-refer the bill to the committee during executive session.
- Re referral was appropriate according to Sen. Carson due to concerns relative to cost, and ongoing conference with DHHS/DCYF.

**Patricia Tilley**

**Department of Health and Human Services – DCYF**

- The Department initially had concerns; however, they supported continued partnership and discussion with Sen. Carson.

- DCYF has developed new strategic priorities, and has conducted children's system of care assessments to inform ongoing work to improve services and their long-term outcomes
- A measured, coordinated approach can ensure that the health and welfare needs of the entire family unit are met seamlessly.

**Holly Stevens, Esq**

**Director of Public Policy, NAMI NH**

- Ms. Stevens briefly summarized NAMI's primary concerns.
- The transition and continuity between youth and adult services was difficult under the shared roof of DHHS and would likely deteriorate further if administratively separated.
- The cost of establishing and maintaining the proposed measure was concerning.

**Tracy Fowler**

**NH Charitable Foundation**

- The Charitable Foundation was initially opposed to SB 142.
- Years of careful work to integrate services would be undone by SB 142.
- Significant funding was necessary to establish the new department which would be better invested in preexisting bodies and measures.
- The Charitable foundation offered its participation in continuing discussions.

PM

Date Hearing Report completed: February 27, 2025