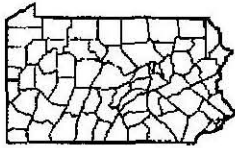


Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators, Inc.



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Testimony to House Judiciary Committee regarding HB 928 pn. 1052 February 22, 2010

Good morning Chairman Caltagirone, Chairman Marsico and ladies and gentlemen of the House Judiciary Committee. My name is Charles Songer. I am the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators Association (PCYA), an Affiliate of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP), and represent all 67 County Children and Youth Services Agency administrators in the Commonwealth. Personally, I have served in the public child welfare system in Pennsylvania as a county caseworker, supervisor and agency administrator from 1972 to 1997, and as Executive Director of PCYA since 1997. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today regarding House Bill 928, p.n. 1052.

The mission of the PCYA is to enhance the quality of service delivery for children, youth and their families by providing for its members:

- (1) A forum for the exchange of information;
- (2) Assistance in educating the general public and its constituencies; and
- (3) An environment of support for the Association membership.

In light of this mission, the issue before us today, better detection of child rapists and predators, is important because of the often irreparable damage inflicted on children and youth by these individuals. We endorse the enhanced efforts to identify and apprehend these individuals.

We do have two concerns with the Bill as written however.

First, we are not convinced that the mere presence of a sexually transmitted disease constitutes evidence of either a felony or of child abuse as stated in sec. 6321.4 (a) and we suggests that further information be sought from health care experts to clarify whether certain sexually transmitted diseases can be transmitted accidentally.

Secondly, in sec. 6321.5(c), the chief administrative officer of the county agency is required to establish procedures and track referrals to the child predator unit. We certainly have no issue with this for cases that meet our current definitions and responsibilities under the Child Protective Services Law. The definitions of "child" in sec. 6321.3 and "child abuse" in sec. 6321.4(c) do not correspond to our operating definitions under either the Juvenile Court Act (42 Pa. C.S. sec. 6301) or the Child Protective Services Law (23 Pa. C.S. sec. 6301) and we ask that our responsibilities not be expanded until the workload and financial impact are weighed and addressed.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. If further information or clarification is needed, please contact me at (717) 232-7554 or csonger@pacounties.org.

Charles Songer
Executive Director

An affiliate of The County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania