

Senate Children and Family Law Committee

Joshua Schauer 271-3077

HB 478, establishing a foster care oversight subcommittee within the oversight commission on children's services.

Hearing Date: April 3, 2025

Time Opened: 12:25 p.m.

Time Closed: 12:37 p.m.

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

Bill Analysis: This bill establishes a foster care oversight subcommittee within the oversight commission on children's services.

Sponsors:

Rep. Petrigno

Rep. DeSimone

Rep. Gregg

Rep. Grossman

Rep. Levesque

Rep. M. Pearson

Rep. N. Murphy

Sen. Altschiller

Sen. Long

Who supports the bill: Representative Petrigno (H-43), Senator Altschiller (SD-24), Representative DeSimone (R-18), Representative Korzen (Coos-7), Cassandra Sanchez (OCA), Lissa Mascio (OCA), Emily Lawrence (Waypoint), Betty Gay, Janet Lucas, Deborah Cmar, Brittany Low.

Who opposes the bill: Mariellen MacKay, Robert Tangway.

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Rep. Petrigno: Representative Hillsborough District-43

- Representative Petrigno introduced the bill and said that he had heard testimony in a study committee last year and is the reason he filed this legislation.
- He said the bill will create oversight to a much needed area in our state government, foster care families do not have the necessary resources, and this committee will ensure that they do.
- He stated this will establish a permanent oversight subcommittee within the commission. This is a bipartisan legislation that will ultimately benefit new Hampshire families that provide foster care.

Senator Sullivan stated that the house has legislation which removes the Office of the Child Advocate and if that stands where would this legislation fall under.

Representative Petrigno said that it stands on its own merits and cannot be determined by what will or will not happen with other legislation.

Rep DeSimone: Rockingham District-18

- She stated that for many years, she and others have served on DCYF advisory board, and it solidified the reason for this bill.
- She explained that with an oversight committee it will oversee the foster care system and provide stability, education, and assistance for all families involved.

Betty Gay: Former Representative

- This legislation would give this issue some teeth. An advisory board and oversight committee could affect a little more change.

Lissa Mascio: Legislative Liaison for the Office of the Child Advocate

- She said that they stand in strong support of this bill.
- The OCA works very closely with the foster care program and is a huge part of the OCA. An oversight committee is important and crucial to the State and the agency.
- She explained that bill highlights the importance of the foster care unit within OCA as a whole.

Representative Korzen: COOS District 7

- She said that it is something that is needed and spoke to her personal testimony of being a foster parent.
- When they moved to the State, they were shocked at the New Hampshire system and the lack of structure and infrastructure that foster families need to support them. It needs more focus and assistance which this bill will help better support foster families.
- She offered her services and personal experience to serve on the oversight committee if this legislation does pass.

Senator Sullivan stated that she sits on the oversight committee and asked how long ago was representative Korzen in the foster care system?

Representative Korzen said she has been in the system for 3 years.