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PUBLIC HEARING

before

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN'S SERVICES

To examine and review various staffing and caseload issues
within the State Division of Youth and Family Services

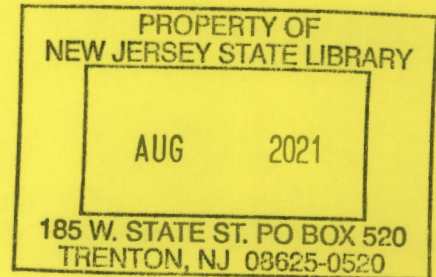
September 22, 1987
Room 407
State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Senator Catherine A. Costa, Chairwoman
Senator Gabriel M. Ambrosio, Vice Chairman
Senator Leanna Brown
Senator Donald D. DiFrancesco

ALSO PRESENT:

Amy S. Fischer
Office of Legislative Services
Aide, Senate Committee on Children's Services



* * * * *

Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by
Office of Legislative Services
Public Information Office
Hearing Unit
State House Annex
CN 068
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

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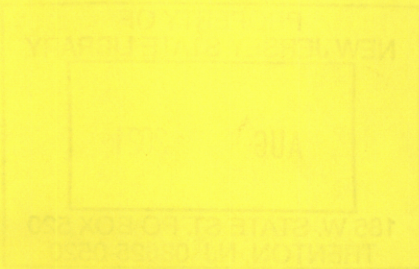
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Chairman
BRIEL M. AMBROSIO
Vice-Chairman
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New Jersey State Legislature
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September 8, 1987

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN'S SERVICES
ANNOUNCES A PUBLIC HEARING TO EXAMINE AND REVIEW VARIOUS
STAFFING AND CASELOAD ISSUES WITHIN THE STATE
DIVISION OF YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**Tuesday, September 22, 1987
Beginning at 10:30 A.M.
Room 407 of the State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey**

The Senate Committee on Children's Services will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, September 22, 1987 at 10:30 A.M. in Room 407 of the State House Annex. The purpose of this hearing is to examine and review various staffing and caseload issues within the Division of Youth and Family Services in the Department of Human Services.

Address any questions and requests to testify to Amy S. Fischer, Committee Aide (609) 292-1646, State House Annex, CN-068, Trenton, New Jersey 08625. Persons wishing to testify are asked to submit nine copies of their testimony on the day of the hearing. The chairman may find it necessary to limit the number of witnesses or the time available to each witness.

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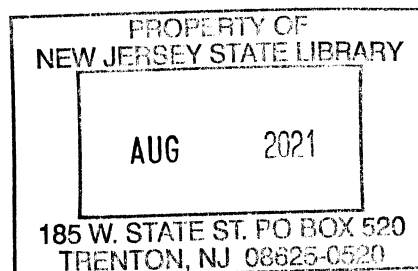


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Shop Stewardess

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SENATOR CATHERINE A. COSTA (Chairwoman): I believe we should start the hearing at this time. We were waiting for the Assistant Commissioner, but she isn't here yet, so we are just going to start anyway.

I am Senator Catherine Costa. I represent the Seventh District in Burlington County. I am the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Children's Services. At this time, I would like to introduce one other member of the Committee who is here -- Senator Gabe Ambrosio -- to my left. We expect two of the other Senators, and I will introduce them as they get here.

As all of you know, we are going to hear testimony today on staffing and caseload issues within the Division of Youth and Family Services of the Department of Human Services. The focus of this hearing is to review what has transpired in the Division following the appropriation of approximately \$10 million over the last three fiscal years for additional staffing positions. These additional appropriations were in direct response to the dramatic increase in the number of reported child abuse cases, the need to conduct investigations of the reports, and the subsequent increase in caseloads of DYFS workers.

In addition, we are also interested in determining exactly what the current caseload is in DYFS; that is, whether the additional moneys appropriated to the Division have alleviated the staffing problem, and if not, why not? For example, we have such questions as: Have caseloads been reduced, or have they remained constant? What is the turnover rate for caseworkers? What difficulties does the Division have in hiring and recruiting caseworkers? Is the salary structure adequate? Have criminal background checks hindered recruitment? What accounts for caseload differences among district offices? What accounts for the percentage reduction in clients over the past year? How does a child who has been repeatedly beaten from the time she was five weeks old-- I

point to this. (Senator Costa holds up newspaper) As you can see, I have had this newspaper for quite some time. Actually, it is from April of this year. It addresses a child who was beaten from the time she was five weeks old. She had a skull fracture at the time -- the first time. How does she find herself being returned to her parents, who did the beatings?

These are some of the issues we would like to hear about today. We will hold the record of the hearing open for two weeks for anyone who wishes to submit written testimony, who doesn't have it here today. You can send it to Amy Fischer, the Committee Aide.

Before we hear from the witnesses, I would like to introduce also, Paul Anzano, partisan aide, and Judy Peoples, who represents the Minority on the Committee. I would also like to ask Senator Ambrosio if he would like to make some comments?

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Not at this time, thank you.

SENATOR COSTA: With that, the first person we will call from the witness list is William Waldman, Acting Director, Division of Youth and Family Services. This is a heck of a thing for him to come into. He just came on board. Bill?

W I L L I A M W A L D M A N: Thank you, Senator Costa.

SENATOR COSTA: Mr. Waldman, you are not the Acting Director. You are the Director of DYFS.

MR. WALDMAN: I am the Acting Director. Senator, Deputy Commissioner Welch is here. I wonder if I could yield to her?

SENATOR COSTA: All right. Deputy Commissioner Odella Welch. Odella, I am so glad you got here, and just in time.

D E P U T Y C O M M. O D E L L A W E L C H: Please accept my apologies for being late. I was circling around looking for a parking spot.

SENATOR COSTA: Oh. I received a phone call yesterday from Commissioner Drew Altman. He was in Washington. He is trying to get waivers for the REACH bill I sponsored.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WELCH: Exactly. He asked me, Senator, to extend his thanks to you for your effort in that regard. ~~From the bill of this year, it addressed a child who was~~ ~~born.~~ At this point, Senator, I would beg your indulgence. After Mr. Waldman and I have completed our testimony, I have other pressing issues related to the other divisions under my responsibility back in the office, and I would like to return there after I have answered your questions, if that is all right with you.

SENATOR COSTA: As long as we can keep him here.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WELCH: Yes. I would like, as well, if you would again indulge us, if you would hold your questions until we have both made our presentations, because I am certain that Mr. Waldman's presentation will clarify -- will both respond to and clarify a lot of the questions you have.

SENATOR COSTA: Well, I would like to acknowledge what you have said, but I have said to the panel-- We will hold the questions until after you have finished, but in case there is something we feel we just have to say at that moment, we will do so.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WELCH: Certainly. With that, I would like to say: Chairman Costa, members of the Committee, and other children's advocates, I am very pleased to be here this morning to represent Commissioner Altman and the Department of Human Services, and to introduce to you our new Director of the Division of Youth and Family Services.

As Deputy Commissioner for Agencies, responsible for what is commonly known as DYFS, the Division of Public Welfare, Medical Assistance, and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, I welcome this opportunity -- my first -- to address you today.

I would like to begin by briefly reviewing the current directions and goals of our Department and explaining a little bit about how DYFS fits into that mission.

The Department of Human Services is the largest department in the State. We have a \$4 billion budget and employ about 23,000 people. But, as Commissioner Altman has stated so often, we are more than just a big box. Our Department is responsible for some of the toughest problems we, as a society, face -- problems such as confronting poverty, child abuse, and homelessness; problems such as caring for the blind, the mentally ill, and the developmentally disabled; serving an ever-aging population and serving our veterans.

Commissioner Altman has pledged to make the Department a more pro-active force for both the taxpayer and the client. He has begun to take decisive steps to meld our seven divisions into one strong Department. I am sure you have heard that statement from him before also. In a department like ours, the job is never done, and there are always areas where we need to do better.

DYFS is one of the Department's seven divisions. Its mission is to meet the social service needs of New Jersey's children and their families by protecting children, supporting families, and, through community education, preventing abuse in a pro-active way. Its responsibility is to be accountable to its clients, to you, and to the people of New Jersey. These hearings are but one way of ensuring that accountability. As part of its mission, DYFS: Shields children from abuse; houses homeless families and protects the elderly; arranges adoptions; provides day care; houses battered women and children; and cares for pregnant teen-agers and children with AIDS. These are only a few of the functions of this multifaceted agency. When children are in trouble in the State of New Jersey, DYFS is almost always the agency called upon for help, and sometimes at odd hours of the day or night.

In its long history, which dates back to 1899, DYFS's role and function have changed and evolved with society and its needs. In the past, the Division was reactive, and could only step into a crisis after a child had been abused.

Since the early 1980s, the philosophy has changed to one that is more pro-active, and that is because we recognize -- as you do -- the connection between the increased stress on today's families and the rising types and severity of problems children face. In a nutshell, more children and families are receiving needed services. If we err, it is always on the side of safety for the most vulnerable of society -- our children.

We do this in partnership with communities to develop more and stronger local programs. The Division can't be expected to be all things to all people. They must rely on cooperation and shared responsibilities with all sectors of the community, and while prevention is an important part of the mission, results are hard to measure. We do know that in the last six months our caseloads have declined slightly. We believe it is because we're doing a better job in helping to stabilize families and prevent abuse. How many children have escaped abuse and neglect because New Jersey has begun to recognize and deal with the demands on its families is something we don't know.

The changes from reactive to pro-active have meant simply one thing. Kids -- our children -- are safer today in New Jersey than they were five years ago.

By focusing more closely on the needs of children and families, we have been able to identify other serious problems they face. One example is the simply devastating plight of children with AIDS. There are presently 95 children afflicted with this disease in our caseload, and we anticipate that number continuing to grow at an extremely rapid rate. Child care, homelessness, parenting, domestic violence -- this list of problems is constantly growing.

Because the problems are so varied and so severe, they have created more stress, more frustrations, and more demands on DYFS' staff, whose job is more difficult than you and I can imagine, and you will hear more about that this afternoon, I'm

certain. These people are the backbone of our Department. Few do more for the most needy in our State. We have attempted to provide needed supports for them by upgrading the titles and salaries of caseworkers. We have instituted a career ladder, one that has not worked as well as we would have liked to have seen it work, but we have instituted that career ladder. We have provided additional supports. Offices have been relocated and upgraded, and we have increased available cars and equipment. We have enhanced our training for caseworkers and supervisors. Together with the Communication Workers of America, we have introduced a Stress Management Program which now exists in almost every DYFS office in the State. We have created a Parents' Rights Handbook and a Citizen Complaint Action Line.

We have not done enough, but in today's ever-changing society, what is enough, and when can what we do ever be enough? We can only continue to identify and work to resolve these difficult issues.

You have helped us in the past to meet these challenges by providing significant budget increases and additional staff to allow us to hold our own. But imagine the frustrations of a DYFS caseworker who must tell a single mother of three children, or more, that no housing other than a cramped motel room exists, or is available for her and her children.

Imagine being a DYFS caseworker working around the clock to find a shelter, a foster home, or simply a place to sleep for an emotionally disturbed teen-ager, or having to find a home for a baby with AIDS.

But, rather than dwell on these problems, everyday we are molding new approaches, new solutions, and reordering our priorities to better address these issues. One example is the recently opened group home for children with AIDS, which is one of the first, if not the first, in the country. Another is our

new Family Preservation Service, which moves counselors directly into the home to confront crises on the spot and avoid out-of-home placements for children. We need supports for them by upgrading our nationally unrecognized Post-Adoptive Services Program, counsels and supports families which have accepted hard-to-place children, thereby preventing further disruption in the life of the child.

We still have a long way to go. One basic need is to maintain a full complement of staff in our district offices at all times. That is difficult to do given the bureaucracy of government. We have made some progress, and Director Waldman will provide some additional detail on that in his presentation. We need to give our workers the tools and resources they need to do their jobs.

We need to train our foster parents better and to provide them with additional supports, such as respite care, competitive board rates, and enrichment programs for their foster children, and we appreciate your efforts in helping us to do this.

In order to speed up our recruitment of foster and adoptive parents, we need to amend the criminal history record checks statute to allow for temporary approval of a foster or adoptive home in special cases. As you know, bills on these foster care initiatives have been moving through the Legislature, and we need your help to make them a reality.

We will also be asking for your support for our Fiscal Year 1989 budget requests. These requests include additional services for young victims of AIDS, troubled youth, battered women, and families who need child care. It is only through the commitment of the Legislature and the partnership that exists throughout the State with community service providers, that we can accomplish our mission to serve those who depend upon us for safety and family support. We will do our part.

On the issue of accountability, we must expect our managers and workers to be accountable for their actions. Likewise, we must be accountable to our clients and to the public. Decisions made daily by a DYFS worker are often critical in the life and safety of a child.

Accountability for performance and efficient use of resources must be practiced at all levels of government or any organization. Along with accountability goes a responsibility on the part of management to provide staff with the tools and supports they need to do their jobs. With your help, the Department is committed to doing exactly that.

One sensitive area where DYFS actions are sometimes questioned, is in the matter of balancing the rights of children and the rights of parents and, Senator Costa, we have had conversations about this. Adults have all of the rights of due process. Children are vulnerable. They have no rights, and must rely on adults for protection. Child abuse is always an emotionally charged situation. But, in this delicate balance, is there any question that the welfare of children must prevail? This is where accountability and confidentiality appear to be at odds.

Accountability, simply stated, means we must answer for our actions. Confidentiality often means we can't. You may well hear of specific cases in which DYFS is criticized for its actions on behalf of children. You pick up the paper and you read that DYFS can't comment. I have had problems with that. Our staff is called overzealous, to use one of the kinder terms. Well, let me emphasize this: It is very frustrating to be criticized and be unable to set the record straight. But the laws that protect the privacy of our clients won't allow us to do that, even if the clients themselves publicly discuss it. The same dilemma applies to discussing staff disciplinary actions.

However, as you know, we are always available to discuss specific situations in closed session with you, and we invite you, as often as necessary, to review these cases with us. We are at your disposal daily by a DYFS worker and often by me. In conclusion, Commissioner Altman and I want to thank you for your continued support of Department programs, both through the funding process and through your advocacy for our children.

Now, if it pleases you, I would like to introduce William Waldman, recently appointed Acting Director of DYFS. Bill brings a strong background in human services to this challenging position. For 12 years, he directed Middlesex County's Department of Human Services. He is also President of the New Jersey Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers and is highly regarded in the human services field. His testimony here today will further clarify some of the issues before your Committee and, of course, I am available for your questions also.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Commissioner, do you have a copy of your testimony?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WELCH: Yes, I do, sir.

SENATOR COSTA: We would now like to hear from you, Bill Waldman. I don't know if I should say you walked into a hornet's nest, but I hope we can be constructive in this hearing.

MR. WALDMAN: Thank you, Senator Costa, and thank you, members of the Committee. It is a pleasure to be here.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Senate Committee on Children's Services for the opportunity you have presented to me today, in the form of the hearing you are holding on staffing and caseload issues relevant to the Division of Youth and Family Services. In the three short weeks since my appointment as Acting Director of DYFS, I have spent a great deal of time with the staff of our Division,

becoming more fully acquainted with our organization, structure, programs, and services, as well as the issues and challenges we face today in protecting children and vulnerable adults, strengthening families, and preventing abuse and neglect. The internal perspective at the Division I am gaining in this process, will be balanced and enhanced by the external perspective I hope to gain through the forum you have provided in today's hearing. Again, I thank you for this opportunity, which is vital to me in forging a clear, consistent, and appropriate agenda for the Division of Youth and Family Services.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the members of this Committee, and to the entire New Jersey Legislature, for the support we have received traditionally for DYFS, in expanding resources, both our internal resources in terms of staff and related requirements, and our resources for funding programs and services in the community, all to meet the needs of the children and families that we serve.

In addition, each member of this Committee is sponsoring important legislation designed to improve the status of children, provide additional resources to address unmet needs, and enhance the quality, accountability, and accessibility of services. Your concern for DYFS and the children of New Jersey is indeed deeply appreciated, and I look forward to working with you in the future to face the many challenges ahead.

Deputy Commissioner Welch has outlined the overall mission and direction of our Department. I would like to more directly address the staffing and caseload issues that are the subject of today's hearing, by providing you an overview of how we have utilized the staff resources that have been provided, the changes in our caseload that bear upon the adequacy of these resources, the steps we have taken to improve working conditions, and the additional work -- as Odella indicated -- that needs to be done.

In Fiscal Year 1985, the Legislature approved a supplemental appropriation which provided, in part, for the addition of 507 direct service personnel to respond to the very significant increases in caseload which were experienced at that time. The caseload continued to grow in 1986 and peaked at our highest level of 58,000 children under supervision.

Truly, 1986 was a crisis year for DYFS. We were struggling with a record number of new cases, while at the same time recruiting to fill the new positions that were made available and train the workers for service. Caseworkers worked overtime to meet the demand and did whatever was needed to protect a child from harm. Their dedication and personal sacrifices under these very trying circumstances are a source of great pride for us and for the State of New Jersey.

In the past year, we have experienced a gradual but steady decrease in the total DYFS caseload. However, we are still experiencing increases in the number of referrals or complaints we receive, which we expect to reach a record level of 55,000 this year, almost 5000 more than 1986, and double the 1983 level. Today, there are 50,000 children actively under our supervision -- a 12-1/2% reduction from the 58,000 children under supervision at peak in 1986. Because of this trend, along with management controls and new programs, the average caseload has dropped from a high of one caseworker to 50 children in 1986, to an average of one caseworker to 38 children today.

We thus were ultimately successful in utilizing all of the positions allocated. However, due to a turnover rate of approximately 18%, there are currently in excess of 250 vacancies in the Division's total staff complement of 3478 employees. If all direct service vacancies were filled, the actual average caseload would be reduced to one caseworker for 36 children. This compares to the Child Welfare League of America standards of one worker to 32 children.

Despite the average caseload numbers I just quoted, some degree of inequity does exist, and will remain among individual worker caseloads. There are some very practical reasons for such imbalances. First, a new worker cannot immediately handle 40 cases. It takes time for a new worker to be trained and to learn a very difficult and demanding job. Second, vacancies caused by sick leave, maternity leave, retirements, promotions, and resignations cause a temporary transfer or assignment of caseload to other workers. Finally, sometimes cases are not closed in a timely fashion. All of the above factors can, and do, interfere with absolute parity for all workers in every office at all times.

For example, we know that there are 24 workers who currently have caseloads in excess of 80 children. Six of these workers have caseloads exceeding 100 children. This should never occur, and we are taking immediate steps to rectify the situation, and even more importantly, to prevent its recurrence.

It should be noted, however, that caseload assignments are fluid. DYFS is a 24-hour agency that has constant movement of cases from segment to segment. Any report we give you is a snapshot at a given point in time and, quite frankly, is subject to rapid change.

We have implemented management controls to reduce caseloads. In 1986, supervisors and workers in every district office in our Division completed a quite rigorous review of every case over a nine-month period. If a child was no longer at risk and there had been minimal supervision over time, our caseworkers matched these families, wherever possible, to appropriate community resources and closed their DYFS cases. I believe this effort was a significant factor in the reduction of our caseload.

In addition, DYFS regional administrators have been given the authority and a 10% flexibility to reassign staff

among district offices to respond quickly to variations in caseload size, before it reaches a crisis level. ~~It remains a~~ ~~individual.~~ But, of course, caseload ratio is not just a numbers game. There are no quick and easy answers to achieving and maintaining manageable caseloads, or we would have found them quite some time ago. Child welfare agencies around the country are grappling with these same realities. The fact is that reducing caseloads demands action and vigilance in many areas: We have to be very careful and expand our coordination with other community service agencies to assure that they can handle cases that perhaps we do not need to get involved in; we have to redouble our efforts in training our staff; we have to focus on issues like quality of supervision; we have to have the available resources we need in the community to address those caseload issues; and, quite frankly, we need sufficient internal management controls in the personnel system that anticipate and respond quickly to changes in the work force, and take directed time-limited intervention through clear case practice standards -- I believe that is very important; we need flexibility to shift resources in response to changing situations; and we often have to realign geographical coverage areas. I think you can appreciate that need, in view of the growth that is taking place in the State of New Jersey today.

I intend, and I have set my agenda, to work carefully on all of the above issues, to assure that our staff resources are deployed in a manner that best protects and serves our children and families, but is also fair and equitable to our dedicated workers.

DYFS workers really have one of the toughest jobs in State government. Child protective services is not the most sought after position in the social work profession. I say this also as the President Elect of the National Association of Social Workers for New Jersey. Attracting and retaining people to fill vacant positions is, indeed, a persistent problem.

For example, only one Civil Service examination for DYFS caseworkers was offered in an 18-month period. Even if the exam were to be offered every six months, it couldn't possibly produce a large enough pool of eligible candidates to fill the vacancies. This is true because: 1) No one can anticipate or control the number of citizens who will apply to take such an exam, or pass it; 2) not every candidate who passes the exam is willing to accept a vacant caseworker position in all areas of the State -- this is important to consider; and 3), the Department of Personnel's process for preparing, scheduling, administering, grading, and certifying these examinations has improved vastly, but is still slower, I think it is fair to say, than all of us would like it to be.

In the past year, however, DYFS has worked very closely with the Department of Personnel to find better ways to recruit and hire entry-level caseworkers. We tried several options, but none could meet our urgent needs to fill those vacancies, until very recently. We have a little bit of a breakthrough on the process to report to you that I think will have a major impact on this issue. Initially, we hired hourly workers to fill vacant positions, until we could appoint Civil Service candidates, and that did help. However -- and this is the important part -- the first walk-in exam for Family Service Specialist was held last month. This was the first walk-in exam ever given for a professional title within DYFS. Three hundred candidates passed the test, and within six weeks we will have a list of candidates to begin interviewing. In the past, this same process took approximately six to twelve months. Two more walk-in exams will be held by late October, and will continue on a coordinated basis. The important part is that we have coordinated with the Department of Personnel, so that when one of these lists is two-thirds empty, or completed, another walk-in test will be given, and we will have continuous lists of people to draw from to recruit to fill

vacancies. I am advised by our staff that by the end of this year, we will have made truly giant strides in filling the vacancies that exist. We are grateful for the cooperation we have received from the Department of Personnel. It has been more difficult to attract people to work in the urban areas, where poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing, and crime intensify family stress and crisis. High crime areas heighten our workers' concern for personal safety and security. Vacancies are usually highest in our district offices in Newark, Plainfield, Elizabeth, Atlantic City, and Perth Amboy.

At our request, the Department of Personnel also agreed to try another different approach to the traditional way of testing people interested in positions in the five areas I just mentioned. Instead of administering a written or oral examination, the Department tested these individuals by reviewing and assessing their education and experience, using information provided on the application for examination. This practice is known as E&E -- rating people by education and experience. Our experience is that this is much quicker, and also produces eligible candidates that are, in fact, willing to accept positions in one of these areas where we have difficulty in filling the vacancies. As a result of this process -- this innovation -- we were able to fill some longstanding vacancies in those offices and, in some cases, we are able to make regular Civil Service appointments of individuals who we had previously hired to work on an hourly basis.

Because the work of a DYFS caseworker is so intense and demanding, caseworkers need lots of support to do their jobs. I would like to review the efforts that were made to increase supports, and to improve working conditions and the work environment itself, because I think these issues also bear on the issue of turnover and vacancies.

Inside the Division itself, we have created a special Medical Unit to provide backup to caseworkers who have clients with AIDS and other intense medical problems. We have engaged professional consultants to assist us on case practice and other professional issues. We have expanded and strengthened a new Worker Training Program to a 20-day period, that has both didactic classroom training and some on-the-job type training with more experienced workers. We have instituted expanded supervisory training. As you know, we have a new title series now. We went from the old social worker titles to the Family Service Specialist titles. As Deputy Commissioner Welch mentioned, we have a career ladder that, in fact, enables people who really love direct practice, who don't want to move up to supervision, to have a higher title and salary range. It is said, and I would agree, from what I have learned in the brief time I have been there, that it hasn't been as successful as we would like it to be. However, we do have some ideas to improve it as time goes on.

From the vignettes Odella mentioned, you can realize and appreciate some of the occupational stress and burnout associated with child protective service work. Dr. Janet Cahill, who worked closely with one of the employee unions -- the Communications Workers of America -- and our Division, has developed a Stress Management Program for field staff. She will testify here today on this subject. I believe this program has been both popular and successful, and needs to be expanded.

Paperwork: It's still a problem. We are a people agency, so why do we have to do so much paperwork? First, I think it is precisely because we are involved with people, most of them vulnerable children, and we make decisions that affect the safety, and sometimes the very life of a child. We need a formal means to communicate and record important events and decisions. In some cases, Federal funding is contingent on

documentation, as are court decisions and case practice decisions. We have brought some modern technology to the local offices. Word processors and microcomputers have been installed to streamline case recording. These improvements may solve some of the problem, but we must strive toward that delicate balance between the need to monitor professional performance and the amount of documentation that is absolutely minimally necessary.

We will continue to eliminate duplication wherever we can. We will look to the Personal Computer Pilot Project in the Long Branch District Office, and hope to gain from that project some greater insights and new solutions that we can adopt statewide to help minimize paperwork. This project attempts to eliminate duplication of client information that is required on several of our DYFS forms.

Providing direct supports to workers also involves improving their physical environment. Conditions in some of the district offices were surely problematic.

In the past two years, 15 district offices have been relocated to better facilities, and some to brand-new buildings. Space was added to three more. Six more of our offices will be relocated by the end of this fiscal year. Through a series of annual life-safety, environmental quality inspections of all DYFS office sites, we attempt to identify deficiencies and work towards their abatement. We honestly have some additional way to go in getting our workers into adequate facilities where they can work more comfortably.

Child abuse investigators and case managers are in the field investigating complaints, visiting families, visiting foster parents, visiting the children in their care, transporting them to medical visits, and so forth. A car is an absolute necessity. Three years ago -- and I believe at the former hearings that were held in this regard this was noted --

there was not a sufficiency of cars available for our staff. Since that time, we have added a total of 392 cars for the use of our field staff ~~to bring~~ ~~some~~ ~~modern~~ ~~technology~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~local~~ ~~offices~~. I mentioned earlier that many caseworkers managed themselves and the children in their charge admirably, despite the stresses and demands of high caseloads. We have heard concerns raised by the union that disciplinary actions are increasing. I independently took a look at the numbers on this, and can report them to the Committee today. Last year, with a total of 3400 staff, there were a total of 76 disciplinary actions. This is an increase from 1982, when there were 50 disciplinary actions, on a staff base of 2750. However, if you look at it on a percentage basis, the actual increase in disciplinary actions initiated by our Division was less than 1% over those five years. We will continue our staff development and training activities, so that workers will have the skills and support to perform their responsibilities. We must require accountability, because of the critical nature of the services that our workers perform. On the other hand, we cannot blame our workers for deficiencies in our system.

I began with the statement that caseload size is not a numbers game, and that making it manageable depends on availability of resources in any particular community. My years of experience in government leads me to believe that government alone cannot solve all of the problems, particularly those involving child abuse and child neglect. As Deputy Commissioner Welch stated earlier, we simply can't be all things to all people. We have to focus. What we have done is, in every county, we approached schools, health professionals, and public and private community agencies to work with us to expand community support systems for the children in this State. Since 1983, we have allocated a total of \$49 million new dollars for prevention and family support programs. These range from expanding traditional services -- like child

day-care, homemaker services, and counseling -- to newer support services, like parent aides and self-help groups. We used local governments and community groups to help guide the allocation of these funds, so that maximum results could be achieved. I believe we have really consolidated a partnership with communities and counties in the planning and allocating of funds for children.

These major initiatives represent a long-term strategy to prevent child abuse and family disruption. I believe this will have a decisive long-range impact on caseload size. It is an investment in the future.

If more intensive services are available to families in crisis, they have a better chance to get through the crisis, and are able to cope with minimal assistance sooner. Confronting the issues of foster care, career clients, and the scarcity of resources, particularly for adolescents, caused us to tap, as much as we could, the community-based supports that are out there. We have to tighten up on our own management controls, and we have to define more specific case plans with time frames in each of our cases. That is the process, in essence, that I spoke of earlier, that helped to reduce our caseload.

In addition, efforts to expand the number of community programs have also had a pronounced preventive effect at the front end of the system. Families with problems other than abuse and neglect can be referred to more appropriate local programs at the point of intake, obviating the necessity of clients to get involved in our system. In the past, they would have had to enter the DYFS system to get help, because it was often the only agency -- of the only show in town -- willing, or available, to respond.

Are we moving in the direction of community partnership in services? Absolutely, but we surely have a very long way to go. When prevention and in-home services are

unable to provide adequate protection to a child, or keep a family together, the most desirable alternative is temporary placement with a foster family.

We have made great strides in reforming the foster care system, which I believe has distinguished New Jersey as a national leader in this particular area. However, I want you to know that we are still facing serious problems in recruiting and retaining enough foster care homes. We need your help to professionalize the critical role that foster parents play in our child welfare system in New Jersey.

As our Deputy Commissioner did, I would also like to appeal to you to support the foster care bills sponsored by Senator DiFrancesco. These measures will provide respite care, foster parent training, and a higher board rate, which will make us more competitive with some of our surrounding states. These bills, right now, are awaiting action in the Senate Revenue, Finance, and Appropriations Committee.

I am also appealing for your support of our Fiscal Year 1989 budget request. We need to develop more services for troubled adolescents and for children with AIDS.

Stress, morale, job satisfaction, and turnover are unquestionably linked to the availability of community programs for families. The lack of community resources to do the job we need to do, in many instances is a daily source of frustration for our workers. I know this from my own experience as a caseworker in New Jersey. I believe our caseworkers are dedicated professionals. I believe they want to do their jobs. But, we must help to get them the resources and the tools they need to complete the job.

In my testimony, I have outlined efforts to reduce caseloads, to improve working conditions, and to improve accountability throughout the agencies. We have indicated progress in several areas, but obviously a lot more needs to be done. We will continue to work with our employee unions on

stress management issues. We remain committed to achieving 100% of the Child Welfare League of America standards for caseload size. We hope you will positively consider our request for additional direct service positions, as a part of the State Fiscal Year 1989 budget process.

There are many more important issues and initiatives to discuss. However, this is a one-day hearing, and you have many people on the roster to testify. My staff and I are available, and will be here all day to respond to questions from the Committee.

I intend, personally, to listen carefully to all of the testimony and concerns expressed here; to continue my dialogue with community and advocacy groups; to visit our facilities; to talk with staff at all levels in our organization; and to communicate with our foster parents and the citizens we serve. I intend to vigorously apply my 22 years of experience in public human services in New Jersey, to manage the staffing and caseload issues of the Division, and to forge ahead to fulfill our mission of protection, support, and prevention.

I will do so with the strong leadership of our Commissioner -- Drew Altman -- and in partnership with our community, local governments, our staff, and with your support and guidance. I would welcome the opportunity to report back to you in six months, as to the status of our initiatives and our progress in resolving some of the issues we have pointed out today.

Thank you for this opportunity to both present and -- very importantly to me -- to listen. And thank you for your deep commitment to New Jersey's children and their families.

SENATOR COSTA: Thank you very much. I would like to introduce you to another caring, sensitive Senator on this Committee, Senator Leanna Brown. Thank you for joining us, Senator Brown.

I know we have quite a few questions. I am just going to throw out a few, and then I will ask our other Senators for their questions. First of all, you are speaking of lowering caseloads. As of what date are you speaking of that the caseloads have been lowered?

MR. WALDMAN: They have been lowered since 1986. We had reached a high of about one to 50, when our caseload peaked, when it was at about 58,000. Since then, there has been a steady decline -- a constant decline -- to this period right now, where our caseload has dropped from 57,000, 58,000 to about 50,000, and the ratio of caseworker to children is one to 38. Again, that is on actual staff count. If we filled all of our positions, as I indicated, it would be one to 36.

SENATOR COSTA: I have something about intake case management vacancy rates, as of August, 1987, and the actual ratios you have per individual. Just like in Camden -- south -- I am speaking of my area -- 64 children with one caseworker. I don't know how anyone can handle that. I have a letter here, which was just delivered to us. The person has signed the letter. She is a shop stewardess. It says: "On September 17, I was made aware by the management that two members of my intake unit had more than 80 children on their caseload, effective September 4, 1987. I was also told they must bring their numbers down below 80 by September 22" -- which is today. "My understanding of this request was because of a hearing in Trenton, which was going to address the high numbers which workers have to be responsible for.

"The two workers in my unit with more than 80 children on their caseloads, were the only two workers on intake rotation in my unit for approximately six weeks during the summer. This was the result of a lack of staff, vacations, and maternity leave. Also, these workers were unable to have clean-up weeks, because of the above.

"I feel it was unfair to have my workers work all weekend in order for the Division to appear on these hearings and say that no workers have more than 80 children on their caseload. Management states that they understand the plight of a DYFS worker; however, they continue to make demands which add stress to the worker. I am unable to attend these hearings because I have a deadline of September 22 to complete these cases and have them processed in the computer, so the workers show having less than 80 children on their caseloads."

MR. WALDMAN: Senator Costa, I can say to you sincerely that that certainly wasn't a directive that I know of that was made in our Division.

SENATOR COSTA: I'm pleased about that, but just getting to the point itself--

MR. WALDMAN: Yeah, but I--

SENATOR COSTA: --of having a caseload of 80 children. Then you wonder why we're losing caseworkers. I have a question about caseworkers. When they have to make their reports -- their paperwork -- they are constantly dealing with paperwork -- do they have to write it longhand? Do they type it? Do they put it on the word processor? What is the procedure?

MR. WALDMAN: We have been in the process of modernizing some of our offices. I would like one of my staff -- Marc Cherna -- to perhaps give you a more detailed account.

M A R C C H E R N A (speaking from audience): Some write it; some dictate it. Most of the time, they are on the word processor to do what they have to do. On reassessments, and things like that, they can just take what is already there and make the corrections. It is uneven among offices right now. That is something we are working towards. Bill discussed the Long Branch project. That is part of that, to eliminate that duplication. So, the computer does a lot of that work once we put it in the first time.

SENATOR COSTA: All right. So, they really have to take the time -- quite a bit of time. Speaking of modernizing the offices-- They travel a lot in their cars, right, from one place to another? Why couldn't they have a tape machine to dictate into while traveling from one place to another?

MR. CHERNA: They do, but not everyone is comfortable with it.

SENATOR COSTA: Beg pardon?

MR. CHERNA: Not every worker is comfortable doing that, but they do have dictating equipment.

SENATOR COSTA: They can just talk, and that way you can have secretaries do it, rather than having someone who is good with children taken off their casework.

Senator Ambrosio would like to jump in at this point.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Director, you indicated that there was a 12-1/2% reduction in caseload from a peak of -- I think you said 58,000 to 50,000.

MR. WALDMAN: That is correct.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: What do you attribute that reduction to?

MR. WALDMAN: I think a big part of it had to do with the project I mentioned, where the staff culled the entire caseloads and found cases that we really didn't need to be involved in any more. That was a very large project that occurred on a statewide basis. I think that was one reason. It is really speculation in some instances, although I feel strongly that that was a big part of it, because I know that a number of cases were closed.

I think also that some of our investments in the community -- investments we made in terms of community-based services -- have started to pay off. We had been investing in preventive programs. We had found local not-for-profit agencies to do counseling. So, there are other agencies about, that are able to remediate the problems, or even prevent them,

because of the initiative we have taken. I hope that is a major factor in this, as well. ~~the office~~ SENATOR AMBROSIO: So it is your testimony that this is an actual decline in demand for services?

MR. WALDMAN: Well, we have experienced an actual decline. My staff advises, and I believe, that it is probably more of a leveling off. It is interesting. As I mentioned, the numbers of complaints or referrals we have gotten do continue to rise. It takes a lot to investigate that. I think we are going to reach a record peak at the end of the year. Generally, about 35% of those are validated, and we take some type of intervention.

I think what you're seeing happening may be still a large case flow, but a more appropriate handling of each individual case. I say that as a caseworker. You know, the idea of setting time-limited goals, not to hang onto a case forever-- In some instances, when applying those kinds of casework techniques, I believe our workers have been successful in moving cases; doing what is necessary; providing brief counseling; making a referral; and closing out the case.

We think it has peaked, and it is going to be steady at about the number it is now. It may have some small growth, but I don't see the decline continuing that much longer.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: That is an interesting speculation. I know this is not something that you can be responsible for, because you weren't in the position. But, when we look at the projections that were given for Fiscal Years 1985, 1986, and 1987, and we see that in each of those years the caseload was underestimated by some 15% to 20%, and you have had to come back to the Legislature for additional appropriations-- Are we in the same position today as we were then, where you are underestimating your caseload?

MR. WALDMAN: I don't believe we are. One of the controls I believe has been established over time, is that our

caseload controls are being fully computerized and systematized. It is hard to predict, but I believe we have better record keeping, better controls, and I hope to give you much better estimations.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: I am also interested in your comment on the changing in the staffing between the case managers and the administrators for the various fiscal years. There was a big jump in Fiscal Year 1986. Four-hundred and ninety-eight additional caseworkers were added. In '87, that was reduced by 24. I'm sorry. In '87, 498 were added. But for Fiscal Year 1988, you have asked for a reduction in caseworkers. Why would you be doing that?

MR. WALDMAN: I don't believe we have actually asked for a reduction in caseworkers. (At this point, Deputy Commissioner Welch makes an indiscernible comment.) In fact, for the Fiscal Year 1989 budget, we have asked for an increase of 69 positions.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Well, I'm looking at '88, and there is a reduction from 1918 to 1894 in caseworkers. Why would you be asking for a reduction in caseworkers?

MR. WALDMAN: To my knowledge, Senator, I don't believe we have. Would someone ask Marc to clarify, or perhaps Ted to clarify that?

T H E O D O R E J O S E P H (speaking away from microphone): I'm sure the numbers are even. They are not all caseworkers. We have moved more closely to having every office have a consistent group of resource development specialists, case practice specialists, people to assist caseworkers. I think that switch would have been, if I get it right, about 24 people, and I think that probably would have played out in that way. The actual number of caseworkers on the front lines has not decreased. It has stayed relatively steady. That is a total of-- That would be the total number of workers -- staff available in a particular district office. That is what you

are looking at. There is a difference between that and caseworkers.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: But aren't you reducing the number of initial response people who are available to service the Department?

MR. JOSEPH: No.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: No? Okay.

MR. WALDMAN: There have been shifts, perhaps, from office to office of some personnel. We have a 10% flexibility rule. It is possible that one district office may have declined in caseload and another increased, and we may have transferred individuals from one to the other positions. That is possible. That does happen. There is a play.

SENATOR COSTA: I understand you are taking some of your caseworkers and putting them into management positions. Is that correct?

MR. JOSEPH (not near microphone): No. What we have done is take a number of caseworkers, for two reasons, one having to do with the career ladder, as well as a commitment we had made earlier, but also as a commitment to the community-based participation process, and placed them, by additional resources, in positions of field staff, against (indiscernible) practice issues of supplementing management, essentially, so that there would (indiscernible). We haven't changed the numbers.

SENATOR COSTA: Mr. Joseph, when you speak, would you please speak into the microphone, so your responses can be recorded? (Mr. Joseph complies)

So, you are not taking them out of caseworker status?

MR. JOSEPH: That is correct. We have not reduced the number of front-line workers. As you are aware, Senator, the 507 was a mixture of 367 direct line caseworkers, the number of administrative support, and verbal supports.

SENATOR COSTA: Your high employee turnover-- We addressed that -- high caseload, burnout, too much work. I understand you also have a stress management course.

MR. JOSEPH: Yes, who are available to handle the

SENATOR COSTA: From what I understand also, those who are sent for stress management-- Their work keeps piling up at their desks, so they are getting more stressful, because they have to get back and do that work.

MR. JOSEPH: Well, again, that balance-- Some of that commitment, Senator, is because of the agreement that we jointly worked out with the CWA. There ought to be what is known as "a free day." One of the problems we have had with staff is, how do you juggle a free day a month, essentially, when stress management-- By free, I mean that no one goes home; people still work. That is a day that is set aside for staff to deal with that stress issue, as well as get some additional learning.

That has had various responses in the 38 district offices. It is a very difficult issue our staff, and certainly for management, but I think it is something that we have tried to work out. I think Janet Cahill, when she presents, can probably respond to that question from her experience.

SENATOR COSTA: We have someone here from the union, who I am sure will address that. I will leave it up to them, since they handle it firsthand.

You know, I have been in touch with DYFS many times because of things that happened in my district with children. This revolving door, as far as caseworkers are concerned, really concerns me, because children have to have some kind of trust in somebody. Just when they get trust in a person, they no longer have that person to deal with. That person is gone. Looking at some of your cases here, even if you have -- as some of them here do -- 50 and 60 children per caseworker a month, they would not be able to see the same child twice. It might

be about two or three months before they might be able to get back to see a child.

What happens in an emergency, if that child needs that person, and they can't get to them? This is a real big problem, as far as your staffing is concerned.

In speaking of your burned out-- In trying to get more people into the field, have you looked into recalling some of your former burned out workers who may be in a little better condition, because those people are the ones who were dedicated enough to have gone into social work to help kids? Too often, just as in some school situations, with DYFS, people who are really dedicated-- They didn't go into it for the money. They just wanted to help, but were burned out completely, and had to go. They just couldn't take it any longer. Would there be a chance of getting them back -- those kind of dedicated people?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WELCH: Senator, that is certainly worth looking into. It is an idea we hadn't considered.

MR. WALDMAN: I am advised that we have actually done that in a small way with our special services workers -- the hourly workers -- the ones who have left us from time to time. We have reached out to them to come back. I would agree; I think that is an excellent idea, and it bears looking into.

I think there have been some improvements over time, and maybe the situation isn't as stressful as it was several years ago. Some of our workers might consider it.

SENATOR COSTA: It is still an unrealistic caseload you give the people working for DYFS -- an unrealistic caseload, and the paperwork that has to be done. It's very difficult.

I am just going to go to something that happened in my area, where I called in the troops from DYFS. I had them all in there. The former director was there, too. Working with one of the State schools in my area, someone saw something -- an abuse -- in the school with the children. That person

reported it, and what happened was, the one who reported it was let go. The one who perpetrated the abuse -- and it wasn't only one time; it was over and over again -- stayed. I believe he knows which case I am talking about, because he was there.

In listening -- many times I had them over -- it came across loud and clear that the problem was with one of the people who worked for your office, because she was very friendly with the perpetrator at this school, so she would take her part at all times, no matter what, and the kids were disregarded. We had a real big problem at that school. One child died. They called for a nurse, and she came in. She had no knowledge about what to do. She had to run for a book. By the time she got back with the book, the child had died.

So, you know, these are the kind of things I hear in my area. I'm sure that some other people have some horror stories to tell, too. That is not your social work cases. This is something that DYFS is involved in -- the schools, the State schools.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WELCH: That was the Division for the Developmentally Disabled, I am told by staff.

SENATOR COSTA: Could you please speak a little louder?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WELCH: My understanding is that that was another Department of Human Services' division, and not DYFS.

SENATOR COSTA: I had people from DYFS there.

MR. JOSEPH: We did the investigation, but the facility -- which we discussed previously-- We can't talk about cases, but the facility was not a Division-- We do the investigations.

SENATOR COSTA: Okay. Senator Brown?

SENATOR BROWN: Thank you, Senator Costa. I certainly commend you for calling this hearing today, and also for the fact that so many people throughout the State have taken the time to come here. Bill, you are certainly hitting the deck

running. Congratulations on your appointment. Mr. Waldman, Senator Costa, and myself all share a strong background in county government here in New Jersey, so it is nice to see someone who has served so well at the county level progress to the State level.

I have three questions for you: One is in the area of salary; the second is in the area of working conditions; and the third is in the area of placement in the community. What is the starting salary for a social caseworker?

MR. WALDMAN: It is about \$20,000.

SENATOR BROWN: Twenty thousand dollars.

MR. WALDMAN: That is a Family Service Specialist III.

SENATOR BROWN: That is \$2000 above the \$18,000 which is the minimum starting salary for a teacher, which is a nine-month job, as compared to a year-round job. After four years working for the Division, what could I expect to make?

MR. WALDMAN: Let's see, the range would be--

MR. JOSEPH: That would depend on the Legislature, in part, but it would probably be approximately 20% off the first piece.

MR. WALDMAN: The range goes from \$20,327 to \$28,454. I believe after four years-- I would guess about \$26,000. Ted?

MR. JOSEPH: Again, that would depend on-- It would probably be in the neighborhood of about a \$4500 raise.

SENATOR BROWN: The question is, obviously the starting salary is important. We cannot expect people to come to service our children here in the State of New Jersey, who have done a lot of training and so on-- Obviously, it is not the type of job that is just off the street, like item pricing in a supermarket, for example. These people come with backgrounds, and we have to pay them. There is no more important resource out there than the children of our State.

But, I am learning that salary at the start is one thing. Certainly, different professions escalate a lot

quicker. If I am hired to be a policeman in some town, I may be hired at the same salary as a caseworker, but after four or five years, I may be earning \$33,000, which is a big difference from earning \$24,000 or \$25,000. So, I think if we look at this total salary picture, Madam Chairman, not only do we have to consider what we are hiring these people at -- these people who have such an important job to do -- but also what sort of salary advancement they can anticipate.

Secondly, not only have I visited the headquarters of DYFS in Morris County, which is a very pleasant new facility on Route 10 in Randolph, but I have gone to Newark. Obviously, the Division of Youth and Family Services is a tenant. I guess my question to you is, how do you feel the Division is doing as far as getting value for its rent dollar? Is the buildings and grounds operation here in the State really going to bat for the Division? Golly, when you want an elevator fixed, or when it is a question of freezing in the middle of the winter or boiling in the summer, there is no reason why the landlords, who get taxpayers' dollars for the conditions in which the caseworkers are working, do not just hop to it when all of you call on the phone. I guess my question is, do the largest landlords, like Mr. Helmsley from New York-- Certainly, there is nothing better he needs to do than to make things absolutely good for your employees in Newark. Those of us who are in an elected office are not going to settle for less than the best for all of you.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WELCH: Senator Brown, just a brief response to that from me. I have visited the Newark offices, and I have to be candid with you and say that I was appalled. I was simply appalled. But, on the other hand, I have seen, in the short time I have been with the Department, some tremendous progress in terms of communication and cooperation with the officials responsible for consummating those leases. As Bill indicated earlier, we have relocated

certain of our offices. We have refurbished some of them. Some progress is being seen on this. I understand there is a committee of representatives from the Department of the Treasury and our Department working to correct many, or most of the problems that have been identified, across the State really. So, your question, I think, was: "Can we expect full cooperation?" We will expect it. I think only time will tell if we will get it.

SENATOR BROWN: Well, I'm sure -- through the Chairman -- that this Committee would be most interested to know if you are having any difficulties. As someone who has been involved in government for almost 20 years now, what tends to happen is that the person who is doing the contracting with government is isolated from the elected official. We cannot-- I mean, obviously, we have to go through the Division, and, therefore, to a certain extent, the landlord is protected. Therefore, the taxpayer does not get true value for the dollar. I think the day and age of this type of operation has got to cease. May this be a message to all landlords out there who are housing State operations: We intend to get the best for our employees. Okay?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WELCH: I couldn't agree with you more.

SENATOR BROWN: Lastly, let me just say as far as placement in the community is concerned, do we need more facilities out there to help to place some of our adolescents who are in trouble?

MR. WALDMAN: Unquestionably. We believe so.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WELCH: No question.

MR. WALDMAN: That is one of our more serious issues. I know that as a county official, I faced that issue day to day. I think we need a spectrum of different types of facilities for adolescents. In our Fiscal Year 1989 budget request, we have requested to the Department, and I believe

they submitted it in their budget plan document, the sum of \$9 million to expand programs. I think we are witnessing changes in society and in the family structure around adolescents. I have heard of the situation many times. We are faced with what is referred to as "throwaway children." There are parents who relinquish their responsibility for their kids, and we have the responsibility then to go out and place them. But, there is not just one type of facility; there is a range of facilities. We definitely do not have enough in New Jersey. We are hoping that with your support, we will get the additional resources to expand.

SENATOR BROWN: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

SENATOR COSTA: I would like to introduce Senator Donald DiFrancesco, who has joined us. Would you like to ask any questions, Don?

SENATOR DiFRANCESCO: Ask questions? No, I just really wanted to introduce myself. I am from Union County. I represent part of Essex County and part of Union County. I welcome you, and wish you luck.

MR. WALDMAN: Thank you.

SENATOR DiFRANCESCO: Specifically, if you need anything from me, I am here to help you, just as I am here to help the people in my district, and in the State of New Jersey.

I have one question, and that has to do with what steps you are taking with regard to the problems of teen-age pregnancy and teen parents? If you could summarize, you know.

MR. WALDMAN: I would like to ask our Assistant Director for Policy, Planning, and Support, Marc Cherna, to respond directly to that question. He has done some things in that area, and I am glad you are giving him an opportunity to report on it.

MR. CHERNA: As you know, adolescent pregnancy is a tremendous problem -- housing, education. Many of these women are dropping out of school. There is a lack of child care.

You have sponsored some bills which will help to ameliorate the problem, and we are in total support of those bills.

Our bill sets up a Governor's Task Force on Adolescent Pregnancy. We are working very closely with that Task Force, and are hoping to come up with a report with some real good recommendations to help to deal with the problem.

SENATOR DiFRANCESCO: I assume that DYFS is working with the Task Force directly--

MR. CHERNA: Yes, we are on the Task Force.

SENATOR DiFRANCESCO: --and has a lot of input. Do you have any idea when the Task Force will terminate?

MR. CHERNA: I think within the year. I would expect the report within the next six months. There are public hearings coming up, and we will be getting community input. Then we will be writing the report. But it has been active. It has been meeting monthly.

SENATOR COSTA: Senator Ambrosio?

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Yes. I don't want to dwell on this, but we are here to talk about the caseload problem. I really don't completely understand the explanation you gave about the reduction in caseload at this point. My understanding is that you made a review of the active caseloads, and basically have closed out a number of cases that were really inactive. We are really talking about an internal auditing and accounting system. Is that right?

MR. WALDMAN: In a sense, that is correct. Some of them may have been inactive, but some of them, it may have been determined, could be better served by another community agency; an agency, for example, that we had a contract with. So, it was case disposition. You're right, though.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: They basically weren't being serviced by your current staff?

MR. WALDMAN: I wouldn't say that is exactly true. They may have been serviced, but we didn't need to keep them

any longer. They may have fallen into the inactive status. We may have--

SENATOR AMBROSIO: I'm sorry. What I am concerned about with that approach, is that we really have not done anything to affect caseload, if that is the case, because what that means is, if an individual caseworker had 60 cases, and 12 of them were really inactive, that person had effectively 48 cases she was working on, and she still has 48 cases. Therefore, the stress and all of the other problems associated with a heavy caseload have not been alleviated in the slightest bit. Would that be true? I don't want to give the impression in this hearing that some reduction in the number of cases being serviced has really occurred.

MR. WALDMAN: I think the only way to answer your question is to look at the Child Welfare League of America standard, which is a nationally accepted standard. I think you should judge us by how well our caseloads approach that standard. We have made progress. In a sense, it may be more of a paper review kind of progress, as you are indicating, to some extent, although I believe some of it was real, just knowing the pressure the Division was under in '86; that our actual counts did reduce. We are at one to 38 right now. Again, as Senator Costa pointed out, they are equally distributed. We have to do a lot better with that, and look at the factors.

But, when we went through this new Civil Service process, which I described-- If we staff up to vacancy, we will be at one to 36, which represents 95% of the CWLA standard we have in New Jersey. I mean, we are moving in that direction. If we are successful in realigning the cases to make them more even, to fill in the vacancies-- When you entertain our budget request, we have a shot at going close to 100% of the standard over time. That is the goal we have set for ourselves.

I think it is important that we do that kind of a review. I think our caseworkers' time is very valuable. There is no need to keep on a case that we are not servicing, or one that could be better served someplace else. It is important to do that kind of vigorous management review from time to time -- "This is the kind of case that we should be involved in. This is where our best skills can be utilized. Other cases can be served better elsewhere." But, your point is well taken.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Just one follow-up question on that: For Fiscal Year 1988, you estimated an active caseload for children at 59,000. Would you change that projection, based upon what you have told me today?

MR. WALDMAN: Yes, I would. I think about 52,000 was the latest number we projected, given that change.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Would you make any change in the estimates in terms of active caseloads of families? You projected 31,000 for Fiscal Year 1988.

MR. CHERNA: Yeah, it would go down the same way.

MR. WALDMAN: It would go down the same--

MR. CHERNA: The same percentage. We usually talk about children, as opposed to families, when we do a case count.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: I penciled in 52, and we will take a look at how that looks, and what number you want to put in for the family estimate.

MR. CHERNA: Well, if it drops 12% -- a little over 10% -- I would just do the same thing.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: I'll make sure I do it in pencil, though.

SENATOR COSTA: There is one thing that concerns me greatly, and that is the kids who fall through the cracks. What is your system doing to see that that doesn't happen? We have had many times where children have been out in the street, and because they had been put into another facility, they were under DYFS. Who is keeping in communication with each other?

Is that child followed, or does he get lost? This article here -- "How the System Failed a New Jersey Infant" -- This child, five weeks old -- ~~and~~ DYES recommended that the child be taken away from the parents. They took it away, and then the child was back with the parents again, after the collarbone was broken, the legs were broken -- everything happened to this kid.

How do you try to see that this doesn't happen, that we don't lose these children through the cracks? Somewhere along the line, they are out in the streets, and we don't know about it. Where is the communication between various levels of government? Do you have a tracking pattern for these children?

MR. WALDMAN: Not exactly perhaps a pattern. There is always a danger in this business, because of the complexity and the maze of human services, for people to fall between the cracks. I know we have established a partnership basis with the family courts throughout New Jersey. We work very closely with them. We still have a ways to go in coordinating services with the mental health system for kids, and with the system of developmentally disabilities.

We have established within our Department an inter-divisional communication pattern which I think will go a long way to do it, and will also be a way to resolve these particular situations.

SENATOR COSTA: In what way? Do you keep track? Is there a system whereby you keep track of the kids?

MR. WALDMAN: Oh, you're saying that individually tracks?

SENATOR COSTA: Is there something that we as legislators can do to see that the courts -- or whatever they are, or wherever they are placed -- make sure that the Division of Youth and Family Services knows about it, so that when they are out of there, somebody is there to catch them, like a safety net?

MR. JOSEPH: It's clear that in this State when children are out of their own homes, no work already exists for the CPR -- for the Child Placement Review Board; that when we move a child from his or her home, the system kicks into gear, and that our staff is responsible to get back to that system and inform people as to where this child is, why this child has been removed, and what our plan of action is around either returning a child, or not.

So, for the kids who are at a home -- those 10,000 or 11,000 -- that system exists. For children in their own home, whom I tend to think -- in our previous conversations, we were talking about a number of them who might fall through the cracks in that way -- that system is a DYFS system. That system is one of a caseworker having to discuss his or her feelings about that case with assistant supervisors, and on up the line. A formal system -- a legal system -- exists for one set, and for the other set it doesn't.

SENATOR COSTA: So, actually, we really don't have too good a system. I am speaking of one child who was in a J.I.N.S. Shelter. You know that in a J.I.N.S. Shelter -- Juveniles In Need of Supervision -- they can walk out any time they want. This kid walked out. He was out on the streets for two weeks. The school didn't know he was out there. Do you keep in touch with the schools? They would have gotten after him. He was out in the streets for two weeks, and nobody even noticed. The school didn't know he was out on the street. He was gone from the J.I.N.S. Shelter. DYFS didn't know he was out there. Somehow he got lost.

MR. WALDMAN: One of the things that has helped -- and we do have a long way to go--

SENATOR COSTA: If you haven't got it, I would like to see it strengthened. I would like to see something done. If there is anything we, as legislators, can do, we want to do it, to strengthen that kind of a communication line, so that these

kids don't get lost; so that somebody cares enough to watch them as they go through life, until they can go out on their own. CPE -- for the Child Placement Review Board; that when we move a

MR. WALDMAN: That is an issue I would like to get back to the Committee on, if that is okay. The one thing that did cross my mind, which I remembered from my experience in county government was real helpful, was the Youth Service Commissions that were formed by legislation that was approved. It required people from the different systems -- the J.I.N.S. Shelter operators, the youth shelter operators, mental health, county government, courts, and others -- to sit down and open up lines of communication and coordination between agencies. I know we worked together. The Division, some time ago, required an out-of-home placement plan for kids, and also required that. Some of those efforts have improved communications, so that a shelter operator seeing a kid missing would know who to call.

We have more work to do. I would like to look into that, and report back to you on it.

SENATOR COSTA: Okay, good. Thank you, Commissioner, for being here. I know you want to leave, but I ask that the others please stay.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WELCH: Yes, certainly they will. I appreciate the opportunity you have provided me to appear before you. I will be in my office; if you should have a need for me to return, I will be happy to do that.

SENATOR COSTA: I would like to call--

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Senator, before you do-- I know there are a lot of people who want to testify, and I don't want to ask any more questions. I would like the opportunity to go through some of the questions I have. Maybe I will do it directly with you. But I would really like to hear the testimony of the witnesses today.

SENATOR COSTA: Okay. Vincent Trivelli, Legislative Coordinator, Communications Workers of America.

V I N C E N T T R I V E L L I: Senator, as we discussed, we have a few workers who would like to testify.

SENATOR COSTA: Yes. Will you please bring them up? I am taking the list out of context because some of these people are under pressure to leave, and I want to hear them. Who will speak first? Vincent, will you speak first?

MR. TRIVELLI: No, George Krevet will be first.

SENATOR COSTA: George Krevet, please.

G E O R G E K R E V E T: Good morning. My name is George Krevet. I am a DYFS worker from the Elizabeth District Office on union leave. Some of what I am about to present is from personal experience, and some from what has been conveyed to me by the DYFS workers whom I represent as a Staff Representative for CWA Local 1037.

The intent of this presentation is to provide the Committee with some insight into: 1) The stressful nature of DYFS work; 2) how this is compounded by unworkably high caseloads which adversely affect clericals, supervisors, as well as front-line workers; and 3) the Division's historical response to systemic breakdowns caused by excessively high caseloads.

Even in the abstract, the typical reactions to the term "child abuse" are those of revulsion, agitation, and anger. Unfortunately, for DYFS workers, child abuse cannot be an abstraction. It is a daily, sometimes hourly, reality. Unlike those of us who read the newspapers and see the words, "scalded arms and legs of an infant," the DYFS worker must examine the actual scalded limbs of the screaming infant. Instead of seeing the words, "multiple welts and bruises on the back of a seven-year-old boy," the DYFS worker must count the welts and bruises on the back of the frightened and whimpering seven year old. Instead of seeing the words, "fractured skull of a three-year-old girl," the DYFS worker must sift through the matted hair of the dazed child so as to determine the

approximate length and location of the injury. Or worse yet, instead of reading the words, "sexually abused five year old," the DYFS worker must try to break through the sullen wall of silence of a little girl betrayed by the grown-ups she trusted most. And, unlike the physician working in the sanctuary of a hospital -- who may eventually choose to either help or hinder confirmation of child abuse -- the DYFS worker must frequently conduct his or her investigation in the child's home, with the child's parents screaming at the worker that he or she has no right to be there, insisting that the injuries are the result of an accident, often threatening or actually becoming violent when the decision is made that removal is necessary. The adrenalin -- what's left of it -- surges again when the worker, upon leaving with the hysterical child in his or her arms, is greeted by the family's neighbors alerted to the situation by the previous commotion.

This is but the beginning of a long line of stressful situations and hostile players encountered by the DYFS worker. There is then the judge, who publicly castigates the worker for failing to provide a foster home when no foster homes are available. And, of course, were the worker to place the child in a foster home already at capacity, this would be the individual to reprimand the worker for having done so. There is the Deputy Attorney General, who acts as if the case he or she is attending to is the only case the worker has. There is, in cases of removal, the defense attorney, who has a vested interest in calling the worker's competency, if not sanity, into question. There is the referent, who may, who may be a teacher, relative, etc., who demands to know why the worker hasn't implemented his or her recommendations, oblivious to the numerous legal constraints. There is the acting-out juvenile who, after the worker, using smoke and mirrors because of funding cuts, spends months working on, and receiving approval for a particular residential placement, jettisons the placement by setting fire to his mattress.

There is the foster parent, who holds the worker personally responsible for a child's renewed bed wetting behavior, when the foster parent specifically agreed to care for a toilet-trained child. And, of course, there is the hostile parent who, in the preliminary stages of the investigation, views the worker as an adversary intent on dismantling his or her family, which sometimes means the cancellation of a public assistance check, thereby depriving the parent of two of the most important things in his or her life, i.e., family and means of survival.

It's easy to conceive how, given such circumstances, DYFS workers frequently meet with resistance and hostility and how, contrary to the expectation of DYFS management, families sometimes render it impossible for workers to meet all the demands of the DYFS operations manual.

What was cited in the above is undeniably the substance of DYFS work. It, in itself, is demanding, stressful, and unrewarding in the traditional sense of a payback for a job well done, in that child abuse prevention is just that, prevention, i.e., maintenance. The worker continually waits and hopes for something "not to happen." There is no closure and, therefore, no sense of having accomplished something. The caseworker and his or her supervisor sit on pins and needles, doing what they can with limited resources to prevent a case from exploding, until it is transferred from their responsibility or closed. As stressful as one such case may be, the tension level geometrically progresses as caseloads mount.

"Standards for Child Protection Service," the nationally recognized state-of-the-art manual on protective services published by the Child Welfare League of America, states: "Workloads should be determined on the basis of work units in protective service, and should make it possible for staff to carry out the intensive social work intervention

required in situations of neglect and abuse. If effective service is to be provided, a full-time practitioner is needed for every 20 families, assuming the rate of intake is not more than one new case for six open cases." With rare exception, the prescribed limits cited in the above are a professional fantasy of every DYFS worker. We have reports from DYFS workers that they deal with double and triple that number of families. By last official count, we understand that the average caseload is 42 families per worker. That figure is misleading, in that some casework positions actually attend to administrative functions or act as a liaison between the Division and community services involving no caseloads, yet are factored into the average.

Admittedly, this is down from the astronomical numbers operative two and a half years ago, when \$12.8 million was appropriated to fund additional clerical, professional, and supervisory positions. But caseloads remain at a dangerously high level with no mechanism in place to prevent them from going higher. It is precisely this unregulated fluctuation that concerns us most. History teaches that if "X" number of children die of child abuse in a given year, and/or if the media climate is ripe for stories on sexual abuse, attention is paid to the subject of child abuse, money is allocated and, to some extent, caseloads decrease temporarily.

Unfortunately, newspaper headlines determine the administration of DYFS, the agency charged with the responsibility of protecting the State's children. In my relatively short tenure as a DYFS worker, the agency's official policy went from "least intrusive," intervening only when tangible cause has been identified and only as long as it takes to remedy that particular problem, to a policy of "to err on the side of caution," i.e., open all cases which are potentially abusive and address any familial problem found which could lead to domestic discord.

Needless to say, the newer policy initiated in 1982 resulted in an avalanche of cases accepted by the agency, swelling caseloads. While political administrations and DYFS policies come and go and caseloads fluctuate with the political winds, the workers in the offices labor on, and the safety of the State's children hangs in the balance. One doesn't need a Master's in Social Work to realize that the more cases a worker has, the less time he or she can devote to any one particular case. With burgeoning caseloads, workers are forced to apply Band-Aids to the familiar wounds. Symptoms, rather than causes, become the focus, and the workers jump from crisis to crisis, rarely initiating long-term solutions.

Needless to say, new workers become frustrated, discouraged, and overwhelmed, leading to premature burnout, thus contributing to a staggering turnover rate. The whole approach is a prescription for disaster as the system is poised to collapse in upon itself. A far saner approach would be to establish an institutional mechanism by which caseloads are regulated, and such a solution is not without precedent. Copies are available of two court cases in which the courts of both Massachusetts and Missouri adjudicated caseload caps. What we are asking is that the Legislature in the State of New Jersey take the progressive step of legislating caseload limits. We at CWA would be more than willing to work with both the Legislature and the Division in order to formulate a bill encompassing components of the two court cases, Child Welfare League of America standards, and any other resource materials that would be helpful.

Heretofore, the DYFS reaction to the systemic collapse which is inevitable when workers are too thinly stretched to adequately cover bloated caseloads, was to hold the worker and front-line supervisors responsible by disciplining them when cases blew up and children were injured. Elementary as the approach seems, it has fairly well insulated management from

culpability, while scapegoating workers and leaving children at risk. Having represented DYFS workers at disciplinary hearings for the last three years, I can attest to the arbitrary, excessive, and unwarranted application of discipline by the Division of Youth and Family Services. Local 1037 has handled more disciplinary cases from this one Division than any other Department. Clearly, this is a symptom of mismanagement. Just to give the Committee a flavor of how the Division administers discipline, allow me to briefly enumerate just a few cases I have been involved with in this last year:

There was a supervisor in the Suburban Essex County Office who was disciplined for not having effected a removal in spite of the fact that three doctors, at the time, all concluded there was no abuse. When it later became evident that abuse had occurred, the supervisor was disciplined for not having known that the doctors' medical opinion was wrong. The case was overturned on appeal.

There was the supervisor from Elizabeth who had over 37 years with the State in protective services -- some with the Bureau of Children Services before DYFS even existed -- who was terminated for negligence. The decision was later modified by an OAL judge, who typified the Division's action as "abominable."

There was the worker in the Hackensack District Office who received a 30-day suspension for having refused to continue working past sundown on a Jewish holiday after having received permission to leave. This decision was completely overturned at the Office of Administrative Law, with the judge admonishing DYFS for inappropriate issuance of discipline.

According to DYFS' own disciplinary manual -- Administrative Code 4:08 -- discipline should be, among other things, "corrective and not punitive." Yet, how could it be construed as "corrective" to issue an official reprimand to an

Elizabeth worker at five minutes to five on her final day of work? And the list goes on.

Clearly, the Division's disciplinary policy is the product of management's refusal to address the horrendous problems of caseload size, worker morale, and ultimately, children's safety within their own homes. A far more rational approach would be to limit caseloads, whereby caseworkers would be freed up so as to provide genuine relief for families in need, and discipline would be reserved for those instances in which it were truly warranted.

Hopefully, with the advent of a new Director in the person of Mr. Waldman, disciplinary policies will be reviewed and revised, and the Division will work with us to ensure that caseloads become and remain manageable.

Thank you. What I would like to do now, is introduce-- Well, we will entertain questions at any time, but what I would like to do now is introduce workers -- hands-on workers -- who have personal experiences and knowledge which will augment what I just said.

First, Robert Bowell, a Supervisor from Asbury Park.

SENATOR COSTA: What is the name?

MR. KREVET: Robert Bowell -- B-O-W-E-L-L.

R O B E R T B O W E L L: I am a Supervisor in the Asbury Park District Office.

SENATOR COSTA: Please try to speak louder, so that everyone can hear you.

MR. BOWELL: Okay. Excuse me, I am a little nervous. I don't do this every day.

SENATOR COSTA: The microphone is only for the recorder.

MR. BOWELL: I understand. I am the Supervisor of a Generic Unit in the Asbury Park District Office. I have been employed by the State for 13 years, and have been a Supervisor in DYFS for 11-1/2 years. I worked in Newark; I worked in

Trenton; and currently, as I said, I am working in Asbury Park. I also work as a Special Response Worker, which is the after-duty-hours response portion of DYFS. There are two elements I would like to deal with, and I will try to keep this under 10 minutes. One is the lack of resources, particularly for adolescents -- teen-agers -- and the other is the difficulty of supervising a unit in a period of time when we have very few experienced workers left on the job. So, I will attack the resources first. It is easier, for me, at any rate, since I don't do this sort of speaking as a living, to give you examples of situations.

In my duties as a Special Response Worker, I have run into several situations that are horrendous; they embarrass me, they aggravate me, and they make it difficult for me to continue with my job. It is a job I really like. I think I am in the rare position of being able to do a job that I enjoy doing. However, the frustrations of what comes from above are what are interfering with me really accomplishing my goal.

I would like to give one example of a situation that happened about two or three years ago now, under the direction of our former Director of DYFS. I was on emergency response, at that time, for Monmouth County. I was living in Ocean County at the time. I received a call which involved a case that needed the activities of both the Monmouth County worker and the Ocean County worker, because the individual was in Ocean County at the time. I called the Special Response Worker for Ocean County and we arranged to meet, which we did. As we were about to leave on this case, which was a rather serious situation concerning abuse, we were beeped by the central number in Trenton, and were told -- not myself, but I went with the other worker, since we were about to go on this other case-- She was ordered to respond to a home in Bricktown to pick up an Easter basket -- this was the Saturday before Easter -- and deliver it to a child, because the mother was so

insistent about her 18-month-old child getting this Easter basket. So, we proceeded to that house, along with two police officers. The Regional Director at the time showed up at the house, and we proceeded to pick up the Easter basket and deliver it, delaying us from our attendant position. I think it was a terrible waste of money and our use of resources. There was a woman who was obviously emotionally disturbed, who was known to be so by the town. That is why the police officers were there. To respond to that sort of an issue on an emergency basis is ludicrous and a waste of everyone's time. That is one example.

Just more recently-- I won't use names obviously; I will just call this girl Barbara. She is 15 years old. She ran away from her foster home, and put herself in a home of her own choosing. We were investigating that home as possibly opening it as a special, since we have very few foster homes that will accept teen-agers, and at this point we had none. While there, she ran away from that home. We finally located her with her 25-year-old boyfriend, and we brought her back to our office.

For the next three days, we dealt with trying to find this child a home to stay in. At this point, she was fairly cooperative with us, because she was desperate herself. We first started by checking with all relatives and friends. We had no success, so we then attempted to find a foster home within our area, without success. We then did a statewide check of foster homes, but there were none available throughout the entire State, according to the system we have in place.

We checked every shelter. We called every shelter in the entire State of New Jersey. No one would take this child. Some because they were out of county, and others because they were full. We then went to our county Project Open House, which is a replacement for the J.I.N.S. Shelter. We have no

J.I.N.S. Shelter. They couldn't take the child in either, because they were full. That night, we talked an aunt into keeping the child for one night only, but she insisted that she be out the next day. The next day, she came back into our office and sat for the entire day, as we went through the process again, pushing it up the line, as it were, to higher levels. We still had no success.

We went back to the aunt again, and she agreed to keep her for one more night. The next day, we went through the same process again. Fortunately, a worker was able to go begging, and pleaded to the first foster mother to take her back. The child agreed to go there. That foster mother was an elderly woman, who had had difficulty dealing with this difficult child. Again, it was another burden, and an inappropriate placement, because the child shouldn't really have been there, but there was nothing else.

But, this since has had a happy ending. After three days of three different workers handling this case, so I could give the other ones a break to do their own work-- At that particular time, I had two workers out on sick leave for three weeks because of a car accident. I had one worker on vacation, and I had one worker who is leaving in the middle of next month, as a transfer to another office. Under these conditions, I had to switch workers around to try to give each worker an opportunity to do his or her own work, while working on this case.

My last example is a boy I had, again on emergency response, who had been in dozens and dozens of DYFS placements prior to about two years ago, when he was transferred to Vision Quest in Pennsylvania. It is a residential program, and he seemed to be doing well there. He stayed for two years, which was really a record for this very disturbed child. He created a situation while he was out there that was beyond that staff's ability. It is an excellent program, so we knew it had to be a

pretty bad situation. He attacked several staff members, and he attempted suicide. They insisted that he be brought back to New Jersey. I got the call on a Friday night. I insisted that we go. About nine o'clock I went to the hospital. They arrived at about ten o'clock -- at Jersey Shore Hospital -- from western Pennsylvania, with the child. The child was evaluated by the medical staff and the psychiatric staff on duty there. They agreed, after some discussion, that they would admit him -- not to the hospital, because that is the way the organization works-- He was to be admitted to Rutgers. Rutgers had agreed to take him -- the Rutgers Adolescent Treatment Center.

They, however, balked at the last minute, and said, "Let's wait until tomorrow. It is now two o'clock in the morning. Let's wait until tomorrow. We can pick him up in the beginning of the day, and get everything straightened out." So, the hospital agreed to keep the child in the emergency room. Fortunately, he wasn't violent and acting out. He was fairly calm at the time.

The next day it was no longer my involvement, but the worker who had the case continued with it. I found out that he stayed the entire day in the emergency room again, because Rutgers declined to take him. They then had to go directly to Trenton Psychiatric and get a court order to admit the child there. Again, that speaks for itself. I won't comment on it.

We have no shelter in Monmouth County. We are using Project Open House, which is a county-run organization. It is not really something that DYFS can insist on using. It is only if it is available. If we have tried everything else, then they will let us use one of their homes.

There are plans, I have been told, for a 10-bed adolescent placement center. However, I understand now that that is not an emergency placement. That will be after the entire process of preparing a child for residential -- which is

very extensive -- is completed. That can hold a child up for another month or two months before he is prepared to go in. I would like to move on then to the area of supervising my caseload and my workers. I currently have six generic caseworkers. As I said, I have had several out due to car accidents; I have one who is transferring soon. In our office, out of 28 workers, we have eight workers who have been there for more than a year. That means that the time I have to spend on training is obviously quite a bit. Many times, I go home very worried that something is going to happen. I go out in the field when I can, with my workers, to see how they are doing, but that is something that is frowned upon because I have to be available in the office for other emergencies, as my boss here can tell you.

We have workers who do not know the basics because-- They have been through a very good training program. It is a big improvement over what we used to have. There have been a lot of improvements at DYFS, but we are still faced with a situation where there is no way you can train a worker about what to do until he or she actually faces a situation. They need a lot of on-hands guidance and someone to work with. When workers come in, they don't get a blank caseload -- a one or two caseload to work with. They get a full caseload, because someone else has left, and there are 40 or 50 cases that have to be assigned. In my unit right now, I have one worker in the low 30s. The others are in the high 40s to 50s. We just brought one worker from about 65 cases down to somewhere in the low 50s. There is some deadwood there, but it is not because workers have said, "Well, let's just not close this case. We will keep it open because it's fun." It is simply because they were dealing with other cases and couldn't get to closing it. That was not a crisis any more, so it was put aside.

However, there is not that much deadwood, not in my cases. We have some very serious situations that are not

getting the treatment they need -- the attention they need -- because the workers are stretched too thin, and they don't have the knowledge and experience to move quickly on what needs to be done. I suspect that one of the reasons we have very few experienced workers left is due to all these pressures the workers are under that you have heard some testimony about, and about which you will hear more.

I think there is a tendency on management's part -- although I am sure no one is going to admit to this -- to look at a balance sheet. If I worked for a private company, and I was experienced after working there for 10 years, and someone new started to work there, obviously the new worker is going to get paid much less than I am. I think the company would see the benefit of that. My experience would bring in more profit for the company. In DYFS, I think the same thing holds true. Obviously, an experienced worker generally knows better and does a better job. However, you have no measurement of that. We don't see a profit; we don't see anything concrete to show this is what they have done; this is what they have accomplished; this is what they have brought in. The measurement is simply looking at the balance sheet, that this worker, who is brand-new, makes \$20,000; this worker who has been there for 10 years makes \$27,000. And they are both doing the same job. Why don't we get rid of the one who is costing us \$27,000, and just keep the new one? That seems a very simple kind of thing. That appears to be what is happening, because that is what we've got -- eight workers out of 28 being relatively new workers.

I wanted to give a very brief -- I have a couple more minutes left here -- rundown on some of the things I have to require my workers to do -- some of the pressures. I won't go into details on them; I will just mention them. Obviously, abuse and neglect investigations. Those can be very extensive -- long running -- and can take you a week just to get the

initial problem dealt with. Workers are also responsible for the reporting of all that. There are many, many forms attached to an abuse investigation, that have to be done after you go out and actually do the work. The emotional strain, and so on-- I am not going to deal with that. I am just listing these. CPR -- Child Placement Review Board: We have requirements to meet, reporting to them within certain time frames -- very short time frames. We have to get the stuff done. To CPR people, the most important thing in the world are their reports and their time limits. There is more than just one report. There are many things that have to be done. There are meetings that have to be attended to meet the requirement. Whenever a child is placed, he goes before the CPR Board, and then is reviewed every six months.

DYFS workers have to do an agreement with every case they have -- a service agreement with every family they have -- in order to lay out what the goals are and the time frames, and what the families have to accomplish to get DYFS off their back, in effect.

Litigation -- court cases: Another tremendous area of time and, of course, to the courts and to the Attorney General's office, this is the most important thing DYFS workers have to do. Obviously, we also see it as a high priority.

Supervision of cases involves making minimal visits, once a month to once every three months, depending on the case, or maybe once every six months. Most of them are once a month, because most of the cases we have left are serious cases that need constant supervision. That is a minimum of once a month. Obviously, they do go out more than that. We have to work with foster parents -- in partnership with foster parents. They demand a lot of time, because that is the most important thing to them, and understandably so.

Day-care: We have to get children into day-care. We have to do all of the paperwork to get children into day-care.

We have to find the day-care centers to get them into. We have to renew the day-care, because if we don't renew it we are going to get complaints from the day-care center about why the kids aren't being paid for. We have placements to make of children, and that runs the gamut from simple foster home placement, which may-- I don't know how many forms we have to do. One time we had a meeting here, and we stretched the forms out from one end of the room to the other, to give you an example. We have to do all that, and everything concurrent with it.

We have permanency planning requirements -- children who are going to stay under supervision for more than a year. We have to have a long-term plan for them. All of these are absolutely necessary, good casework practice procedures, that need to be done, but they all have to be done by one person. Permanency planning can include things like searches, which is an affidavit that may run this thick (demonstrates), of all the attempts made to contact parents and relatives who may want to take a child in prior to seeking adoption. All attempts to contact a person have to be documented.

We have training issues, which our workers obviously need and have to go for, but it takes time away. We have the case file itself, which has a tremendous amount of paperwork in it -- contact sheets on a daily basis. It has to have a six-month evaluation of the case. You have to record and demonstrate that your MVR -- monthly visit requirements -- is being met. Service agreements have to be in there and updated every six months. Flow charts have to be done to demonstrate that you have done all the things that are supposed to be in the file. And some other things that I can't remember right now. We have dozens of other responsibilities.

Stress day is something that comes along once a month. Most of my workers do not attend the activities on stress day. They are trying to destress themselves by making

up all the work that they aren't able to do the rest of the time. They often stay at their desks and do that work. I think I have seen one or two films on stress day over the last six months. Distress day I call it, because I end up doing more work because I am trying to take some of it off the workers.

Lastly, I would like to say that I am very pleased to see that our new Director is President of a professional organization of social workers. I used to be a professional; I used to be a social worker. They changed our titles, so I have no profession. I have no organization to go to nationally to discuss the improvement of our professional standing, because we are not professional any more. We are Case Managers, which in itself is a manager; it's a glorified clerical position. They gave us a little more money with it to impress us, but basically we are no longer professionals. Personally, I would rather give back some of that money, and maintain the professional standards.

I think they are suffering tremendously at the expense of accountability. Everyone agrees that accountability is necessary, but there has to be a balance, and lacking professionalism--

I have one little fantasy to impart, and this, I think, is DYFS management's ideal casework procedure plan. We have a little room surrounded by manuals, from one wall to the other. A client comes in, sits down at a table, and says to a worker, "Good morning." The worker picks out a manual related to that and looks up the response to those words. I think that if something like that could be worked out, or if a robot could be put into our places, management would be very happy. You could just program in what you want to come out. You might also want to consider my favorite line: "We ought to change the name from Department of Human Services to the Department of Inhuman Services," because of the type of demand put on

caseworkers, and because of the effect it has on clients who do not get the services they need.

My involvement in the union comes from-- I am a shop steward in the union, and my main concern there is not really financial increases, although I would like that, but my real concern is the professionalism which I think is being lost. I am hoping that our union will address that as much as we address working conditions.

Thank you.

SENATOR COSTA: May I ask the Senators to hold their questions until we have listened to all of them, unless you really feel there is something you want to ask. If there is, please feel free. The next speaker--

MR. KREVET: Next will be Donna D'Andrea, from the Atlantic City District Office, who will speak to us about burnout and overload.

D O N N A D ' A N D R E A: I am Donna D'Andrea. I am a caseworker. I have worked for the Division since December 1, 1980.

SENATOR COSTA: Could you please speak as loud as you can, because not everyone can hear you.

MS. D'ANDREA: I happen to be leaving the Division in December. I have set a resignation date of December 4. Basically, it is because of the-- I'm sorry.

In January, 1987, I happened to be one of the people -- I'm sure statistics will show -- who had an exceptionally high caseload. I had a caseload of at least 200 children.

SENATOR COSTA: How many?

MS. D'ANDREA: Two hundred. I am not exactly sure of that count, but it was at least almost that. There were services offered to bring down the caseload. That did not count for crises that came up to take away from closing cases from January until June of '87. I had to give priority to only particular cases, which took away from everything else.

In June, 1987, there were special service workers hired, who were given a portion of my caseload. I had been taken out of rotation in January, when I was supposed to be getting these cases closed. In June of 1987, of course, when the special service people took over a portion of my cases, I was put back on rotation at the same time. My caseload has since gone back up again, which is basically why I have submitted by resignation.

For three and a half years prior to my resignation, I had been attempting to get my caseload down. I covered for eight caseworkers who had left the agency. We had no one in my unit to cover the cases. At this point in time, I don't see an end in sight. I mean, I don't see my caseload getting down to 38 children. Basically, the demands of the paperwork take away from our ability to deliver services to a client. Our demands are 90% paperwork; 10% client contact. There is no way you are going to help someone when you have to meet all of these paperwork requirements. The needs of the clients are not there. I see my job currently as a referral source. I am referring my clients to other places to get the services they need.

I happen to be someone who went to college -- my degree is in social work -- to assist people and to help people. I wanted to be a caseworker, or a counselor. The Division no longer, as far as I am concerned, provides a service. That is another reason I am resigning. At this point in time, I have submitted a medical leave request as well, besides my resignation. Because of the demands of the paperwork requirements and everything, I am unable to deal with the responsibilities of everything at this point in time, to even get things up-to-date.

Since handing in my resignation, I have been informed that I am in the process of being disciplined for the fact that my casework is not up-to-date -- my paperwork requirements.

Again, I just see that the paperwork requirements affect everyone's ability to deal with the clients. I am not the only one in my office who is attempting to get a medical leave, to get away from the stress of paperwork.

SENATOR COSTA: Do you write out all your reports? Can you dictate them?

MS. D'ANDREA: No. We have nothing to dictate with. We do not have a clerical staff that even works with a Dictaphone. We handwrite everything in our office, unless something is being transferred to another district office. Then, of course, most of those reports are typed up.

SENATOR COSTA: Would you have found it much easier to use a recorder in the car as you were driving along, recording your case, so you could hand it over to someone else to type?

MS. D'ANDREA: Oh, sure, because then you could be doing two things at one time.

SENATOR COSTA: But it was not available to you?

MS. D'ANDREA: No.

SENATOR COSTA: It's unfortunate. We need good people -- good caseworkers.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: You are in the Atlantic County office?

MS. D'ANDREA: Yes.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: How many caseworkers are there in that office -- if you know?

MS. D'ANDREA: About 50, but of that 50-- Full staff is 70, but we also have at least 10 special service workers.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: How is it that your caseload is so high, compared to the average, which from the statistics we see is about 30?

MS. D'ANDREA: Okay, some of it is-- I can even give you an example. We are also covering-- For instance, in my unit, we are covering a caseload for a worker who is on maternity leave. We were told we were going to get a worker to

replace that worker. We have not received one. That worker went on maternity leave on July 19. We have been covering that worker's caseload, but the stats and the computers will not reflect it. We are covering a caseload, but it is not being reflected in any caseworker's name, other than the one who is on maternity leave. So, that person is not there--

SENATOR COSTA: So, you take on another person's job--

MS. D'ANDREA: Exactly. We are covering her cases while she is gone. What is unfortunate is, she is actually going to be held responsible for what is late, if you read a computer sheet, not the worker who is doing--

SENATOR AMBROSIO: The cases are still assigned to her?

MS. D'ANDREA: Exactly. Even though she is not there, and we are doing the work, there is nothing to reflect that we are working on her cases.

SENATOR COSTA: How often do you see your clients within a month? Do you see them once, twice, or what?

MS. D'ANDREA: Sometimes you can only do it as a crisis comes up.

SENATOR COSTA: So, sometimes you may not see these children who you have as cases for months?

MS. D'ANDREA: And I have one case on my caseload who is only seen every six months. It happens to be an autistic child, who we are mandated to provide a service to through the Respite Care Program. In order for the family to even get the service of the Respite Care Program with Sunny Day, they have to be an open DYFS case. It is not abuse; it is not neglect. There are no problems in the family, but it has to be an open case in order to receive a service for this child, who we have to carry until he is 18 years old. The case sat for two years until he could get into the program. We couldn't close the case once the referral was made, because then it would become ineligible to be on their list.

SENATOR COSTA: You say you have to refer mostly. That means we are contracting out, right?

MS. D'ANDREA: Exactly, for counseling, homemaker services -- when you can get them-- At this point, our office does not have a contract with anyone, but day camps, day-care, things like that.

MR. BOWELL: May I say something else about statistics and caseload size? I can increase my caseload size or decrease it by about a third any given time that you want me to. We have done that, because we have been directed to do various things, depending on the moods of the moment. If we have, for instance, a family with seven children, and we are only actively servicing two of those kids because maybe they are the ones who are victims of abuse and neglect, we can either show all seven children as being open, or we can just show the two we are working with. I have been told to do both. Right now, I can't tell you which is in fashion, because I have lost track. After 10 years, I have been up and down with both. The last thing I remember was that we were to show only those we are actively working with. However, if a caseworker goes into a family where there is one child being abused, he is going to interact with the other children. He is going to talk with them about what is going on -- what's happening.

SENATOR COSTA: So, actually, the numbers--

MR. BOWELL: It is a game-playing thing. You can do it in many different ways.

SENATOR COSTA: --can vary. Really, when we are given numbers, we really don't know if those numbers are accurate.

MR. BOWELL: In our office, we have two aides who do not carry cases at all, but they are counted in our complement of workers. They are counted as workers, and they are divided into the caseload size. People who are out on leave for various reasons are also counted into the caseload size. They don't reflect what the worker actually has.

SENATOR COSTA: So, even with your caseworkers, the number is not accurate.

C A R Y C U R R A T O - L A: The number that is accurate is the increasing intake statistic, which the new Director has testified to. Obviously, if intake is going up, a static caseload could go up too, just as we have done all along.

SENATOR COSTA: Are there any other questions? (no response) We will go on to the next speaker.

MR. KREVET: The next person will be Diane Hobbs. Diane is going to speak about a personal experience she had, in terms of dicipline.

D I A N E H O B B S: My name is Diane Hobbs. I have been with the Division since 1979. Currently, I work in the Elizabeth District Office as a Supervisor. I got that appointment in February of this year. Prior to that, I worked in Newark South for the past, say, seven years.

Back in 1984, I applied for a job in the Foster Care Unit, and I got it. Prior to that, I had worked in intake for five years. When I transferred to the Foster Care Unit, I took an intake caseload with me. Okay? I had to clean that up and also do my foster care duties. During that time, we were low on staff, and my intake caseload was kind of high. I got it down, and meanwhile I was still doing my foster care duties.

There were other people in the office who had been taken off of rotation, out of the Intake Unit, and they were allowed to dispose of their intake cases by only doing one job. There were various time frames. With some people, it took up to two years. Around the latter part of '84, I found out that I may have had a major illness. It was something that my mother died from also.

SENATOR COSTA: Take your time.

MS. HOBBS: I made my supervisor aware of it. During that time, they tried to discipline me. I contacted the union. I was able to get statements from at least five other

people who had been in the same situation that I was in, but who were only doing one job, and it was allowed to go on, you know for almost two years, in some cases, like I said. They were never threatened with discipline, and they were never disciplined.

SENATOR COSTA: So, actually, you were doing two jobs. You were working as a caseworker, as well as taking care of foster care.

MS. HOBBS: Yes, and like I said, they were never threatened with discipline, and were never disciplined. I was just singled out. All right? After that, I went to the union, and DYFS did try to provide supportive services through counseling with the Advisory Board. I had a medical problem; I didn't have an emotional or a mental problem, so the counseling really wasn't necessary.

SENATOR COSTA: How many cases did you have at the time?

MS. HOBBS: At that time, I had gotten it down to maybe about 13 or 14. That district office manager was no longer with the Division, but I still felt that I had been treated unfairly, simply because there were other people who had gone through the same procedure that I had, who were only doing one job, and they did not have the medical problem I had.

MR. KREVET: I think modesty also prevents Ms. Hobbs from mentioning the fact that, at that time, she would have been working, I believe, for seven years, and she had received five outstanding ratings and two satisfactories. At the hearing, it was also brought out that there were either five or seven letters of commendation from various agencies, and from the Division itself. She was clearly an exemplary worker, who was undergoing an incredibly trying time medically. There was a family history, so obviously there were mitigating circumstances, and there was disciplinary treatment -- clearly disciplinary treatment -- with five other workers having gone through the exact, same routine without having been disciplined.

SENATOR COSTA: Is there an appeals process for you?

MS. HOBBS: No, I couldn't appeal it.

MR. KREVET: Well, there was a first-level appeal. DYFS, in its inimitable wisdom, sustained it. However, we would be glad to entertain any attempt to withdraw it from the record retroactively.

SENATOR COSTA: Do you want to continue?

MS. HOBBS: Yes. After everything was said and done -- like a month after I was disciplined -- there was another girl in that district office who was taken off rotation. She had been taken off shortly after I had initially been taken off. What they did with her was, they just took her caseload from her entirely. They didn't even attempt to discipline her. I was just singled out.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: What was your discipline?

MS. HOBBS: An official written reprimand was my discipline.

SENATOR COSTA: Could I get a clarification on what you mean when you say "rotation"?

MS. HOBBS: Okay. When you are on rotation-- If you are an intake worker, that is initial response -- PRS. You are the person who goes out first when you receive a call pertaining to abuse and neglect. There is a rotation system, and you go down. Once you are taken off that, you are no longer getting new cases.

SENATOR COSTA: I am not following that too clearly.

MR. KREVET: Okay. If, for instance, I was an intake worker in Elizabeth-- Different intake units may structure it slightly differently, but basically what it is, is that it is your turn to go out on the response. A 97 is the piece of paper which contains the referral. Now, you receive that, you put that in your hand, you head out, and you do the investigation.

SENATOR COSTA: Is that one of the cases where you rotate from one social worker to another? Is that what it means?

MR. KREVET: No. That's the first--

SENATOR COSTA: Or, an assignment that rotates?

MR. KREVET: It is the first step in the process. It is the investigation. In other words, she was in the batter's box.

SENATOR COSTA: Okay. Anything else?

MS. HOBBS: No.

SENATOR COSTA: Thank you for coming before us. Next?

MR. KREVET: Next will be Charles Cohen, who is going to speak about some of the procedures in his office in a more general sense.

C H A R L E S C O H E N: My name is Charles Cohen. I am a Family Service Specialist II, working out of the Suburban Essex County District Office, located in East Orange, New Jersey. For the past close to five or six years, I have been the shop steward representing the professional unit out of that district office. I will give a brief overview as to my observations of the agency's overall disciplinary policy and accountability, what I witness, and what the manifestations are of this policy in my local office.

I would like to start off by stating that the Division, over the past four years, upon the promulgation of the admission statement, has, in fact, fostered a high degree of accountability in the community and among its work force in combating child abuse and neglect. On the positive side, this accountability has heightened community awareness, and there have been some improvements in community resources, and some improvements in employee training.

On the negative side, in fostering this accountability, the Division has often engaged in a harsh, if not reactionary, get-tough approach in both the community and

among the work force. In reaction to community outrage and indignation generated by accounts of the more horrid incidents of abuse and neglect, the get-tough approach, with the court order, has caused both excessive and needless disruption in family life. As a result, a basic tenet of social work, namely that dysfunctional families are in need of treatment and rehabilitation, is often forsaken.

In its get-tough approach with its work force, which is the focus of my testimony, Division management has fully equated "accountability with disciplinary action." As a result, the effective use of employee evaluation, employee counseling, and seeing to it that the lines of communication between worker and supervisor are open, are forsaken. The Division, as a result, forsakes professional personnel practices in general.

At DYFS, the most comprehensive discussions between workers, supervisors, and management on controversial cases, take place in disciplinary hearings. This often occurs after tedious hindsight in a game of Monday night quarterbacking by local and regional management. This excessive dependence upon disciplinary action, in turn has become a crutch for ineffectual management, and has made the agency a sanctuary for martinets. This policy does not recognize the accountability the Division forsakes when workers have to supervise close to 50 families and supervisors are responsible for 500 children, as has been the case at times around 1982-'83. This policy further explains why Local 1037 CWA, out of northern New Jersey, now handles more disciplinary appeals from DYFS than from any other State agency, and why the relationship between the union and DYFS has soured.

Let me share with you my observations and experiences as a shop steward in the Suburban Essex County District Office, located in the metropolitan region headquartered in Newark, where discipline has flourished. One instance out of my office

three years ago best reflects the failure of effective employee evaluation. Here, an employee with an ongoing history of personnel problems, within the same day, within the same hour, received both a notice of termination and a satisfactory annual performance rating.

In a case two years ago involving an employee with an attendance problem, the district office manager was admonished by the departmental hearing officer for failing to refer this worker to the Employee Advisory Service for counseling. The district office manager, a martinet of the supervisor, bent on disciplining this worker, ordered the employee to return back to the job, regardless of whether she had a doctor's note or not, after she stayed off the job beyond an approved medical leave. The supervisor and district office manager, upon her eventual return -- the afternoon of her scheduled day back -- wrote her up for the time she used in the morning to confirm her medical clearance with her doctor. She was written up again later that week, after she was denied leave to go to an administrative hearing on her diabetic son's SSI claims. She went anyhow, as a dutiful parent would normally do.

In another instance, pointing to the failure of an employee evaluation, one employee who had consistently been behind in client contact during his running record for two years through two supervisors, continued to receive satisfactory annual ratings. But, two weeks before his resignation, he received a five-day suspension for excessive delay.

As for the insidious game of Monday night quarterbacking that is played, last year there was an employee and a supervisor who experienced the tragedy of having an infant under supervision die of SIDS. This case came under the scrutiny of the regional office, which concurred with medical science, remarkably, that there was no relationship between the SIDS death and the casework. However, having engaged in

tedious hindsight, regional management trumped up charges of inefficiency. This worker, in fact, had problems in locating this continually indigent family, and had trouble ensuring that the infant and siblings got pediatric care. But this worker extensively documented exhaustive involvement with extended family members to ensure proper care and supervision, in accordance with DYFS' omission statement.

This extensive documentation that this worker did -- 54 pages of a running record, the most I have ever seen of a worker's exhaustive casework efforts -- had its most practical use as State's evidence against this office.

In another instance -- which George alluded to before -- after a hospital dropped a 72-hour hold, and a child was discharged when four doctors could not substantiate abuse, the Monday night quarterback second guessed the supervisor's actions in not filing a court complaint seeking custody of the child. The supervisor received an official reprimand. The facts that were represented from the regional office concerned about the hospital's actions, stated in a conference that the supervisor acted properly, but this did not mitigate the discipline. Apparently, the district office manager had omitted mention of this conference in the request for discipline.

Incidentally, when the worker on this case testified at her supervisor's hearing to the effect that there was this conference with the representative from the regional office, she faced a barrage of intimidation from the district office manager who was prosecuting the case, as if she were the one facing the disciplinary charges. As George indicated, in this case reason prevailed, and the discipline was dropped.

SENATOR COSTA: May I ask you something at this point?

MR. COHEN: Sure.

SENATOR COSTA: Is it your local supervisor you are speaking of, or is it someone higher up in the Division of Youth and Family Services' office of the State?

MR. COHEN: As the chain of supervision goes in a request for discipline, disciplinary action is discussed between the local district office manager and the assistant regional administrator and regional supervisor. Sometimes the District manager -- the district office manager -- will take the initiative; sometimes the regional office will take the initiative, and will tell the district office manager to send the documentation. It is reviewed by the DYFS Office of Employee Relations to see whether there is "just cause" for discipline and to proceed with--

SENATOR COSTA: Just let me get a picture of this now. It could be that someone is in charge in a local office--

MR. COHEN: Right.

SENATOR COSTA: --and that is his manner of handling people. Do you have any option of letting someone above that know -- an appeal -- that this one supervisor is not working properly with the workers? You can create a feeling in an office where everyone is unhappy.

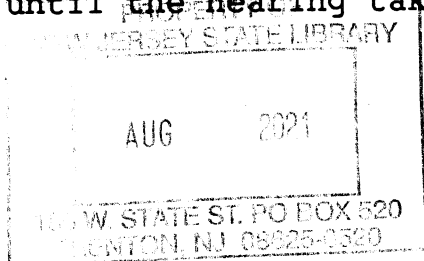
MR. KREVET: May I just jump in for a second? There is an appeals process commensurate with the charge. If it is an official reprimand, you have one crack at him. You have what they call a "departmental hearing." Beyond that, if it is any other minor discipline, up to and including five days, there is a departmental hearing, and then what they call a "joint union/management panel," which is a kind of arbitrary--

SENATOR COSTA: Are you speaking of just one individual who is doing this to all of the employees?

MR. COHEN: Unfortunately, I think this is general policy, from my observations in my office, and from what I know of procedures in other offices.

SENATOR COSTA: In other offices?

MR. COHEN: Right. There is basically no discussion until the hearing takes place.



SENATOR COSTA: I'm sure Mr. Waldman would be interested to know that the people who are supervising a group -- how they react, because that makes a whole world of difference in whether you are going to get workers who are happy on the job, who feel they are being treated right, and who will be able to do their job right. If the top is going to treat everyone ill, it sort of permeates. Everybody gets excited; everybody gets angry. They are all down, and the whole thing falls apart. I am sure this is an eye-opener for him. I am glad we have you here to discuss this.

MR. COHEN: I would like to continue.

SENATOR COSTA: Go ahead.

MR. COHEN: Okay. I, too, have felt the passing attack of the Monday night quarterbacks. Last October, after securing an agreement from an abusive father and a mother to have a child placed with relatives, the father lied about this child's placement. When I discovered, six working days, two calendar weeks, two more crises, and 30 families later, that the child was back in his custody, I dutifully notified the liaison to the Deputy Attorney General and my supervisor that I had discovered that this child was back home. Nonetheless, the child remained with the abusive father for another three weeks, with the Division's full knowledge. In hindsight, I was made culpable for the father's lying for the initial two weeks, and was charged with endangering the child's welfare. As I stated, the State knowingly allowed the child to remain with this abusive father for another three weeks.

SENATOR COSTA: Did anyone let you know that he was back? It was your case?

MR. COHEN: Right.

SENATOR COSTA: And no one let you know that he was back with the father, or did you know about it?

MR. COHEN: The father lied. No one knew, until I checked with the custodian who was named as the child's

caretaker, who said, "This kid was never here." I found out the father had lied.

SENATOR COSTA: This is what we discussed before about the noncommunication between one governmental agency and another. Correct?

MR. COHEN: Yes. By the way, as I touched on before, I was written up on this matter, without being confided as to my actions or inactions on this matter. Incidentally, at the same time, I received a promotion, becoming a Family Service Specialist II, within a four-month working test period, when the norm is about six months.

In sum, DYFS fails to realize that hindsight is always 20/20, but that hindsight is not employed when one is involved in handling a crisis situation.

I would like to go on to state that advocating as an effective shop steward in this atmosphere has been difficult, to say the least. Besides contending with disciplinary actions on their merits, I and the local unions had to also contend with disciplinary actions on procedural matters. Despite contractual provisions that workers being disciplined are to be given documentation being used against them upon their request, workers in my office have had to wait for over one month to get this information from the office manager.

The supervisor on the issue of the hospital hold was charged 11 months after the incident, in the face of an internal memo from Program Coordinator Ted Joseph, who is sitting in back of me. That delay in timely discipline is being viewed as acquiescence by the courts. The hearing itself was scheduled three months from when the charges were preferred, when the union contract stipulates that a hearing has to be scheduled within 20 days of that receipt.

When the employee, suspended within two weeks of his resignation, requested that I, as his shop steward, be in receipt of the documentation being used against him, he was

rebuffed by the DYFS Office of Employee Relations, and it took this incident citation in an unfair labor practice filed with the Public Employee Relations Commission and resolution in a consent decree to resolve the matter.

Although this did not involve discipline per se, I had to advocate for an employee after the local manager engaged in a serious breach of confidentiality, by disseminating a critical quality assurance report which mentioned his workers by name among the office's entire supervisory and support staff. My advocacy as a shop steward has had its personal cost to me. As such, my advocacy, I believe, has been perceived as a threat by the local manager.

My district manager has gone so far as to set up a code of conduct for me as a shop steward, conduct which, for the most part, no other worker in the office is accountable for. Last June, after years of workers getting on the office's public address system to announce the arrival of the coffee truck, or the winner of the 50/50 lottery -- gambling being illegal on State premises -- I received a written warning for announcing the informational picketing in front of the district office, during the union's contract mobilization. It took the picketing of the DYFS Central Office during my grievance hearing to get the agency to back down.

SENATOR COSTA: Mr. Cohen?

MR. COHEN: Yes?

SENATOR COSTA: You have given us a lot, but in the interest of time, because we have so many other people to listen to, is there anything else other than those cases you are stipulating? We have gotten the general idea of what has been happening.

MR. COHEN: I just want to say that the pattern continues.

SENATOR COSTA: The pattern is over and over again.

MR. COHEN: If I may go on, once again, in my office, there is no policy restricting exit and egress out of a supervisor's office, short of going into the supervisor's desk. In fact--

SENATOR COSTA: I do have to limit you, at this point.

MR. COHEN: Okay.

SENATOR COSTA: We have quite a roster. I was told that each one would speak no more than three to five minutes.

MR. COHEN: Okay. I will conclude by saying--

SENATOR COSTA: I think you have concluded. May we have the next speaker, please?

MR. KREVET: Next will be Alice Stinson, from Atlantic City, who is going to speak about the impact on the clerical staff.

A L I C E S T I N S O N: I am Alice Stinson.

SENATOR COSTA: Could you please get close to the microphone, and try to speak loudly so people can hear you? I would appreciate it if you would keep it short, because we have had six people now from your group speaking already. How many more do you have?

MR. KREVET: Two.

SENATOR COSTA: I really would appreciate it if you-- In fact, we are not going to take a lunch break. Since there are so many people, you will see us walking in and out here, but we are just going to continue, so we can get to hear everyone. If anything has already been said, I would appreciate it if you would not say it again. All right?

MS. STINSON: My name is Alice Stinson. I am a Principal Clerk for the Division of Youth and Family Services in Atlantic City. I have been employed there since 1979, and I have enjoyed my job and the people I work with.

However, since I have been with the agency, the demands on the clerical staff have increased about three times. As you know, there was a bill passed in the '70s, which

permitted the Division to remove children at risk. Work for clerical personnel increased in accordance with the children removed. We had to prepare closing checks and arrange foster care. When the new SIS system was introduced in 1980, all of the available cases that were open at the time were converted to the SIS system. The paperwork has been tremendous, but no new clerks have been hired.

In 1981, when the Legislature enacted the Child Placement Review Act, requiring the local board to review the children in our home placement every six months, extensive reports were required. They must be redone every six months, and no new clerks have been hired.

Our client population in Atlantic City has steadily increased over the last few years. The clerks are anxious to help the social workers with their paperwork. We have been trained on PCs and word processors. Recently, we went back to dictating machines. We had done that in the past. It had been stopped because no new clerks had been hired. People in our office who are on maternity leave, or leave for other reasons, have not been replaced. We have always been short-handed. There is just so much we can do. We try to do the best we can.

Recently, with this mandated case reduction, special workers were hired. The same clerks who have been there were required to perform work for them also. I believe we are supposed to have a ratio of one clerk for five workers. The special workers are not included in that ratio, and our staff has not increased at all. Therefore, we are not always able to give the social workers the support they require.

SENATOR COSTA: I see. In other words, although the caseworkers have increased, the people who do the typing have not. Thank you.

May we have the next speaker, please?

MR. KREVET: Our next speaker will be Gary Curatola, from Asbury Park.

MR. CURATOLA: The first statement I would like to make is that the presentation that was made by the Deputy Commissioner and by our new Director, highlighting what they see as the problems in DYFS, I have to basically agree with. I am glad to see that we all agree on what the problems are.

I, as a Casework Supervisor in the Asbury Park District Office, have been employed by DYFS for 17 years. I think I have a rather unique view of how DYFS operates, because I also do the after-hours Special Response Unit work. I have gone out on literally over a thousand cases in my DYFS career, and I think I have seen what DYFS does from all angles.

Basically, what DYFS has done is present a mission statement in the past few years that is an undoable job for DYFS caseworkers. It is too encompassing. It says basically that we are supposed to do everything for everybody, and if we can't do it directly, network it with somebody -- find somebody to do it with. Unfortunately, we have de-networked in the past, not added networking. In Monmouth County, we recently had a merged situation with the county welfare agency there, where county welfare workers were doing a DYFS job. We have, in fact, cut down on duplication of services to clients. Since the demerge, they are going back to a DYFS office. We have less staff in the Asbury Park office than we did when we were in the merged situation. The caseload is higher.

As has been testified to by management, there are increases in intake statistics. That is the statistic you really have to look at, if you want to look at what kind of case flow DYFS is working with. Obviously, a static case count can be manipulated, and often is, as has previously been testified to. We can manage that static number in any number of different ways, from what you put into the computer to what you actually identify as a service. I, as a casework supervisor, supervise the supervisors supervising the workers. My main job is to make sure that all of the cases that are

under supervision in the Asbury Park office need to be serviced by DYFS. I don't want cases there that can be handled by another officer. However, we sometimes have to close cases, and as our manual states, recidivism is not to be looked at as failure. I don't think necessarily that it is, but at any given time, if we are down staff, like we are now-- We have five vacancies out of 28. Two of our allocated 28 positions are case aides who have been long-time employees with the Division. We can't inhumanly fire them, but they are counted as management as social workers. They cannot carry caseloads. They cannot do protective services. But management says that that is two social workers we have in our office. We don't have them.

We have had to increase intake lately. We didn't increase our intake staff. We have five units in Asbury Park. There used to be one Intake Unit and four Generic Units. Because of the manipulation of caseload sizes -- the ever-increasing intake statistics -- but the need to decrease our static count with fewer bodies, we now have two Intake Units and three Generic Units. The three Generic Units right now are supposed to have 18 bodies in them. We only have 15 bodies in them. We are down two in intake. We are down five in the office.

The average generic caseload is still around 50 kids in the Asbury Park office. After it gets out of intake, after the initial response, it is passed on to a worker for continued DYFS services. We are still averaging about 50 kids per worker, although the computer's snapshot will show Asbury Park with 800 kids and 28 positions, and that will come out to a nice 32 or 33. That is not the fact.

SENATOR COSTA: Why don't you have a full complement of people?

MR. CURATOLA: It took us five months to clear one worker's position to the union who went on leave, to get what

they call an "X" position. It took five months. We finally got the okay, I think a week and a half ago.

SENATOR COSTA: If the position was there, why couldn't you fill it immediately? It is not to be looked at in the future.

MR. CURATOLA: Position numbers don't clear through the personnel system. That is what I am told. The actual vacant bodies are there for months. We have had one vacancy for over a year, because the only names we have been given to fill the vacancies-- We get resumes sent to us by our regional personnel office, people responding to ads in the newspaper. We don't get responses from anyone on the Civil Service list. They won't work in Asbury Park. Asbury Park is not a desirable area for people to work in, and at the rate of \$11 an hour -- which is what they are paying some of our staff as hourly workers-- You talked about what the starting salary was, and management said, "\$20,000 a year." Eleven dollars an hour does not come out to \$20,000 a year. They expect us to have people working for \$11 an hour, with no benefits, and no overtime. So, when they are there seven hours per day-- When they put in seven hours, they have to leave. If they are in the middle of a crisis, they don't get paid overtime for it.

SENATOR COSTA: Why are there no benefits? Aren't you with a State organization?

MR. CURATOLA: Hourly employees means that they get paid \$11 an hour. They do not get any other benefits, no time off, no sick time, no vacation time. That is what we are told by our management and by our personnel office. I was told that just yesterday when I interviewed someone from an existing Civil Service list. This person is ranked twentieth on the list. I was told that I could not hire this person as a provisional with full salary and benefits; that I have to hire him as a special. This person is working right now in another State agency. He does not want to leave that job with his benefits, to come to work for DYFS with no benefits, at \$11 an

hour, even though he is on the existing list that is promulgated right now. Personnel can't move it.

G W E N A R M S T R O N G: Senator Costa, after Mr. Curatola finishes with his statement, I have like a minute and a half presentation, which will address some of your concerns about why these positions are not opening, and why we have these vacancies.

SENATOR COSTA: Fine. We will get to you. Thank you.

MR. CURATOLA: I think people have gone over most of the problems. I would like to offer a few suggestions on things that I have seen from my 17 years experience. Number one, you probably need to create another division. The Division of Youth and Family Services is too big, too all-encompassing. There is a real big difference between providing direct protective services regarding kids who are abused and neglected, as opposed to the kinds of other cases that were mentioned -- the throwaway kids. Our caseloads-- We get a lot of parents calling up and saying, "I don't want my kid any more." We're talking about a 15-year-old kid. They had this kid in their family for 15 years. Now the 15 year old decides to go out until midnight, has a boyfriend, smokes, whatever, and the parent calls DYFS, and says, "I don't want my kid."

We are not allowed to respond to that parent. DYFS management, and the courts, I might add, look at that as a kid in need of protection. It probably is a kid in need of protection, but the services you need -- both the expertise of the worker and the resources you need to deal with that -- are quite different from working with the abused and neglected kids, the smaller kids.

I really feel that right now we need more expertise in that kind of a division. There is also the adoption services -- kids in foster care who aren't really being abused and neglected.

Another suggestion I would make -- and you have already kind of touched on it with the paperwork problems-- Somebody mentioned 90% paperwork, 10% field work-- I would say it is more like 75% paperwork, but in some offices I can see where it might be that. You made some suggestions-- portable Dictaphones, dictating machines. We have one in the Asbury Park office. We have no clerical people who would be able to transcribe it, however, into the case records. We need more clerical staff. We also need computer technicians, which would relieve a lot of the computer work the caseworkers have to put up with now. As it is now, a DYFS caseworker had a caseload of 40 or 50 kids, representing maybe 18 or 20 families. They have to go out and do continued monthly MPRs and all the casework that is needed to handle all the descriptions you have heard about of abused and neglected kids.

They have to go out and do the field work. They have to come back into the office, write up the written paperwork, do all of the written reports, and then, on top of that, they have to translate it into computer language to get it into the computer. The only earthly good it does to the DYFS caseworkers -- the people in the district offices-- The one good thing the computer does is, when we get a referral, we can look it up immediately to see if the case is known somewhere in the State. That is helpful. The rest of the stuff in the computer is a management tool, to which I can attest. I, personally, on a daily basis, get printouts on everything. They are in love with their printouts. They have printouts showing left-handed, eight-year-old, blond-haired, blue-eyed kids, I think. In reality, we have printouts for kids who are in placement over "X" amount of months. We have printouts for forms that are not completed. A worker and DYFS management in a district office-- We have to spend a lot of time just to fill out forms correctly, just to answer the computer. In fact, it gets so bad that the computer doesn't even compute if you don't have all the forms filled out.

So, caseworkers are spending a lot of time doing paperwork and computer work. If we had computer input technicians, where a DYFS social worker could simply say in English to a computer person, "This is what you need to put into the computer," and let them do it, I think that would go a long way toward helping staff morale.

In general, what I see is a deep professionalization at the DYFS level. That is basically the result of accountability. This is the last thing I would like to touch on. I think the amount of accountability that DYFS administration requires from each worker and supervisor in the district offices, in terms of being told not only what to do, but how to do it, when to do it, and the forms to do it-- There is no creativity allowed at all at the local level. We have developed several forms at the local level that were working quite well, but only months later we had the regional office or the central office come along with the form they wanted to see standardized and used throughout the State. It is not as good as the one we were using, but we are forced to use it. We still have to use our old stuff. We still have to use manual handwritten records to keep track of cases, because at any given time the computer picture they take is never accurate.

I am here basically to entertain any questions you might have, or that you have asked, because I feel that at the direct service level, I would be able to answer them.

SENATOR COSTA: I appreciate what you have said. It has been very instructive. I know that with Director Waldman here, he will take what you said into consideration, and we will prod him a little bit. Yes?

SENATOR BROWN: I just have a quick question, as far as inputting the information. I have been very much impressed with how much members of the press go around with their portable computers, and it just seems to me-- Obviously, one

does not know how expensive they are, and so on. But, do almost all of you, as part of the job-related requirements, type? Indeed, where a social worker could simply say "I'm sorry."

MR. CURATOLA: Do we type -- the workers? No. Please don't make us do that.

SENATOR COSTA: That's why they need clerical workers.

SENATOR BROWN: We talk about how times are changing out there, and I think you will find many-- I think a lot of us, years ago, used to think that that was sort of a degrading question to ask, but I think you will find nowadays that everybody has a relationship with a PC. It just seems to me that as times change, and so on, certainly rather than transmitting the information 1000 times, you know, if all of us could learn how to-- I even went back to Kean College to try to understand how--

MR. CURATOLA: The problem, I think, with that, is that trained social workers might not only have a slight aversion to doing that, but they are still going to be spending more time working with the computer -- time they could be using working with the clients. If we had people who wanted to work with the computer employed to work with the computer and take the information from the professional workers, I believe that system would work out a lot better.

SENATOR BROWN: My reaction to that, frankly, coming to you as someone who serves on the Finance Committee, is that it is just one more layer of bureaucracy. I would much rather have you able to go directly into a recorder, or directly into a computer. But let's not build on that.

MR. KREVET: There are title considerations, also. You know that is an additional skill, which would require more pay.

MR. CURATOLA: Yeah, definitely.

SENATOR COSTA: We realize that. May we have your name, please?

MS. ARMSTRONG: My name is Gwen Armstrong. I am a DYFS worker from the Asbury Park District Office on union leave. You have now heard a myriad of reasons why there continues to be low morale and a continuing mass exodus of workers from DYFS, resulting in understaffing. I would like to cite a major contributing factor, which is the personnel management information system, commonly known as PMIS. This computer system was installed, and it was to be able to address the many complex personnel issues in DYFS, in an expeditious and systematic manner.

Sadly, what we have discovered is a system unable to begin to address the multitudinous needs of the employees of DYFS, and as a result of the malfunctioning of this system, it is unable to release X and Y positions. Now, the significance of this, is that if you are unable to release X and Y positions of workers who are on maternity leave, union leave, or leave of absence, for whatever reason, you are not able to hire and bring in new social workers at the provisional status level.

Many workers who have received career ladder positions and are serving in these positions, have not received salaries commensurate with these positions, nor retroactive pay. Naturally, if they haven't received the salary, they haven't received their retroactive pay. That statement is to address the statement that the career ladder positions have been in place. They are in place, but none of the people-- Some of the people have received money, but there are many people who, for over a year now, have not received their commensurate salaries with their promotions. These things are all attributed to this PMIS system, which is not functioning properly for all employees.

The PMIS system is accountable to management. Even though memos, letters, and phone calls have been made to various DYFS personnel staff, PMIS continues to malfunction. It is our suspicion that the malfunctioning of this system may

be correlated with the computer fiasco within the Division of Motor Vehicles. It is no small wonder that low morale permeates DYFS workers. We appeal to you for any assistance or support you can give us in resolving this issue.

SENATOR COSTA: Are you a social worker also? Do you work in the field?

MS. ARMSTRONG: Yes. I am a generic, which is different from--

SENATOR COSTA: What is generic, in this instance?

MS. ARMSTRONG: A generic worker is a worker who works directly with the family after the problem has been identified.

SENATOR COSTA: I see. You know, it's so simple. I hate to say this, but why can't each county -- each DYFS group of social workers -- hire just one more person to be there to take over when someone is out on maternity leave or vacation? Is that too simple?

MR. JOSEPH (speaking from audience): It's too simple for PMIS.

MR. CURATOLA: It's not too simple for DYFS.

SENATOR COSTA: I mean, instead of loading them, when they already have a load, just get one person who can pinch-hit.

MR. JOSEPH: In fairness to (indiscernible), it has taken over a year and a half to straighten out what is known as an XY position with the Department of Personnel, and that is not particularly--

SENATOR COSTA: Well, I want to thank you all for being here. That's it, right? (affirmative response) Thank you.

I would now like to call Joyce Munkacsi, Governor's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect. Then we will go on to the list of witnesses.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Madam Chairman, before you go on, I would like to thank all of the workers. They have all taken

time off. They have either taken vacation days, or whatever, to be here to testify, and I want to thank them all for coming.

SENATOR COSTA: George, I did want to ask one more question. I understand the employees' feelings now -- the social workers -- but what is your feeling on the clientele -- the children you are serving?

MR. KREVET (speaking away from microphone): Well, obviously, they are our paramount concern. That is exactly the focus of trying to establish caseload caps. Quite frankly, the situation is a no-move situation. Either caseloads will remain at a stable level, in which case the caps will be inconsequential -- but they will be there -- or the caseloads will spiral, in which case there is an obvious need for caseload caps. So, our concern, obviously, is that the workers all service the clientele.

SENATOR COSTA: Thank you very much. Ms. Munkacsi?

J O Y C E E. M U N K A C S I, E S Q.: Thank you, Senator Costa. I believe it is afternoon, so good afternoon Senator Brown, Senator DiFrancesco, Senator Ambrosio, and staff. Thank you for this opportunity to testify before you concerning an agency that I have worked with, fought with, and had an intense professional and personal relationship with over the years, both in my capacity as an Assistant Prosecutor in Middlesex County for 17 years, which I am Chief of the Sex Crime and Child Abuse Units, and also as Co-Chair with Commissioner Drew Altman of Governor Kean's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect for the past four years.

I am known both in my county and without, as someone who publicly and privately speaks out on behalf of DYFS workers. They are some of the brightest, most dedicated people I know in public service. They are professionals in every sense of the word, no matter what they call them. They work hard at an impossible job, suffer great stresses, and they deserve whatever help this Committee, DYFS management, and, indeed, the public can give them.

In all candor, I have listened very carefully to what the workers have just said previous to my coming up here, and I have heard nothing new. I have heard these complaints over the years. I applaud the new initiatives that DYFS management under Tom Blatner, and now Bill Waldman, has undertaken to increase supports to the caseworker. In particular, I have personally seen the morale of Middlesex County DYFS workers improve when they recently moved from crowded, dirty offices in New Brunswick to a new facility in Edison.

SENATOR DiFRANCESCO: May I interrupt you? So, things are better than they were before? Didn't you just say that?

MS. MUNKACSI: A qualified yes. Yes, I think they--

SENATOR DiFRANCESCO: Didn't the other people basically say that, but with a lot of--

MS. MUNKACSI: Yes. They are saying basically, Senator DiFrancesco, "We have problems, but it is better in some areas." The DYFS workers feel that their problems are not being addressed in other areas. I have found, certainly, DYFS management to be very, very sincere in attacking the problem. I work with both DYFS management and the average DYFS worker. I may go a little far afield from my prepared remarks--

SENATOR COSTA: I would appreciate it if you could summarize your remarks, rather than read them all, because of all of the people we have here.

MS. MUNKACSI: Okay.

SENATOR COSTA: And then take questions instead.

MS. MUNKACSI: I can certainly appreciate that. I think what you want to know, and what this Committee wants to know is, has the situation improved since 1984, when there was a massive influx of money into the system, because you hoped it would improve? I think it has improved. As I said to Senator DiFrancesco, a qualified yes, I think so. Certainly the caseload has decreased. I have found that in our county, and from what I hear from DYFS workers throughout the State.

Although the numbers vary, you can shift cases around, and you can shift numbers around. It depends on whether you are working with families or whether you are working with children. If you say the average DYFS worker's caseload is now 40 cases, I still think that is way, way too high. In Middlesex County, where we have three district offices, we have a higher caseload. I believe in the New Brunswick office, the ratio is one caseworker to 49 children. In the ideal world, the caseload, in my opinion, would be half of that. And I am not sure how to accomplish that, other than by money, money, money.

SENATOR DiFRANCESCO: More money, right, to hire more people?

MS. MUNKACSI: Money, money, money. Insofar as the problems of DYFS workers containing paperwork, I, personally, as an Assistant Prosecutor, am grateful for the detailed reports I get from DYFS. I work with them every day. Clarity leaves something to be desired, because they are all handwritten reports. But I can certainly attest to the need for documenting everything that a caseworker does. Those cases are often going to wind up either in the Family Court or in criminal courts, and it is very important. We just can't throw out paperwork, and say, "It takes too much time."

One suggestion, because Director Waldman has referred to the transportation problem-- DYFS workers have to spend time taking clients to therapy, for physical exams, etc., etc. Why not have a transportation aide, or several transportation aides in each district office, to alleviate that one small responsibility?

On the plus side, DYFS workers, I believe -- and I think this can be borne out -- are far better trained today and have a good knowledge of what constitutes a thorough and competent investigation. I think that has come about in part because of the alliance between law enforcement and DYFS. That

was encouraged by former Commissioner George Albanese and former Attorney General Kimmelman, back in 1983. This Committee may remember that 10 children died in 1982, who were under the direct supervision of DYFS. Then Commissioner Albanese said that that was unconscionable, and that that would never again happen. He sought the help of law enforcement to help with the training of DYFS workers. I say, with no pride whatsoever, that law enforcement, up to that time, had abdicated a great deal of their responsibility in the investigation of child abuse cases. Everybody was shoving everything off on DYFS, as they are still doing today in great part -- other agencies. But law enforcement, I think, since 1983, when we had the working group, which eventually evolved into the Governor's Task Force, has accepted its responsibility.

We have joint training between DYFS workers and law enforcement. In Middlesex County, for instance -- and this is true in other counties -- we are holding seminars to make sure that law enforcement officers -- the officers out in the street -- gets to meet DYFS workers, listens to their problems, and develops a rapport. DYFS workers, to them, were always those crazy women who went around taking kids out of their homes when you didn't want them to, and leaving kids to be abused when you felt they should be taken out. So, I think we have come a long, long way in those four years.

I just want to say in conclusion, that Governor Kean has charged the Task Force, first of all, to promote awareness of the extent of the problem of child abuse and neglect in New Jersey. I think we have accomplished that, perhaps too well. Everybody is aware of the problem, and this is reflected in the increase in reporting that has come about each year. I believe it was you, Senator Costa, who asked whether, in fact, the caseload is going to decrease, or if the reports are going to decrease? Not on your life! I just heard this morning on the radio that New Jersey is experiencing an unprecedented growth

in population. People are coming in from out-of-state. You are going to see increases each and every year. I do not see the end of the increase in the reports of child abuse, or a decrease in the need for DYFS services. One of the other mandates that the Governor's Task Force has, is that we mobilize citizens and community agencies in a strong prevention-oriented pro-active effort to address child abuse and neglect. We have been doing just that, and we are committed to continuing our best efforts. We believe, as Director Waldman does, that DYFS cannot do it alone. They can't possibly solve the problems of child abuse and families in crises. There must be community-based services that will take over, and provide homemaker services, day-care, mental health therapy, medical care, crisis nurseries, teen-age facilities -- which has been mentioned -- and affordable housing. That is half of the problem right there -- the housing situation -- which nobody is addressing in New Jersey, and which DYFS lives with every day. All the things that families in crisis must have, so that the children in those families can grow up to be strong and healthy.

Thank you for your time and attention. I would be happy to answer any questions from my perspective.

SENATOR COSTA: You spoke about needing more services and more organizations, and that means more money. I have a little note here to myself, which I put down a long time ago during this hearing. Regarding a volunteer corps, would the agency consider that kind of an arm to DYFS? You know, people who care, such as people from church organizations. They have their various societies that might be interested in doing work. There are the service organizations -- the VFW, the American Legion, all of those. They have people who like helping other people. It is part of why they get together.

You know, government will never have enough money to take care of all of its ills, and if we could get volunteers to

come in and assist-- I know that when I worked as a Welfare Director for just three short months -- I was on the local Assistance Board and we lost our Welfare Director, so I did it gratis for three months -- I was called in on a case where I walked in and there was no one there, and I didn't have anyone to call upon to take care of those three kids. The baby was blind, and was running a high fever. I called my husband, and said, "I can't come home. I am going to take care of these kids." But, there should be something we can tap into -- a volunteer corps -- and I wish the Director would consider that.

Unless there are other questions, thank you very much.

MS. MUNKACSI: Just one thing: I would like to see DYFS, through their public relations, educate the public to exactly what DYFS does. I find that the average citizen has no idea of what DYFS does. They have a lot of misconceptions. I think we ought to start off with a statewide DYFS--

SENATOR DiFRANCESCO: They don't know what we do.

MS. MUNKACSI: I'm sorry?

SENATOR DiFRANCESCO: They don't know what we do.

MS. MUNKACSI: Well, let's start off with a DYFS worker appreciation day, and let's inform the public of what DYFS does.

SENATOR COSTA: Perhaps your Task Force could go to these various agencies and try to get volunteers.

MS. MUNKACSI: Well, maybe you will get volunteers, if people understand what DYFS is all about. I support them. They need us; they need all of us.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR BROWN: I am sure one of the prime targets of the new Division Director, Mr. Waldman, is going to be to showcase the positive side of the Division of Youth and Family Services. I happen also to have a bill in that would talk about having an ombudsman for children, to be in, but not of the Department of Human Services, because, again, I think we have to emphasize some of the positive things.

One quick question for you: I am a little concerned about your summary. I am wondering, do you see any more emphasis being placed by all of these various agencies, whether it is the mental health worker, or whoever -- or the day-care teacher -- on trying to emphasize the importance of the responsibility of the parent?

MS. MUNKACSI: No. I am interested that you asked that. No, I have not seen that and, you know, all these agencies -- the local agencies -- rely on DYFS. They look to DYFS for money; they look to DYFS for direction.

SENATOR BROWN: Well, DYFS, with all due respect, did not create the children. I mean, the children were born from the mother and the father. So, I think we are misguiding people. I will back up what the Chairman said. You know, there are volunteers out there. I think, also, that we have to start making it crystal clear that when mothers and fathers bring young ones into the world, they have a major responsibility. To think that we are going to build any sort of governmental system that will replace mothers and fathers, frankly, is nothing that I want to see.

MS. MUNKACSI: I would second that. As a matter of fact, in New Brunswick, the Police Athletic League is running a program for adolescent males -- I believe it is called Responsibility for Adolescent Males -- RAM -- insofar as pregnancy is concerned, insofar as bringing children into this world, and what, in fact, that means. They have created a great deal of controversy. They have their supporters -- I am among them -- but they also have their detractors, who say, "We don't want you telling young boys about contraceptives and that type of responsibility. We want you to teach them morality." So, any new initiatives come up with people who are frightened by some very practical solutions to it.

SENATOR BROWN: I was just appalled to learn that about 74% or 75% of the young people who, you know, are coming

before Division workers for one reason or another, are brought by mothers. It just seems to me that we have to make the fathers realize-- You know, Donny can afford to lose a day or two from work.

SENATOR DiFRANCESCO: Weeks. (laughter) See, she hates lawyers. May I just say--

MS. MUNKACSI: You're absolutely right. Maybe it has to start in the schools.

SENATOR DiFRANCESCO: I just want to say that I have heard a lot about you from Prosecutor Stamler. You have done great work, and I appreciate your coming today. I appreciate your input. I read your statement before you spoke, and I certainly know that you have waited patiently. So, thank you very much.

MS. MUNKACSI: Oh, thank you; my pleasure.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Thank you. Next we will hear from Ciro Scalera and Cecilia Zalkind, from the Association for Children of New Jersey.

SENATOR DiFRANCESCO: Is this a double-barreled approach here?

C E C I L I A Z A L K I N D: That's right.

SENATOR DiFRANCESCO: He who comes up here without any notes-- Can you imagine? He comes up here without-- He has it all up here. (demonstrates)

MS. ZALKIND: That's because I have the notes.

C I R O A. S C A L E R A: Senators, it is a pleasure to be here this afternoon, and to be able to discuss what is an important issue facing children in New Jersey.

Cecilia will be making the presentation of our testimony, which you have in front of you, but I would like to take the liberty of at least two comments. First, I think I attended the first hearing on DYFS in 1977, before this Committee. I think -- to answer your question, Senator DiFrancesco -- to look at whether things are different today

from then, I would think you would have to look at two factors: First, we have to understand that DYFS -- that a DYFS -- will always be a Band-Aid on what is, in effect, a broader societal context. Today, we have far more families living in poverty and facing an economic and social situation that is radically different than perhaps several years ago. We don't have to go into the causes or anything else, but the facts and the census tell us that there are far greater numbers of children living in poverty today, than were four, five, six, seven years ago.

That is something that has an impact on what any social service agency attempts to try to do. And it certainly has an impact in terms of resource levels, staffing levels, and other issues that have been discussed this morning.

The second factor is, I think what Cecilia will be covering will be that in certain areas of DYFS operations, despite meaningful, well-intentioned, and important efforts by various people, inside and outside of government, for certain aspects of its operations, things have, in fact, not gotten any better for children. In fact, they have gotten worse.

SENATOR DiFRANCESCO: So, it is not just money?

MR. SCALERA: No. I do not believe it is absolutely money. I don't believe that. We did support the appropriation two years ago for more caseworkers. There was a valid reason for that. I would have to tell you, that if that were a recommendation today, I don't know that we would, per se, support that, unless it included other aspects of accountability for children, which Ceil will cover in a minute. I don't think that in certain areas things have gotten better for kids. I think we will point out some ways in which we feel that to be the case. Cecilia?

MS. ZALKIND: Thank you. I will start with what I always say when I come before this Committee, which is, "I will be very brief." We have pretty extensive written testimony,

which we have included for the Committee. We have also included a letter -- some correspondence -- that we had with the Division almost a year ago -- last October -- that resulted partly from Senator Brown's interest in the child welfare system, and from her resulting visits to a number of Division offices in the State.

As you know, we are always interested in child welfare issues. We have a very strong commitment to children in the child welfare system. We have exercised that commitment a number of different ways -- on the legislative front, through the budget process, and in a number of task forces and committees, on which we have worked with the Division to improve the delivery of services in the child welfare system.

Our agenda before you this afternoon is really a nonpolitical one. We want to focus on children, and the well-being of children in the child welfare system in our State. We feel that is a very urgent and important agenda for us and for you to look at, at this time. We are interested in caseload size and staffing level, but we are interested in those issues not just in terms of the overworked caseworker -- which you heard a great deal about this morning -- but also in terms of the impact that that problem has on children and families within the system.

What happens when a child has a number of different caseworkers in a year? What happens when the continuity of services to a family is not there because of staffing issues? So, we addressed that issue. But we also felt obligated to look at two other issues that we feel are very critical right now. One, we feel very strongly that the time has come right now to look at what is going on in practice. The Division has wonderful policy in the child welfare area -- terrific philosophy. A lot of that has been incorporated into the underlying basis for practice. But we have some serious concerns as to whether those practice issues are carried out.

Is there a system in place that carries out the policy that the Division espouses? Secondly, we think it is very important to direct a look at what is going on in terms of developing and funding community services. One of the strengths, we believe, of the Division over the past few years, is the commitment they have made not only to promoting community services, but to providing the funding for those services. As a number of people have acknowledged this morning, the numbers of children and families, and the problems they face, are so strong that one State agency is not going to deal with all of those problems. It is going to take a community response. We feel the Division has put some commitment toward funding some of those programs.

We also feel that the time has come to take a look at what that money is buying. Are those services the most appropriate services? Are they being used? Are they directed toward the most needy families? And that is the other issue we are going to address. We also believe very strongly that those two issues do have an impact on staffing, on caseload size -- the very issues you have heard about this morning -- in terms of vacancies and workers who leave the agency because of burnout.

Let me begin with our look at policy, as opposed to practice. In preparing for this hearing today, I think we believed that if the efforts and success of the child welfare system right now were to be judged on the basis of philosophy and policy, there wouldn't be any need for this hearing today. However, we want to look at what is going on beyond that policy. What are the systems in place? When we talk about systems, we are talking about standards. Are there standards in that system for day-to-day practice? Are there time frames in the system? Does every worker in the Division know when goals are to be accomplished, what time frames are to be met? And what is the monitoring and evaluation system in place, that evaluates whether those standards and time frames are being met?

I am going to briefly just outline what we have put in our testimony about areas that we think should be looked at. The first is the entry -- the point of entry -- for children into the child welfare system -- protective services. Are there clear standards in terms of how abuse allegations are dealt with, not on the State level, but on the individual district office level, by individual workers? Would a family, for example, which is brought to the attention of the Division in Bergen County, have the same response from the Division that a family does in Camden County? Over the last 18 months, we have received many calls from parents, who are very concerned about this very issue. They have told us that there are a number of abuse cases that the Division does not like to investigate and has, in fact, refused to investigate, primarily where parental custody is an issue; where there is a parent who does not have custody who is visiting, and there is an allegation of abuse made. We find a number of parents who have told us that it is very difficult to engage the Division in taking these types of complaints seriously. We have also heard from parents who have said that it takes a long time -- parents and child placement review board members -- who said it takes a long time for abuse allegations to be investigated.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: May I interrupt you for a minute?

MS. ZALKIND: Sure.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: That particular problem that you address-- Doesn't that become a matter of resources available to DYFS, where there is a marital dispute, and the children are involved? Generally, there are other court agencies, or other social service agencies, that are also available, so that DYFS -- I am not saying they should -- probably says, "Well, there are other agencies, and with the demands on us, we would probably let that go, and let others--"

MS. ZALKIND: I think that is very true, but I think what happens is, the other agencies are saying the same thing.

If the court is saying, "Well--" We have had at least five parents over the last three months who have told us about this, where the court says, "Well, there is an allegation here, but I don't know if we should take it this seriously. We can look at it in the context of a personal dispute between the parents, because, look, the Division has not gotten involved in this case."

MR. SCALERA: I would say that that is a response that is made, Senator. The point is, the law says, "If there is an allegation of abuse, it must be investigated." It is not for the worker to decide, "Well, there is another custody matter pending on the matrimonial side; therefore, we are not--" You know, "It is a matrimonial case; it is not our responsibility to investigate."

Now, I think we have also had some evidence -- I don't know how widespread it is, but it is something we learned from case managers and some of the courts -- that there have been some efforts by certain parents to unscrupulously allege child abuse in a pending custodial matter, to gain some advantage in that action. We are aware of that problem and that issue. To us, the response should be to deal with that in an appropriate manner by, in one way or another, having our laws sanction against that practice, so that it does not become a practice. That should not cut against, though, the bona fide investigation of an abuse allegation in the context of a custody. I think that is our position on that.

MR. CHERNA (from audience): Senator, I would just like to respond for a second. The law does clearly state that if there is now a (indiscernible) case of neglect, that we go out and investigate, and we do that. If there are any specific cases that people know about where our workers have not gone out, we certainly would like them to basically follow that up, because the policy is clear, the law is clear, that if there is an allegation of abuse or neglect, we must go out and investigate.

MS. ZALKIND: We have made those referrals to the Division.

MR. SCALERA: In fact, on just about every one those cases, I have called the DYFS 800 complaint line, and made those cases-- Because the people call us, and we refer them to the agency, and tell them that this is the problem.

MS. ZALKIND: To go on, we are also concerned about services to families once the family is accepted for Division intervention. What kind of services are being offered to stabilize families and to keep them together? Is out-of-home placement truly a last resort? Are efforts made to keep the family together before out-of-home placement occurs?

Secondly, once that child comes into placement, what efforts are being made to ensure that the child returns home in a timely manner? This is not a new issue. This is the whole focus of the idea of permanency for children; that children who do need out-of-home placement should be in placement temporarily, and that decisions be made to either return them home, or to place them for adoption without further delay.

A last concern, which is a very serious one of ours -- which we have expressed repeatedly to the Division -- is what we see as the quality of care for children in out-of-home placement. We believe that despite the best efforts by excellent foster homes -- and there are many good foster homes in our State -- and other placement alternatives, the children in New Jersey are suffering in the out-of-home placement system. A look at some of the very common effects of foster care: Repeated moves from one placement to another. The child is not only separated from its family, but is separated from subsequent foster families. Infrequent visits with his parents, almost complete separation from siblings at the time of placement. So, the child does not only leave his parent; he leaves his brothers and sisters as well.

Risk of physical and sexual abuse while in foster care, infrequent visits with siblings, placement in a county very far from the county that the case originated in, because of lack of resources or foster homes-- All of these are very serious issues to us, that suggest that the system that is designed to protect these children, is resulting in more serious harm to them. We feel very strongly that the time has come to take a look at this practice. What is going on in the system? What are the standards? What are the time frames? What are the monitoring roles of the Division in looking at this?

We also believe that the community has a role in assessing some of this, too. We have, over the last few years, received some data from the Division. We are also aware that the Division has, through its quality assurance reviews, assembled this very information. We believe it is very important that this information be open to public scrutiny and legislative oversight. The input of all of us is needed to ensure that the right questions are asked, and to ensure that the findings are followed up on, to improve the quality of care.

In terms of the staff allocations and caseload size issues, as I mentioned, we participated in a number of projects looking at delivery of services in the child welfare system. These issues have come up continually. There are always issues of caseload sizes being too high, of staff vacancies, and constant turnover within the Division. We are very concerned that this has a tremendous impact on services to children, and on the well-being of children within the system. We have not done any independent analysis of this. We have no data to offer you, but one of our research projects we are working on now deals with two particular district offices in our State. We have been asked by the committee we are working with to assemble some of this information, which we should have when we complete our report in March.

But, what we have seen, in looking at one of the offices in Middlesex County, is that they have operated for at least two years at a capacity below their allocation. They always have less staff than they should have. In fact, looking at the year 1986, they suffered a loss of 50% of their staff. So they had staff turnover of at least half of their direct services positions. This has a tremendous impact on children and families. Even if you can plug in these positions, filling vacancies quickly, workers have to be trained. And what happens is, cases move from one worker to another, or worse, are left uncovered, while these vacancy issues are handled.

The second issue in this area that we are very concerned about is staff resources to the adoption offices. In the Division, the adoption services are offered through four regional offices in the State. They are separate from the county district offices. We have worked very closely with these adoption offices, primarily through the American Bar Association's project, which we began with the Division in 1984, to look at improving the adoption system in the State. This has been a tremendously successful project in terms of moving children through the adoption system faster, not only within the Division, but within the court, and the Attorney General's office as well. We feel that not only has there been an improvement of time lengths, but there has been a tremendous improvement in quality. We are very concerned that over the last six months there have been increases in cases moving to the adoption offices, that are going to impact on how well those offices carry out their role.

For example, from July, 1986 to July, 1987, the four adoption offices experienced an increase of 423 cases, which is quite a big percentage of their total caseload of 2000 or more cases. We are very concerned that there be a look at staff resources for these offices, so that this system, which is working well, will not break down.

Lastly, one of our issues is directing a look at what is going on in the area of community-based services. Again, this is the strength of the Division. They have put a lot of money into community-based programs. But, we would like to know what that money is buying. What kind of services are being provided in local communities? Are workers aware of those services? For example, if a local district office has developed some resources, are they utilized by district office staff? I think that would be a very basic question to answer.

Secondly, are they services that are directed at the most pressing problems within our State? The Division, as well as many other groups over the last two years, has documented the link between homelessness and out-of-home placement. What services are being developed to address those families who face a lack of housing, or loss of housing, beyond placement into foster care? I think the time has come to look at what is needed and what is being provided.

Similarly, we are very concerned about the availability -- and this was brought up at the hearing earlier -- of facilities for children who need more treatment-oriented placements. There will be other speakers. The New Jersey Association of Children's Residential Facilities will address this more fully, but we share their concern that children needing out-of-home treatment services, are instead being placed in detention shelters or correctional facilities.

We are also very concerned because there seems to be a growing population of children who need these treatment facilities, who are being sent to treatment alternatives out of New Jersey. This is costly, and it does not result in the monitoring of what happens to these children.

Again, I would like to just say that we are not saying, "Take a look at this," because we don't believe there is anything positive there. Quite the opposite is true. A lot of positive initiatives have developed from this community

alternative initiative. We hope that a look at what is going on, what services are provided, and how they are being used will result in the expansion of some of these programs and support for the caseworkers who have difficulty with caseload size, with the practice issues we are raising.

I will close briefly by just acknowledging some of the recommendations we would like to make before you today. We tried to be very specific because, as we all know, this is not the only hearing that has ever occurred on the Division. We really made an effort to try to be concrete and specific, and to look at some suggestions we could make to move the process along.

First, we think the Division should release its data on services, practices, and outcomes for legislative oversight and public scrutiny. Again, it is very important to have some public dialogue on this information.

Second, we believe there should be an immediate implementation review of Division practices with respect to standards, time frames, resources, and monitoring, to gauge the overall condition of case practice in the district office. First, we believe that this information already exists in the Division, and that it should be reviewed, and that the Division should then make any necessary administrative changes designed to implement recommendations.

Third, again, we believe that special emphasis must be directed toward children in the out-of-home placement system, foster care, and all kinds of treatment alternatives, not only on the availability of such resources, but on the quality of care as well.

Fourth, we believe it is time for an evaluation of the availability, effectiveness, and appropriateness of Division-funded community-based services, as I have spoken about a little more at length.

Lastly, we also want to look at the availability and adequacy of programs for children who need inter-divisional and interdepartmental services. A lot of older children in the Division's system also are children who come up in the corrections system, or in the mental health system, or within the Division of Developmentally Disabled. We think the time has come to look at how these services are being coordinated, and to review some formal agreements to clarify the roles of these divisions and departments.

Thank you. We will be glad to answer any questions you might have.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Thank you. Senator Brown?

SENATOR BROWN: Mr. Chairman, thank you. As usual, the testimony from the Association for Children in New Jersey has been very well-thought-out and executed. I would just like to make an observation as a result of listening to the two of you.

As you know, I have Senate Bill 2044, which would call for establishing a commission to look into the Division of Youth and Family Services. Obviously, this has met with mixed reviews, because there have been many studies of the Division over the last decade. Many of those reports are in my office. But I think hearing you today, I certainly will talk with Senator Costa, and others of my colleagues, to see if we can't expedite S-2044 to see whether we can, you know, help to support the work of the new Director by again bringing more talent to the overall picture.

MS. ZALKIND: As you know, last summer when this bill came up for Committee discussion, we strongly supported it, and spoke to you at that time. Our support came because we believe this is the largest system in our State that has the greatest responsibility for the greatest number of children. Even if we came before you today and said that everything was fine, that we had no questions, it is still a system that deserves public

scrutiny. We supported the commission for that reason. But we also felt, and we had some discussions with you, about how important it would be in any initiative to take on any more review and study, to make it short term, very specific, very time directed, and geared toward implementation, not just recommendations. We can show you many publications, from the Division and from our own organization, which have wonderful recommendations. The question would be: What has happened to all of them?

SENATOR BROWN: Thank you.

MR. SCALERA: Thank you very much.

SENATOR COSTA: Thank you.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Next on the list will be Julie Turner, Executive Director, New Jersey Association of Children's Residential Facilities.

JULIE TURNER: Right. I would like to introduce the President of the Association, Mr. Peter Kurtz, who is also Executive Director of Bonnie Brae. I am delighted to have the opportunity to testify before you.

I want to start with a child story I heard last week, because sometimes I think that as we talk about numbers, we forget that there are children behind them. This was a youngster who is a victim of severe physical and sexual abuse. Lisa -- not her real name -- entered a residential treatment center acting like a dog. She crawled; she would not walk. She growled, and she woofed. After some years of very devoted treatment from a dedicated staff, Lisa rejoined the human race. Recently, she became part of a loving adoptive family.

I felt rather terrific about that, as I think you all may. I wish I could say that was true for many of the children in New Jersey, who are so troubled that they require out-of-home residential treatment services. But, that is not the case. Our Association represents both the private group homes and residential treatment centers that serve the majority

of these troubled kids placed by DYFS. The kids range: They are young. They can be as young as five or six, up through adolescence. They have a variety of difficulties. They can be autistic; they can be hyperactive; they can be aggressive; they can be arsonists. They are a whole range of kids in a lot of trouble. I would invite each of you to visit any of our facilities to meet the kids and know the reality behind the numbers.

Unfortunately, New Jersey has not, over past years, made the necessary commitment to provide the resources to treat these children. There is much information in the packet that I have provided you, that will document this. I know you don't want to spend all afternoon, so I would like to just highlight a couple of the issues, and invite you to read the rest of it.

One of the key components in treating children, is the child care staff. I was interested in hearing the DYFS testimony when they were talking about an 18% turnover. In our child care staff, we have had a 100% turnover in one year. It is somewhat understandable. The salary that the Division has been willing to provide for the facilities to pay-- The starting salary is \$12,500. Similar salaries that they are willing to pay State employees doing the same job are \$2000 to \$3000 a year more. They talked about caseworker salaries at \$20,000-plus for DYFS employees. In our agencies, it is \$18,500 for Master's-level social workers. This is an example of the lack of commitment and involvement, in terms of being able to get the quality staff.

Now, what it means-- Well, it has a lot of impact. I think Senator Brown, at one point, mentioned the question of stability or consistency in terms of caseworkers. Many of the kids who come into residential treatment have gone through multiple placement. They have come from what is euphemistically called "highly dysfunctional families." That means incredibly abusive, rather crazy, and things like that.

These kids need to have the stability and consistency of people to take care of them who can really provide the right kind of models. They may go through, in a year, three or four different child care workers, and never be able to make the kind of movement and development they need.

In a recent child welfare magazine article, which was looking at the issue of institutional abuse, they identified as one of the primary reasons for institutional abuse the lack of qualified and trained child care staff. We are in the position of having to say, "We cannot provide the degree of training that child care workers need." They are not there long enough. We cannot guarantee the quality of care that we would like to be able to. This has been brought to the attention of both DYFS and Commissioner Altman. We desperately need your help. I know, Senator Costa, that you are aware, and have been very interested and supportive in this area. As I said, this is one example of a very lengthy history of essentially a pervasive neglect of the most troubled kids in our State.

Over the past 10 to 15 years, half of the residential treatment centers in the State have closed. At the same time, we are now sending over 500 kids out-of-state. As we look at where children are and what has been happening recently, there are increasing numbers of troubled children who are not in treatment facilities. They are in shelters, in detention centers, and in corrections, and the numbers are increasing dramatically. In detention centers, they are over capacity. The average population has increased 32% in two years. The shelters are near or over capacity. I think one of the DYFS caseworkers talked about his efforts of trying to find a roof for a child. Their population has tripled in two years.

The State psychiatric hospitals are at, or over capacity. I think you are all well aware of the problems the State psychiatric hospitals have had. Part of that is a result of too many kids, and no place to put them. The CCIS units --

the short-term psychiatric units -- are at capacity, with waiting lists. I was at a meeting with the heads of the CCIS units. One of them said, "I am in the position, on a daily basis, of triaging kids; triaging meaning, "I don't know which one is the most likely to commit suicide, but I am going to have to make a guess and live with it."

I have documented in-- It is a fairly lengthy paper, but I would ask you to look at it, read it, and study it, and ask some questions. We have let this system go downhill, so that essentially we are a disgrace. I met with my counterparts in other states. I took this job a little over six months ago. Having come from a very strong volunteer child advocacy background, I thought there was no better place for me to be than this. But when I met people from other states, I was really impressed with the systems their states had in place. They knew the kinds of kids they had. They had developed programs to meet those children's needs. Actually, they were meeting our children's needs.

SENATOR COSTA: What made the difference?

MS. TURNER: I think there was a philosophical background of, "We just don't believe in residential treatment." I think it has taken a very low priority on the DYFS list. It has been a "penny wise, pound foolish" approach of, "Even though we pay an awful lot of money out-of-state, we don't want to develop the programs and fund them adequately in-state." I think the examples I have given you around the salary issues are classic. The cost of running a similar State facility is about double -- from their budget figures -- what it is for the private facilities. No wonder half have closed in 15 years.

If you have some questions, I think Peter can give you some hands-on experience of what it means to try to treat kids without the necessary resources from the State.

I would ask you specifically for your support on the immediate crisis situation -- the child care salary issue. That is really as critical as I have encountered.

For the long term, I think we really have to be looking at the fact that we are spending money for kids in shelters. We are spending a lot of money for kids in shelters, who may wait six months or more, and deteriorate. Should we not be relooking at developing actual treatment programs that can serve those kids?

P E T E R K U R T Z: Just to clarify our member agencies' connection to DYFS, we are all contracted with the Division of Youth and Family Services for a certain amount of beds. They pay us a daily rate, based on the severity of the children coming into our facilities basically and the nature of the services provided. We represent community-based group homes for eight to twelve children, and large residential treatment centers with anywhere from 30 children up to 75 children.

The residential treatment centers get paid for only the children who are there. Our group homes rate is based on a yearly rate split up into 12 equal portions. We could pay our child care workers, in fact, anything that we cared to in order to attract qualified people. The problem is, the rates that are paid to us for the children in DYFS' care to be treated at our facilities, remain consistently below our costs, so that our ability to raise our salaries independent of the DYFS rates, is almost impossible. Bonnie Brae is the worst case example, perhaps. We are also the best case example, from my point of view. I put up over a half a million dollars a year towards the cost of providing services for DYFS children, above and beyond what the Division pays me to care for those children. Each of our facilities puts up money. None of them can quite put up the amount of money that Bonnie Brae does, but each of us puts up money towards that.

SENATOR COSTA: Where does the money come from?

MR. KURTZ: Well, in Bonnie Brae's case, the money comes from having managed our land well, and sold a lot of it, and built up our endowment, taking interest from that endowment, and also from an enormous fund-raising effort. I have a full-time development record.

SENATOR COSTA: Do you have other children other than DYFS children?

MR. KURTZ: No. All of our children presently are-- Well, I should not say that. On occasion, the Division makes the decision to discontinue services to a child who has been on their caseload for a long time in a variety of services, and occasionally a local school district, not wanting to see that child back in that district, and/or supportive of a parent who is asking for residential services, or responsive to a parent's suit against them for residential services, places a child with us and pays the entire tab. That is an exception.

I would also like to point out that our workers are not represented by any union; that, in fact, they depend on us, as managers of the facility, to both advocate for them among our Board of Trustees, who have the final say as to what we can pay our workers, in fact, and how much money they feel they can raise to support these services, as well as to advocate for them with DYFS, with respect to our contract raise, which would allow us to again pay these workers more money.

Because of the severity of the children coming into our system -- we are talking about children who may have had many, many years of abuse, of suffering in a foster care system that has let them down-- We are talking about children, really, who feel that the world around them is not a loving place. This is not a place in which they can be cared for. It is not a place where they can return their feelings of caring and love. Their disturbances are many and varied, but they need programmatic-- They need a program that can take care of the severity of that illness. They need a safe and caring

environment. They need workers who can give them consistent treatment; who can reach out to them, even when they are being abusive to our workers; even when they are attempting to kill themselves. Suicide is a common -- or suicide attempt is a common thing that happens in our agencies. They need workers who can feel confident enough in themselves to extend themselves under these conditions.

As Julie mentioned, we have about a 100% turnover rate in our child care. That is correct. That does not mean that all of our workers are new. It means that three-quarters of our workers are new, and it means we are turning over half of our positions four and five times a year. So, workers are staying less than three months in those positions, because of the difficulties of the job and the payment we are giving them.

At Bonnie Brae, we only hire people at the B.A. level for that \$12,500. We also have a school. Because of the Governor's initiative, and our ability for the first time this year to charge back our actual school costs to local school districts, we are able to start our teachers at \$18,500 for a 10-month job. But our B.A. child care workers we can only start at \$12,500 for a 12-month job. So, there are enormous inequities within our institutions. This is the problem we have.

MS. TURNER: I would add that a few of our agencies also serve children from DMHH or DDD. Although they are part of the same Department, each of the divisions established different salary levels, so that an agency can be in the position of having two child care workers doing essentially the same job at a salary differential of \$3000.

MR. KURTZ: I would like to add just one more thing: I think the Division, over the last couple of years, as has been mentioned here, has moved toward community-based programs. In fact, I think what we are seeing is a trend to referrals to our group home facilities in the community that

are community-based, of our more severe population of kids -- children with more severe problems. Unfortunately, along with the referral to the community-based programs, there has been no initiative to make those programs responsive to the needs of those children with more severe problems. So, basically, with contract rates that are increasing at small rates a year -- 3% and 5% -- and no initiative to enrich those programs so that they can take care of the more severely disturbed child, our group homes have been left in the more and more frustrating situation of having to care for children right out of State hospitals, right out of the 28-day facilities, who they do not have programs for. That puts them in the position of working harder, essentially, to provide -- from whatever resources they can take -- from the communities that will give them money, from individuals who will give them money -- an enriched program, without really being encouraged by DYFS to increase or enrich or fortify their programs so that they can actually meet the needs of the children being placed.

SENATOR COSTA: I have been in touch with Julie in my area on the same issue. We see a great need here. A lot of children are just not being helped in the State.

Senator Brown?

SENATOR BROWN: How do you feel about the State contracting out for residential services, as opposed to getting into the business of residential services directly, for young people?

MR. KURTZ: Well, anything I say at this point would be self-serving, because I run a private, nonprofit facility. I happen to feel that with local control of a board of trustees, an individual facility that is nonprofit can provide a more caring, a more responsive -- an environment that changes according to the needs of the children more quickly, than if we were tied into a State bureaucracy. So, my feeling is that contracting is the only way to go; that the State should not be involved in the business of opening its own facilities.

What we need from the State to help us provide those services is really encouragement to do so. My Board of Trustees, at this point, would be very reluctant to open another cottage, simply because if we open another cottage, we lose another \$150,000 to \$200,000 a year, because the program we want to provide for those children is simply not being supported to the extent it needs to be supported by the Division of Youth and Family Services.

So, we are not encouraged to expand, or to provide new programs, at least to Division of Youth and Family Services children. That is one of the problems we run into.

SENATOR BROWN: Let me just thank you for taking your time to come here today. Julie made an observation that, although it is not directly related to the hearing, I don't want to have go unnoticed. I have been very much concerned, over the years, with the operation of the Juveniles In Need of Supervision facilities -- the J.I.N.S. Shelters in the various counties. If you are talking about possible changes that need to be made and where we can get some funding, certainly I think if anybody did the map on how much it costs to have a young person in a J.I.N.S. Shelter in Camden, or whatever -- not that I begrudge that young person in Camden-- But certainly to have so much of the public dollar, whether it is at the county level or the State level, in so few of these children, when there are so many out there who need to be helped, is a cause of real frustration. I hope sometime we will get a handle on it.

It is my understanding that the J.I.N.S. Shelters were going to be out of business with some of the changes in the Family Court system, but that has not happened.

MS. TURNER: It has tripled in two years.

SENATOR COSTA: Thank you. We would like--

MS. TURNER: I think one of the issues is the length of time it takes to get a child placed.

SENATOR COSTA: I have just one question: When there are children in your shelters who come under the Division of Youth and Family Services, are these children part of what we speak of as a social worker's amount of children? Are they included?

MR. KURTZ: Yes.

MS. TURNER: The shelters are not part of our Association. I think they have their own.

SENATOR COSTA: Pardon?

MS. TURNER: The shelters--

SENATOR COSTA: Your home -- the residential home.

MR. KURTZ: The residential homes, yes. Each of the children who are in our residential homes, and are considered part of the DYFS caseload, are one child on a particular caseworker's--

SENATOR COSTA: Oh, I see. The reason I ask that is because before I was speaking of 60 to 80 children per caseworker. Is that part-- They could be part of that 60 to 80?

MS. TURNER: Yes.

MR. KURTZ: Yes. We, of course, have major concerns with that.

SENATOR COSTA: So, see, these figures really don't give us an accurate picture, because if I am thinking of 60 to 80 kids, I am just thinking of them going to see 60 to 80 kids, but if they are in your shelter, when they come over there, they are seeing, say, five, six, ten of their own children under their purview?

MR. KURTZ: No. It doesn't work that way.

SENATOR COSTA: See, I am trying to get that straight. I am trying to get a picture.

MR. KURTZ: We may have a worker who has more than one child, and possibly two, and maybe even three children in one of our group homes. It is unlikely that that would happen in

one of our group homes, but in one of our residential facilities. There is an enormous amount of work the DYFS worker needs to do with us, in order to ensure that: The placement in our facility gets the most productive results, because we need that DYFS worker to keep in touch with the family and with the community -- we do not have the resources to do it -- so we can treat that family. We also need that worker to help us with planning for the child once he or she returns to the community. There is still an enormous amount of work the worker has to put in, even though the child is in the residential facility or the group home.

SENATOR COSTA: Thank you very much.

MR. KURTZ: Thank you very much.

SENATOR COSTA: I would now like to call on Sue Dondiego. She was the first one to call us, and somehow she got left off the list. Sorry about that, Sue. Sue is from the New Jersey Foster Parents Association.

S U E D O N D I E G O: The good thing about testifying at this point, is that someone has already said almost everything we were going to say. So, with your permission, I would just like to highlight a few things. Okay?

We were one of the groups that supported the extra caseworkers. I think our point back then was the same as everyone else's; it was because of child abuse. I don't think we realized, and I don't know if anyone else did, how much of an impact substance abuse, AIDS, and homelessness were going to have on families. So, while the child abuse did not go away, we just feel that all of these other things have impacted negatively on families and children.

I have certainly been before this Committee a number of times, and you have supported our efforts because of the problems foster parents were having dealing with children from these types of families, or children who had the problems themselves.

When we talk about numbers of caseloads, our point is, should we really be talking about numbers? I know you need to eventually, but shouldn't we be looking at what the families and children need, rather than saying, "X" number of workers to "X" number of families? It is very, very difficult with little or no housing. It is very, very difficult dealing with either the parents or a child with AIDS. That is not something you can do over the phone. They need the time to get out and work with families, whether they are birth families, foster families, or adoptive families. That is really what we would like people to maybe relook at -- how they assign cases and how they count cases.

I wrote down a couple of things which other people mentioned, or some of the Senators had asked about. One was in relation to schools, when the child was missing, and no one told them. As foster parents, we have had a lot of trouble with schools. Some districts are very good; other districts give you a very bad time about having a foster child in their district. I just wanted to mention, they would probably be the last ones to tell anyone a child was missing, especially a child who they had already labeled as being a problem. They would probably be glad that that child was not in that school for two weeks. So, schools are a real problem when you are talking about DYFS children.

The other thing I wanted to mention, you are already aware of, because I have been here so many times. The Foster Parents Association is doing in-service training, which helps DYFS; we are doing recruitment, which helps DYFS; and we are doing a couple of other things. I think another thing DYFS has to look at, is kind of your suggestion about the volunteers. In Essex County, there is a formalized buddy system. It is made up of foster parents. They are reimbursed for their telephone and their mileage, but they are trained before they can become a Buddy Captain. They contact either new foster

parents or stay in touch with existing foster parents, and answer so many questions that do not have to take up a real social worker's time, which frees them for social work.

We will also be beginning, in Union County, a pilot project, where a foster parent is actually hired to work out of the district office as a foster parent advocate, again working with the buddy system formerly in that county. I think those are the kinds of things that maybe we can look at, so social workers can really do social work.

SENATOR COSTA: That's right. Where do you get your volunteers from?

MS. DON DIEGO: Anybody I know. Once they say "Hello" to me, they are--

SENATOR COSTA: Did you go to churches or some of the service organizations?

MS. DON DIEGO: Yes, other organizations I belong to; other things I have done. A lot of people in this room wear many different hats.

SENATOR COSTA: You're doing your own salesman's job; that's what you're doing. That's great.

MS. DON DIEGO: Yes.

SENATOR COSTA: That is what we need more of.

MS. DON DIEGO: I think the only other thing I wanted to say is, I think we talk about numbers of caseworkers. I have also said this about foster parents -- it is the quality. I think it needs to be the quality, as much as the numbers. All the numbers in the world aren't going to help you if you don't have quality workers.

SENATOR COSTA: Well, we've seen that. You know, you can have one person taking care of one child, and then you can have one person taking care of 10 children. But the quality of that individual, and that person knowing how to care for the children, is of utmost importance. That is what we are speaking of, trying to attract that kind of person.

This is a question that just popped into my mind, so I might as well ask it right now. Director Waldman, regarding getting people to help in caring for children, do they have to have a degree, or can it be someone who is just the motherly type who can do so much good?

MR. WALDMAN (from audience): For foster care?

SENATOR COSTA: Foster care and with DYFS?

MR. WALDMAN: No degrees are required for fostering, just a loving person.

SENATOR COSTA: A degree is not needed.

MS. DON DIEGO: What about DYFS? She is asking about DYFS.

MR. WALDMAN: But a degree is required for certain positions in the Division.

SENATOR COSTA: Because there are some people who are just naturally born good with children.

MR. WALDMAN: You know, there is one program you might be interested in, because it has both that aspect and it has the volunteer aspect. There are several of them throughout the State. It is very similar to the retired executive business corps, for example, that you hear about. In this concept, retired families-- If someone has had experience in raising a family, he or she can volunteer with a younger, more troubled family. It is on a voluntary basis.

SENATOR COSTA: You're doing that?

MR. WALDMAN: We have it on a small scale. It is appropriate for some families, and we have foster grandparents programs. But those are helpful approaches to case practice.

SENATOR COSTA: Thank you so much, Sue. We appreciate it.

I am now going to call on someone who said she was only going to take four minutes -- Pat Stanislaski. Just four minutes, okay?

P A T S T A N I S L A S K I: Okay. Wait until I sit down, though. Don't start timing me yet.

SENATOR COSTA: All right.

MS. STANISLASKI: Actually, I eliminated about 20 minutes. I figured that if I said four minutes, you would take me right away.

I represent the Child Assault Prevention Project. I notice that most of the testimony you folks are hearing today deals with caseloads and level of service. Although we certainly believe that the caseloads are high, and advocate for additional personnel to increase the level of service to families, I am really here today to offer support, as well, for an aspect of DYFS that I feel is oftentimes not given the commendation and recognition, I guess, that it deserves, and that is its prevention work.

For three years now, DYFS has joined forces with the National Assault Prevention Center in Columbus, Ohio, to offer New Jersey's children one of the most comprehensive and innovative prevention programs in the country. With support from the Legislature, DYFS has funded the CAP Project in all 21 counties. During this time, CAP has reached over 150,000 children, and thousands of parents and teachers with strengthening information.

Based on a community approach to prevention, CAP seeks to end the vulnerability of children to verbal, physical, and sexual assault. Using public schools as its primary vehicle, CAP offers workshops for teachers, parents, and children, encouraging assertiveness, peer support, and communication with a trusted adult.

Although our primary focus is on prevention, certainly cases of abuse and neglect inevitably come to light during CAP presentations. I guess that is why we are here today, because we do, indeed, affect the caseload. It is at such times that a real close working relationship between DYFS and CAP is really so essential for the successful resolution of the problem, and for the well-being of the child and the family.

In some counties, this relationship between CAP and DYFS begins with a staff in-service meeting presented by a CAP person, designed to familiarize district office personnel with CAP's philosophies and procedures. It sometimes ends with a district office actually sending a caseworker out to a school where we are doing a CAP Project. This kind of a relationship between these two agencies maximizes the effectiveness both of CAP's prevention efforts and DYFS' intervention.

I guess I am sitting here today before you to help you to understand what I think is some of the real wonderful work that DYFS is doing, and to encourage your continued support of that very necessary work. Despite the fact that their caseloads are just absolutely phenomenal and their offices understaffed, they continue, overall I think, to make a positive difference in the lives of the families they service. We who work so closely with them are oftentimes painfully aware that because of these problems, there are times when individual caseworkers or district offices are unable to render the level of service that they would like to give, that we all expect them to give, and that certainly the children and their families so desperately need.

I would like to ask you to do two things here today: to strengthen DYFS and to increase its level of service. I think you need to support DYFS financially to provide more workers, to increase their support staff and their support services, and to help them to maintain a high standard of service. I think it has been pretty clear, listening as we all have today, that the meetings you held in 1984 did, indeed, make a difference in improved services to children.

I think of equal importance, to me at least, is that you need to believe in the work they are doing. I think you need to--

SENATOR COSTA: I am going to cut you off now.

MS. STANISLASKI: Pardon me?

SENATOR COSTA: I am cutting you off; your four minutes are up.

MS. STANISLASKI: Are they? I only have 30 seconds left.

SENATOR COSTA: We have so many people here who want to speak. We are trying to find out what is wrong and what we can do, rather than just pat anyone on the back right now. I appreciate your patting, and I am sure they do, too, but I would like to listen to the remaining speakers.

MS. STANISLASKI: Okay. Thanks.

SENATOR COSTA: Thank you. Dianne Robinson, Chairperson, Advisory Council, New Jersey Child Placement Review Boards?

D I A N N E R O B I N S O N: Good afternoon, Senators. I am the new Chairperson of the Advisory Council, so Mr. Waldman and I are having a similar day. We very much appreciate this opportunity to speak with you on behalf of New Jersey's abused and neglected children, who are so terribly dependent on the voices of others.

I have just returned from the second annual conference of the National Association of Foster Care Reviewers, where I was made aware again of just how enlightened New Jersey is in its approach to foster care and, in particular, to child placement review.

The recent passage of S-2028, legislation of which many of you were so supportive and on which you worked so hard with our past chairperson, Corinne Driver, will do much to ensure further the rights of foster children.

Let me begin by saying we, as volunteer reviewers, have been impressed by the willingness of the Division of Youth and Family Services to listen and respond to our input.

During the past few years, in particular, we have seen substantial improvements and cooperation between review boards and the Division, especially on the State level. Great strides have been made in many areas. Among them are:

1) Statewide, as well as regional meetings are being held on a regular basis between county C.P.R. coordinators and Division liaisons to address areas of mutual concern.

2) The Unified Review System, a joint effort of the Advisory Council and the Division to improve the review process, resulted in:

a. The writing of a manual addressing policy regarding children in placement;

b. The establishment of a Division position to work specifically and personally with each board;

c. The standardization of forms to increase the quality of case recording;

d. The joint training of caseworkers and review board volunteers;

e. At this point, there is a plan to share statistical information through a joint data base, which would improve our ability to follow children through the system.

The accomplishments I have just listed were a direct result of hard work and cooperation by the Division and those representing the review system. It would, however, be unfair to the children not to discuss areas where further improvement should be made. The following issues have been brought to our attention by board members, coordinators, and staff, relative to the caseload and staffing issues that are of particular interest to this Committee, and remain concerns shared by ourselves, and I am sure also by Division representatives.

There are caseworkers who are reporting to us, as reviewers, that their caseloads are simply too heavy. We are concerned that there are district offices that appear to be understaffed and/or have a high turnover of staff, an often heard complaint from both coordinators and review board members.

There are still children who are not being provided timely reviews. Reviews that should be done within 45 days of the initial placement have, at times, been delayed for months.

Placement conference reports, which should be done six months after the previous review, are, at times, not received.

There is a lack of consistency in the provision of services to some children; several changes in caseworkers in a year; no caseworker for varying lengths of time; or many different placements in a short period of time.

The difficulty and time involved in obtaining reports from psychologists, schools, residential treatment centers, and other service providers result, often, in delayed reviews.

Visitation, a vital ingredient in reuniting families, simply cannot take place in the way in which it should in situations where caseload or staffing is a problem.

Review board members in some heavily burdened urban areas, report more severe problems. In order to speak more directly to local issues, we would suggest consideration be given to regional hearings, like this one today, to more adequately address issues specific to an area.

We, as reviewers, are seeing greater numbers of cases and, most disturbing, we are seeing more severe cases. More than ever, we must ensure the emotional and physical well-being of these children by providing them caseworkers with manageable caseloads, who have the time and the training to enforce the phrases "in the best interest" and "time is of the essence."

If you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them.

SENATOR COSTA: Any questions from the Senators?

SENATOR BROWN: May I just--

SENATOR COSTA: Senator Brown.

SENATOR BROWN: As a classmate of your former chairperson, Mrs. Driver, I have followed, over the years, the excellent work of the review boards. I am glad you are continuing in Corinne's good shoes, by coming here to give us your input, which we will seriously consider.

MS. ROBINSON: Thank you.

SENATOR COSTA: Thank you very much. Allison Jackson, President, DYFS Board of Trustees?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: She is not here.

SENATOR COSTA: She's not here. Okay. Janet Cahill, Consultant, Labor Management Stress Committee?

What we are noticing as you are coming here before us, is that there is so much to be heard, that we really should have made this into two hearings. There is really such good input.

D R. J A N E T C A H I L L: I am going to try to be concise and just speak to my particular area in this -- my particular area of expertise. Let me first tell you some background, so you will know why I am here. I am an Associate Professor of Psychology at Glassboro State College. I am also the Consultant to the DYFS CWA Stress Management Committee, which has been alluded to a couple of times during this hearing.

What I want to do today is twofold. I am going to summarize my written testimony to hit the highlights, and I would be happy to answer any questions. I want to first explain to you what the program entails, so you can understand what pro-active efforts are being made along these lines. I will not go over in detail why this has come about. I think prior witnesses have done that. Then I am going to tell you basically what the program can do, and what it can't do; what it is useful for, and what it is not useful for; and what other steps should be taken to really address the problem of stress and burnout in the agency.

A quick history on how this came about: As you can see, there are areas in which labor and management do not agree. I think that is a fair summary of some of the stuff that has gone on before. We have found, however, that there is an area that labor and management can agree on, and that is that the stress levels in the agency are unacceptably high. I have been brought in because my area of academic and

professional expertise is in occupational stress, particularly in human service agencies. I do a great deal of research in this area, and I professionally consult to other human service agencies.

So, my role has been to find out what common ground exists between labor and management to address this issue; what is doable; and how we can develop some pro-active strategies. We have been doing this for about two and a half years. This is what we have so far and, as I say, I will try to summarize what I think it does, what it can't do, and what else needs to be done.

Basically, the package consists of this -- there are several components to it: When we go into a district office, we first go in and give them an initial stress management training program. What this is good for is to give workers some personal techniques on how to deal with stress, and also to talk about, and to help them to understand, how working for a human service agency virtually, by definition, is starting to make them crazy. So we go at it from both the structural component and also the personal component. That is critical to the success of the program.

After that, each district office enrolled in the program can have one day a month -- called an in-service day -- the goal of which is to provide more training, and also to give them some protected time to catch up on outstanding tasks. One of the real problems of the agency is, they can't finish anything. It is too busy; it is too noisy; there are too many demands on their time.

The in-service days are the most visible part of the program. In my own view, it is the least powerful thing we are doing. Workers are often concerned with, "Is this all we get?" but there is more coming behind it. What it is useful for-- The in-service days are useful to take some pressure off, to give them some additional training, and to help support them.

It, in no way, however, addresses the longer, more difficult problems in the agency. It is important to understand that.

After the in-service days, they have also been provided some supervisory training from the Stress Committee. This, I think, is an important piece, and I am going to talk more about that in a couple of minutes. There have been two programs -- one of which is being implemented, one of which is being discussed now -- to give them increased flexibility around work schedules. You have heard, at some length, the problems of turnover and maintaining good quality staff people in the agency. The demographics are very straightforward. It is a heavily female, young work force. The majority of this work force is below the age of 35. Thirty-five-year-old women, and younger, tend to have children. We can predict that with some certainty. There is a problem in keeping those people in the work force. There is also a problem, in that about every seven years, with some certainty I can tell you, workers tend to burn out. The clearest risk periods are the first two years in a worker's life cycle in a human service agency, and about seven years later they have a crisis of some kind. We tend to lose those more experienced workers, and we tend to lose, disproportionately, workers in the first two years, for lots of important reasons.

The effort on the agency's part and on the Committee's part to find ways to give these people more flexibility with their work schedules, I think is important, to try to retain experienced workers and to allow people to meet their own family needs, while they are responding to other people's family needs as well.

I should mention that the in-service day also includes a recreational component that I think the staff has found very, very useful. We seem to get quite a lot of positive feedback about that.

Perhaps the most, not perhaps-- The most innovative and I think potentially important piece of this project, is the paperwork computer project. You have heard a great deal of concern about the amount of paperwork the staff does, as well as the redundancy involved. My own estimate is that the staff spends about 50%, and up, of its time -- and I mean the professional staff, the caseworkers -- on paperwork. The clerical people, I think with some accuracy I could say, are overwhelmed with paperwork. The existing computer system has been something we have been looking at. What we have done in Long Branch is, we have set up a pilot project which is attempting to do several things. The main thing it is trying to do is-- Some of you have suggested, "Wouldn't it be a good idea if we carried forward information, as opposed to making people do it over and over again?" That is precisely what this project has been able to do. The other thing we have been able to do is develop applications, which gives the workers and the clerks access to their own information, the theory being very simple. You are more motivated to put the information in, if it comes out in a useful form.

We have given the clerks incentives to learn skills. In other words, the computers make their jobs more interesting, rather than less interesting. We think that is critical for the career ladder development and for the efficient use of paperwork within the agency. We have managed to bring the task -- or we hope we have anyway -- of entering information that the agency must have-- We have made it easier for the clerks and for the social workers. The day is not yet here where every single social workers is going to sit down with a word processor and enter the information. However, I think this is an example -- and I think the Committee is to be commended for this -- where for once a human service agency is taking existing technology -- microcomputers -- and using them to make the job easier, rather than making the job more onerous. I

think this is tremendously cost-effective in the long run, for the agency and also for staff morale. However, it takes a long time to do this sort of thing. You have to buy the equipment. We have only been able to bring it to one or two offices so far. On balance, I have to say that I think the Stress Program represents significant effort on the part of both labor and management. It is a sustained effort. They have done this for two and a half years. There is a clear commitment to bring this program to all of the district offices. While that seems like a simple task, if you think about 42 district offices, plus all the adoption resource centers, simply to get out and educate all the workers is very difficult, and then they leave before we can get back to them again to really straighten them out.

We have done an empirical evaluation of this with Len Feldman of the Bureau of Research. What it seems to show is, in the offices we have been involved in, the amount of work load that people think they have, has increased over time. It is called "perceived work load." Where we have been involved, it seems as though their symptoms -- the symptoms of stress -- have not increased. Where we have not been involved, they have. So there is some empirical evidence -- for whatever that is worth -- that this program is helpful. Okay?

There are other things we are planning, but I can't speak in detail because they are in the planning stage at this point.

Now, that is what I think is useful in terms of this program. I think it is an example of labor and management cooperating to the extent they can. The down side is this: None of these efforts, with the exception of the paperwork project, address the structural sources of work load. By that I mean, none of this takes off what people have to do, with the exception of the computer project. I think the caseloads remain very high in the agency. I think that is an ongoing

problem. Certainly the workers and the clerks report that the work load is too high. We get back to perceived work load.

The vacancy rate has already been talked about. I am not going to add to that. I think that in addition to the efforts we have made on the Stress Committee, some specific suggestions I have made, certainly to management and to labor, are along these lines, and I am hopeful that some efforts will be made. There has to be some serious look at caseload size. I know that is ongoing. I think that supervisory training has to be upgraded, even further than what we have done in the Stress Project, for this reason: If you want to hang onto your younger workers -- the literature is very clear -- the single best way to do that is by upgrading the quality of supervisory support. I also think that first-line supervisors in the agency are particularly at risk for health-related problems. They are caught between the rock and the hard place. So, targeting supervisory training, I think, is one of the key things that has to happen in the agency. I see no reason why the agency won't do that, or isn't intending to do that.

I also think there needs to be an ongoing effort to professionalize the workers -- increase training around basic skills and case management. Again, I see no reason why that can't be done.

The Stress Program, to summarize, is useful in helping workers cope, in supporting them, in giving them a chance to develop some additional skills, but, in and of itself, it is not sufficient to decrease the work load problems we see, except for the paperwork project. So, some balanced approach to those two things, I think, would have a powerful impact on the agency.

SENATOR COSTA: In your talks with the employees who have taken the stress management, how have they responded to you? I have gotten that they have to take time out, so they are putting aside their work, which increases while they are

there. They would rather be back at the office taking care of their work, so they wouldn't have that much of a work load to go to. It's a vicious circle. They are trying to get rid of stress, but they are adding more.

DR. CAHILL: Right. It is a legitimate concern. It is something I have given a lot of thought to. The program is voluntary. No one has to go to it. We have gone back several times, and said, "Are you sure you guys want this? We'll take it away if you don't want it." We get 80% of the staff saying, "No, don't take it away; we want it."

SENATOR COSTA: I think it is a good program.

DR. CAHILL: Okay. I don't want to dismiss their concerns, though, because my argument to them is, you need this. If you don't do this, I am fearful that you are going to leave the agency in a shorter time period. They say, "But I've got all this other stuff going on." And that is my major point: It is a useful program. Obviously, I am biased, but--

SENATOR COSTA: Perhaps the office itself can do something to alleviate the pressure. Rather than them going back into a steaming pot, they could just normally go back to their work, rather than having it double just because they took time out. I'm saying these things for Bill's benefit.

Are there any other questions from the Senators? (no response) Thank you very much.

DR. CAHILL: You're welcome.

SENATOR COSTA: The next person to speak will be Kate Quinn.

K A T E Q U I N N: Good afternoon. My name is Kate Quinn. I am a professional social worker. I have a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Work from Kean College, and I am currently a Master's Candidate at Rutgers University for my Master's in Social Work. I am a former DYFS employee. I was employed by DYFS from June, 1974 through September, 1987, as a direct service social worker.

I first became involved with the Division in September of 1973 as a student intern. Upon graduation from Kean College, I became employed by the Division. For eight months, I worked at a district office in New Brunswick with a generic caseload. I was responsible for more than 80 children. That was a high number, but the paperwork demands then were less than now.

From March, 1975 through September, 1987, I was employed by the regional Adoption Resource Center in Princeton. My case work responsibility was to terminate parental rights through the court system, in order to legally free children for adoption placement. When I resigned from the Division, I was responsible for 28 children, which was slightly less than the norm for the office.

During my years with the Adoption Resource Center, I saw many changes. In the early 1970s, the office was a pilot office, and I had the opportunity to see the office evolve. The caseload size at the Adoption Resource Center was lower than those in the district offices, but the paperwork demands were always greater.

In order to work for the Division, one needs to maintain a commitment to the job and a high energy level. The nature of the job is difficult, and at times overwhelming. The turnover rate is very high. Occupational burnout is an occupational hazard. There are two significant ingredients of burnout -- dedication and commitment. I believe that most direct service social workers for the Division have both dedication and commitment. One becomes worn out by excessive strivings to reach unrealistic expectations imposed by the excessive bureaucratic demands.

I believe that bureaucratic demands far exceed client benefit. There is too much paperwork, and the caseloads are too high. Stress caused by the job will remain, unless the job is redesigned and the pressures of the job are diminished.

There is low morale, job dissatisfaction, high turnover, apathy, disillusionment, feelings of being overwhelmed, anger, resentment, discouragement, indifference, and negativism. Being a direct service social worker for the Division is, indeed, a difficult job.

The most important issue here is the services provided by the Division to its clients of children and families. In order to best serve the children of New Jersey and to preserve and strengthen family life, Division staff are entitled to the necessary support systems in order to effectively do their jobs.

Assembly Bill 4030 provides for additional moneys in order to hire 500 additional social workers as direct service staff in the Division's district offices. I firmly support such a bill, in order to alleviate the high caseloads of the Division staff. I believe the caseload size in New Jersey is far higher than the national standards.

Thank you.

SENATOR COSTA: Thank you very much. Do we have a copy of your testimony?

MS. QUINN: Yes.

SENATOR COSTA: We appreciate it. Nicholas Andrian, President, Coalition for the Unjustly Accused?

N I C H O L A S J. A N D R I A N: I hate to add to your paper burden, but I have copies of my testimony; also copies of Mr. Shanahan's testimony, because he had to leave. May I leave these with the clerk, or would you like a copy now? (Mr. Adrian gives copies of testimonies to Committee)

SENATOR COSTA: Fine.

MR. ANDRIAN: Madam Chairman, I think we are known to each other. You and I have corresponded in the past. As one entrusted with teaching children of this State the democratic heritage which we all share, it is indeed with great respect and pleasure that I appear before this honorable Committee -- an example of democracy in action.

Tomorrow is my forty-fourth birthday and, like others of my age, I can scarcely believe that figure. I can believe even less the role that has been thrust upon me at this stage of my life, as a result of my having gone voluntarily to the Division of Youth and Family Services, in the summer of 1983, for guidance in the care of an 18-month-old child, who had been left--

SENATOR COSTA: May I interrupt you for just a moment?

MR. ANDRIAN: I'm sorry.

SENATOR COSTA: This is so lengthy, and we do have a copy. Would you shorten it?

MR. ANDRIAN: Oh, I timed it. It is less than five minutes.

SENATOR COSTA: Okay, thank you.

MR. ANDRIAN: Thank you. I went to DYFS for guidance in the care of an 18-month-old child who had been left with my wife and me by her mother. The ensuing custody battle and viciously false accusation of child abuse lodged against me in early 1984 were the subject of a front-page story in The Star-Ledger, written by the late, and very lamented, Linda Lamendola three years ago this very week.

Our story has become widely known since then as we continue to battle, on several fronts, the gross injustice that has been done to us. Only our faith in God, my innocence, and the credibility I have worked hard to build -- a credibility which prompted Congressman Dean Gallo to tell a major newspaper that the accusation made against me was, "beyond the realm of possibility" -- have allowed us to fight on, and we intend to be victorious.

As a result then of this experience and because of the countless cases of false allegations of child abuse handled by the organization which we founded -- the Coalition for the Unjustly Accused, Inc. -- and as one who has taught in the schools of this State for almost 20 years, and who graduated

from a nursing program at our State's premier medical facility -- the University of Medicine and Dentistry -- thereby having had firsthand experience with bona fide child abuse, I am in a unique position to reveal to you just exactly what is being done to many families of this State, under the guise of protecting our children from abuse or neglect, in itself, certainly a most worthy and laudable cause.

I must tell you that I have not come here to engage in DYFS bashing. There is no doubt that, as with any organization, there are many hard-working, sincere people in DYFS who, like teachers and nurses -- two careers I have chosen -- are underpaid and under-appreciated. I might add parenthetically that I am very happy to have been able to hear individual caseworkers describe their problems and receive insight into them. We have had surprisingly little dialogue with the other side, except for shouting at each other on confrontational television and radio talk shows.

Nevertheless, the unheard voices of the unjustly accused whom I represent tell me that I must not mince words, for in the Division of Youth and Family Services, such as it is currently constituted, we have nothing less than a State agency consisting of unelected officials without true accountability to the people, and with police powers that even the police do not have -- powers that have caused the wife of a State Senator -- one of your colleagues -- to tell members of CUA that she is afraid to touch her children in her elementary school class, for fear of being accused of molestation.

Please allow me to enumerate what some of those powers are, as seen by people who have been unjustly accused. Now, we are not talking about people who have abused or molested children. This is a whole different ball game. We hold no brief for those people whatsoever. DYFS can: Remove your children from your home at any hour of the day or night without a court order, solely on the basis of an alleged anonymous

phone call; requisition police assistance to kick in your door, should you refuse to give up your kids; subject your children to intimate physical and psychological exams, without your permission, or even knowledge; hold your children hostage, and keep their whereabouts secret from you for long period of time -- this is before you have been found guilty of anything -- force you to place your children in State-run day-care centers; force you to submit to psychological examinations by experts, who happen to be on the State payroll, in most cases; force you, and every member of your household to undergo State-sponsored counseling and family enrichment programs; and, in some cases, even -- unfortunately, I hate to say this -- doctor files, manufacture evidence against you, suppress evidence in your favor, commit perjury, deny you witnesses, and otherwise violate your constitutional rights, without fear of punishment. Finally, they can put your children up for adoption, without your ever being charged with a crime of any sort.

Unfortunately, DYFS also operates in total secrecy, for the most part behind closed doors, and appears to us -- in our opinion -- to control and intimidate vast numbers of Family Court judges and politicians, with some honorable exceptions. The Division has an annual budget of around \$300 million, as we have been told -- twice that of the Peace Corps, for example, which fields four times the personnel in 63 foreign countries -- and it is New Jersey's largest adoption agency.

But, the question is-- This would all be valid, but is DYFS at least using its vast unconstitutional powers to protect our children, from what it tells us is an epidemic of child abuse and neglect? By doctors' own statistics, the annual substantiation rate of sex abuse versus allegations of sex abuse, is just under 30%. When taken as a portion of all allegations of abuse or neglect, the sex abuse substantiation rate falls to less than 4%. When taken in terms of the total

population of children under the age of 16 in this State, the substantiation rate of sexual abuse falls to .00064%. Even if one considers that for every case substantiated, nine others go unreported, the rate is still .0064%. I do not make light of even that figure. If even one child is sexually abused, it is a tragedy, and that child must be protected.

There are ways, however, in which to do this, without violating the sanctity of the family structure, and without resorting to unconstitutional means which violate the civil rights of both the parents and the children involved. To that end, we offered to Governor Kean, in 1985, an 11-point proposal -- a responsible 11-point proposal -- which would allow the State to prosecute child abuse in a manner to protect children, while assuring maximum support for the rights of the accused.

In addition, we are currently working with experts and organizations from all over the United States -- the country -- to prepare proposals for various state legislatures, including our own, which would allow for volunteer community involvement, in conjunction with DYFS type agencies and the courts, within a troubled family unit -- proposals which would save millions of dollars, while allowing for a more balanced intrusion into citizens' lives while protecting the children involved. In that capacity, Madam Chairman, I was extremely pleased to hear you refer to volunteer involvement by churches, synagogues, VFWs, and other service groups. I was also moved by Senator Brown's statement that she doesn't want to see government replace mothers and fathers. We at CUA certainly share that view, and reject the Swedenization (sic) of our State, where normal parenting may be twisted into constituting physical, verbal, and sexual abuse.

Just two more minutes and we will be finished. I appreciate your patience.

Again, the question of substantiation. As long as vast powers are vested in defiance of the Constitution -- which

we so jubilantly celebrated just last week -- in a closed, secretive organization whose funding and existence depend on the numbers it can produce, we can be sure that, human nature being what it is, and bureaucracies being what our founding fathers knew them to be -- and we know them to be -- there will be untold damage done to the parents and children of this State. Furthermore, the day will come when parents and other citizens, seeing that the system in which they have been raised to believe is close to justice, will storm the bastille. And believe me, Madam Chairman, I have my finger on the pulse of the anger of some of these people. We are talking again about unjustly accused, not legitimate, bona fide child abusers. There is a vast difference.

There are already reports in the press of threats and assaults against DYFS personnel, some of them young women -- caseworkers -- and cases where they have actually been held at gunpoint. It is not enough now for officials such as Mr. Blatner -- former DYFS Director -- to trot out catch phrases, and I quote some of the things we have culled in the last couple of years from the press: "All that abuse has been there all along in America." In other words, we have been a nation of degenerates since when, since 1776? "Due process must be accorded, but the bottom line must be protecting the kids" -- and I heard this here today, unfortunately -- as if due process is inimicable to the protection of children. "One out of every four girls is the victim of sex abuse" -- a statistic which has materialized out of thin air, and which is disputed by Dr. Besherooff (phonetic spelling), former Director of the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. "The abuser is usually a white male, 35 years old, and respected in the community" -- a category which takes in, I'm sure, a couple of the gentlemen sitting up there, as well as Mr. Blatner -- a very large segment of the population. "Abusers do not match a stereotype." So much for the 35-year-old white male.

By far the most frightening and arrogant quote of all: "The American home is the most dangerous place for a child to be. I am protecting children's rights over the possible infringement of their parents' liberties." We cannot see why the rights of parents and children are diametrically opposed to one another.

"We are only able to find a third of the allegations substantiable, but that doesn't mean that those other people didn't sexually molest their children. It just means we couldn't prove it." I don't know what constitution Mr. Blatner operates under, but it is not the same one that the founding fathers put together 200 years ago.

We feel that because of Mr. Blatner's feelings about some of the things -- and he set the agenda for the last four or five years -- it is no wonder that under his tutelage, DYFS management has turned the organization -- according to what we have heard from both sides of the aisle -- into a rogue elephant of an agency, insensitive to the needs of its very own people, not to mention those of parents and children. The fact of the matter is that although DYFS likes to lay the blame on the Family Court system for its heavy-handed tactics, fully 80% of DYFS cases are handled in-house by DYFS, following what we have discovered to be the ultimate strangle hold that DYFS uses. "Sign this voluntary agreement for our services, or we will go to court and take your kids."

It is true that those who play--

SENATOR COSTA: I would like to stop you at this point, because we have your written testimony, and most of us have read through it anyway. We would rather ask you questions.

MR. ANDRIAN: Yes, Ma'am.

SENATOR COSTA: Basically what you are saying here is, there is an injustice toward people who are not guilty, because of the actions of DYFS, and taking the children out of the home just when the parents are accused, whether it is true or not--

The parents don't have any rights. Your rights are being taken away from you.

MR. ANDRIAN: Yes, ma'am. It is a myth-- as I heard this morning -- the notion that adults have access to due process under the Family Court system, as described in, let's say, the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Amendments to the Constitution. It is simply not true. As part of our 11-point proposal to Governor Kean, we have set up a system whereby the children, wherever possible, can be put with relatives. Often, this is not done. DYFS does not investigate other possible placements within the family structure -- the extended family structure -- whereby the alleged perpetrator, if it is deemed necessary, is ordered to be removed from the premises, so that the child's life is not disrupted.

SENATOR COSTA: I understand, also, that at times this is one means being used by either parent in trying to get rid of a spouse, by saying they have sexually abused the child. Immediately the offending parent -- the so-called, the alleged offending parent -- is taken away from the home, and cannot see the child. I had someone come to see me who hadn't seen his child for over two years. He said he would stand across the street from the school just to be able to see the child. Then, after two years, the court said he was not guilty. But, in the meantime, what did that do to him? What did it do to the child?

This is a very, very serious problem.

MR. ANDRIAN: This is part of what we are working on.

SENATOR COSTA: If you have ways of ameliorating this situation and you have given them to Governor Kean, I would suggest that you also give them to Director Waldman.

MR. ANDRIAN: I would be happy to, as well as the programs we are working on with other states.

SENATOR COSTA: I think all of us are aware of an injustice, and it has been a tremendous injustice. In fact, we are working on legislation that will penalize the individual

who would use such a means for getting rid of a spouse, because they should not walk away free. If the accusation is true, of course, everything should be done. But when something is said that is not true, they should not walk away free. They should know this to begin with, so that the accusation is not made.

MR. ANDRIAN: About 80% of our cases are the result of custody disputes. I would like to read one more page, if I may. I have been waiting since 10:30 this morning -- if that would be okay.

SENATOR COSTA: Well, if it will make you feel better, all right.

MR. ANDRIAN: Well, I appreciate it. It will be a nice birthday present.

Getting away from all the statistics and substantiation and so forth, what we are really concerned about is the termination of parental rights proceedings. We are concerned that there are 1000 children in DYFS' care who are up and ready for adoption. We find that the great majority of these terminations are of the rights of single mothers, usually women on welfare who are defenseless before this onslaught.

Another thing that bothers us very much, and has caused us to actually petition Governor Kean for a special prosecutor, is the fact that these adoptions -- these terminations of parental rights proceedings -- are actually handled by a very small percentage of judges in this State. They are not equitably--

SENATOR COSTA: Mr. Andrian, are you saying that this is done against a welfare mother; that she is being accused of sexual abuse?

MR. ANDRIAN: Oh, no, no, no, not necessarily sexual abuse. It could be neglect, or whatever. But we have had instances where we had evidence that the child was not abused, yet the child was still taken away. We have evidence where parents were subjected to a criminal proceeding and were found

not guilty by a jury, but still had their children taken away in Family Court, at DYFS' insistence, which to us seems to constitute double jeopardy. So, there are some abuses here. The bottom line is that the children are the ones who suffer.

You probably know of the famous case that developed over the summer, where the parents snatched two children back. They had evidence that the children were being sexually abused; evidence which they sent to us, which we then, at the request of the Attorney General, sent to him. I have the return receipt somewhere. They were very anxious to get this evidence from us in the form of a tape recording, but when it came time to doing something about it, we have the return receipt, and that is about all we have. We don't know what has become of the case.

But the fact is, DYFS knew these children were sexually abused. They knew that the little girl in the case -- a seven-year-old child -- had been placed in a home with seven incorrigibles. This is part of the problem of trying to place children when there aren't enough foster families. The fact is, this child, and her younger sibling, were placed with seven incorrigible boys, all of whom had police records. The child was a sitting duck for continued vaginal, and anal -- if we are going to be frank about it -- violations by a 17-year-old boy, who also broke the child's arm in the midst of a rage because she had dropped something on his food. All of this has been turned over to the Cumberland County prosecutor and to the Attorney General.

SENATOR COSTA: Is this a foster home the child was put into that you are speaking of?

MR. ANDRIAN: Yes. The unfortunate thing is that the DYFS caseworker knew that this child was abused, and turned the child back to the very arms of the person who was abusing her. This is wrong. I hardly think that the honorable members of this Committee, or anyone in State government, most of whom I

still-- I am not disillusioned; I haven't given up on the system. I still feel that most of the people who go into State work are honorable people, such as teachers and DYFS caseworkers. I am certainly not a teacher for the money, nor are these DYFS caseworkers in it for the money. You have a certain calling. Okay? And certainly you can't countenance this.

Now, we are not saying, "Take DYFS and scatter it to the winds." There is a necessity for DYFS. There is child abuse. I saw it firsthand, both as a teacher and as a nursing student in the inner city. But the fact of the matter is, we can't just use an elephant gun to shoot at a flea, and have scatter shot. You have to have certain guidelines, and people must know that they are accountable. I shouldn't even have to sit here and say this. It is under our Constitution.

SENATOR COSTA: Director Waldman would appreciate the material you have.

MR. ANDRIAN: Just one paragraph and I'm finished. I am grateful for the system that allows me to come before you to speak my mind, and I am indebted to you for your attention. Rest assured that the Coalition for the Unjustly Accused will stand firmly with those individuals, both private and official, who seek true justice for the children of this State. As a foster father who lost a child to a false accusation, as a biological father whose own infant son died of birth defects during the same period, and as an adoptive father who lost one of a set of twins my wife and I had come to know and love during the adoption process -- the surviving twin and my wife were at an undisclosed location for what must be to you very obvious reasons -- I know the value of children. They are a gift from God, and as Christ exhorted us in Mark IX:42, "Whosoever would cause one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were tied about his neck and he were cast into the sea." That is what we believe at CUA.

I thank you for the extra time I managed to steal. I appreciate it.

SENATOR COSTA: Thank you. Mia Andersen, Board of Directors, New Jersey PTA.

M I A A N D E R S E N: I am awed by your stamina; absolutely awed by your stamina, and your indulgence, and your tolerance. I applaud the Committee for focusing its attention on these important issues. I wish I had realized that we would be discussing other things besides things that directly touch on staffing and caseload issues, because had I realized that, I would have brought additional and different kinds of testimony, and perhaps--

SENATOR AMBROSIO: We're glad you didn't know that.

MS. ANDERSEN: Are you? I can't imagine why. You don't want to be here until a week from Monday.

Let me begin by introducing myself. I am a full-time volunteer child advocate with New Jersey PTA.

SENATOR COSTA: And we thank you for that.

MS. ANDERSEN: I enjoy it very much. I wanted to just reiterate that New Jersey PTA's first and primary concerns rest in considerations of the best interests of the child. It is for that reason, and from that base, that we advocate.

Let me also say that we support everything that ACNJ said here today, and would like that to be on the record.

We believe that staffing and caseload concerns must be viewed in the context of the policies of the Division of Youth and Family Services. In order to successfully meet its charge, DYFS must have policies that are appropriate to that charge, as well as sufficient and appropriate resources to support its staff.

And when we talk about resources, we must talk about salary issues, which were very appropriately brought up here today. I guess one of the big questions about salary is, what is the Legislature willing to provide for the care and support

of its most vulnerable children? That is something I urge you, as a Committee, to look into and to, perhaps, reevaluate the kind of salary ladder that DYFS is forced to offer its staff, as a result of its level of funding.

Recognizing that child abuse and neglect are problems rooted in the community, it is essential that the community be included in forging solutions to their problems. Including the community in the decision-making process is cumbersome, it is time-consuming, and it takes longer rather than shorter. There is no question about that. But, we are convinced that the solutions that result from that process have real and long-lasting benefit, rather than the superimposition from above -- an agency saying to a community, "This is your problem, and you will do such and such." It is, we feel, much more productive to take that time, so that the community begins to accept responsibility for its own problems, and becomes a part of the solutions to those problems.

We urge you to press your colleagues to appropriate the funds necessary for DYFS to attract and retain sufficient number of staff to meet caseload needs and program requirements. The current average caseload of 38 per social worker is close to the caseload recommended by -- I think it is the National Association of Social Workers. I think that's right. However, we believe that accountability and productivity requirements must be required of the Division and its staff.

From the PTA perspective, accountability means responding to abuse reports and referrals efficiently and effectively. It does not mean: Minimizing the reporters' concerns; ignoring repeated allegations of abuse or neglect; stopping by an abuser's home -- or an alleged abuser's home -- and leaving a social worker's business card, with a note saying to call when they get back -- they being the alleged abusers; or scolding or ignoring teachers who are reluctant to give

their names when reporting suspected abuse. Just tangentially, I would very much like, at one point, to have the opportunity to focus on the kinds of barriers that schools and other institutions place in the way of their staffs with regard to reporting abuse and neglect. It is very serious. Some of it was mentioned a little bit here today. That is a systems issue that I think we need to address -- yesterday.

We have instances of giving the name of the teacher who reported the alleged abuse to the alleged abusing parent. The ramifications of that are obvious.

To us, accountability does not mean notifying a client or a potential client as to the specific day and time an inspection is going to be made, or supervisors putting the need for the completion of paperwork above the needs of the children, so that social workers must be insubordinate in order to respond to a child in need.

To us, accountability requires a strong central administration which will hold district and regional offices responsible for the correct and appropriate implementation of Division policy and procedure. It means that the confidentiality of the reporter will be protected at all times. It means that the best interests of the at-risk child will be considered first and foremost.

We recommend and we urge that DYFS -- I have added this to my written statement -- as an agency, and its staff, be accountable to the community it was created to serve, and that the Legislature authorize and mandate that accountability.

Foster parents must be included in any discussion of staffing and caseload issues. The foster care system is essential to the State's ability to meet the needs of our most at-risk children and families. Even if all of the national standards as to working conditions and caseload ratios are met, the Division and its staff will not be successful if they do not have the programs necessary to meet the needs of the

children and families they serve. Appropriate out-of-home placements are one of the most important responsibilities delegated to DYFS. But the foster case system is saturated. Every week, the system has to scurry, beg, plead, spend hours of caseworker time, trying to locate an emergency placement for an allegedly abused infant. It is those kinds of drains on time -- those kinds of constraints -- that we, as a society, and you, as a Legislature, must do something to address.

There are not enough foster homes. Currently, there are approximately 7000 children in out-of-home placement, with hundreds of others who are in shelters awaiting placement. The 7000 figure, you know, goes up and down, depending on the week, and depending on what statistics you want to include. I will let DYFS explain why. There is a serious crisis in emergency placements of infants. Many of the children now in foster care are not in appropriate placement because there are not enough foster parents in the State. Part of the blame for the lack of enough foster care lies with the Legislature; part of the blame lies with the community; and part of the blame lies with the Division. New Jersey PTA must work harder to educate and motivate the State's parents to accept the responsibility of being foster parents. DYFS and PTA must work harder together to recruit foster families, and the Legislature must see to it that DYFS has the resources in order to initiate a foster care recruitment campaign to attract and retain additional foster parents.

We believe that one of the major factors acting as a barrier to increasing the number of foster families in the system is low reimbursement rate. Too often, it is not that families don't want to be foster parents; it is that they cannot afford to be. Economic pressures force most parents to work. Only 11% of our children now live in two-parent families where one parent is a full-time, at-home parent. Most of the children who require out-of-home placement need full-time,

skilled, at-home parenting. It is certainly understandable that these at-risk children have problems as a result of the troubled homes from which they were pulled.

New Jersey PTA believes that it is good public policy to provide reimbursement rates which will permit DYFS to attract and retain sufficient foster families to meet existing need, as well as to allow foster mothers to remain in their homes as full-time parents. We believe it is our obligation -- yours and ours -- to make good our promise to help these at-risk children by providing them with foster care homes where they can benefit from the care of a full-time parent. It is good parenting that allows children to grow into capable, competent, functional, and productive adults. It is good parenting that prevents the kinds of dysfunctional behaviors -- and that is euphemistic for really messed up, miserable, acting-out kids -- which result from child abuse and neglect, which result in the need for out-of-home placement. Providing these at-risk children with skilled, full-time parenting may be the most cost-effective investment in prevention that this State can make.

Another issue I haven't heard today, which I would like to bring up, is alcohol and drug abuse, as they affect and contribute to the abuse and neglect of New Jersey's children. There is an enormous tie between alcohol abuse and child abuse. It is a tie that is well-recognized. Therefore, in order to properly identify and protect abuse and neglect related to drug and alcohol abuse, it is necessary for social workers to have adequate training. We urge the Division to implement training programs for their social workers and district and regional office staffs, so that they have the skills necessary to meet the challenge to that responsibility.

The Division has developed and recruited some of the nation's most innovative and effective programs. The Family Prevention Services, modeled after the Homebuilders Program,

recently implemented in four of our counties, holds great promise to providing troubled families with the skills and supports needed to keep them together and healthy. Such programs, however, require sufficient, adequately trained staff. The Foster Parent Training Programs deserve recognition and support. These and other programs require oversight and evaluation, as well as funding, to be successful.

Many cases hang in limbo without proper disposition because of caseworker turnover -- an issue you have heard a great deal about today, and which I, as a representative of my organization, must underscore the importance of. Being a caseworker is hard. It requires extraordinary skill, energy, and control. It is a profession with a high burnout rate, but in the best interest of children, it is essential for the Division to exert every effort to support its caseworkers. We applaud the Division for the development and implementation of the Stress Management Program. We urge the Division to recognize that it must do much more to reduce the high turnover rate of the caseworkers.

In summary, New Jersey PTA urges the Division to develop and maintain a partnership with the community it was created to serve. New Jersey PTA recommends that the Division: Require district and regional offices to implement the policy and procedures of the Division; monitor and oversee district and regional office compliance with Division policy and procedures; implement drug and alcohol abuse training programs for staff; develop and implement employee assistance programs for staff suffering from drug and/or alcohol abuse problems; assure social workers manageable caseloads; and initiate a major foster parent recruitment campaign.

We urge the Legislature to support these recommendations, and hold the Division accountable for their oversight and implementation.

Every day, a child cries because of abuse and neglect. The world of the abused child is a nightmare without end. DYFS is the only hope for most of these victims. In order to stop the pain and start the healing, the Division must be given the support and resources necessary to support its efforts.

Any questions?

SENATOR COSTA: Thank you, Mia.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Thank you.

SENATOR COSTA: I would like to call on Verlan Kliewer, parent.

V E R L A N J. K L I E W E R: I want to thank you for the opportunity of appearing here before your Committee. Thank you, Senator Ambrosio, and Senator Costa.

Many different people have testified today, and brought out a wide variety of different problems and difficulties with the Division of Youth and Family Services. Almost invariably they have brought out, as a panacea, that the answer to the problem is more money. The only good suggestion I found that didn't say "more money," was the one from you, Senator Costa, suggesting some form of community involvement. I like that idea.

Some of the problems that have been noticed-- The one you raised, Senator Costa, was that children are lost in the cracks in the system sometimes, and the inability to provide foster homes because there just aren't enough available. I am going to give some very constructive ideas on how to solve these problems, as we go along.

Dealing with hostile parents, heavy caseloads, and nothing to prevent the caseloads from rising, workers are overwhelmed with the heavy loads, and there are staggering turnovers. There is also some disciplinary action from management. A social worker from the Elizabeth office stated, and I quote: "Clearly, this is a symptom of mismanagement," in

connection with the disciplinary problem. There are few experienced workers left on the job, there is a lack of resources for adolescents and teen-agers, and there is an extremely high turnover. One office reported a 100% turnover; another one, out of 48 workers, only eight have been there over the past year.

There are reasons for this, and I will go into those reasons and what can be done about it. Workers are denied leave for important hearings; absent employees receive satisfactory ratings; and employees receiving an annual satisfactory rating at the same time they receive a termination notice. Rules prevent them from using social workers. They have people in there who are social workers. We heard one person testify that he couldn't use them as social workers, because they were classified some other way.

There, you do have some problems. These do not stem from a money problem. If they had more money, they would still have the same problem. You mentioned a computer problem. More money, and you would still have a computer problem. It takes five months for vacancies to register. That is not a money problem. Seventy-five percent paperwork, 25% field work. Would money change that figure? I don't think so.

There is another problem: Computers and software not working properly. In my profession, I work with computers. In the computer industry, I happen to know that computers are programmed. I think all of us are aware of that. In the business world, if a computer doesn't work properly, that hurts the business. You do one of three things: You throw the computer out, and start doing things manually -- if that is a good alternative; you reduce what you put into the computer; or you can throw out the software and rewrite it, or get some of the packages. There are many packages -- personnel packages and human resources packages -- on the system that would solve the very problems you have today, without a large expenditure.

But, there is no excuse for a computer causing a heavier caseload, or causing a heavier load for people. That is easily solved. If it causes a heavier load, obviously, don't use it any more.

Now, the ideas that you suggested, Senator Costa-- One of them was using church and civic organizations, and that is a good idea. But, one of the biggest problems--

SENATOR COSTA: I am looking at your package there. Are you going to read all of that?

MR. KLIEWER: No, by no means.

SENATOR COSTA: Are you the one who has been working on the computer as you were sitting here?

MR. KLIEWER: It's a typewriter. It's not really a computer.

SENATOR COSTA: I notice that you are referring to what people said, and it's all typed out.

MR. KLIEWER: No, these are all copies of the same thing.

SENATOR COSTA: Oh, I see.

MR. KLIEWER: I am not going to be reading this to you either.

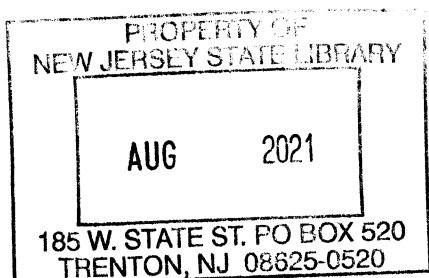
SENATOR COSTA: Oh, okay.

MR. KLIEWER: It's not going to be that long, but I think you will find what I have to say interesting.

SENATOR COSTA: Oh, I found it interesting that you typed away there.

MR. KLIEWER: Well, this is in order to give some background to some very real problems, and to offer some very real solutions to them.

Now, we have numerous problems in management. The problem is, if you involve church organizations, if they are answerable to DYFS, that is a problem, because DYFS has a hard time even managing itself. You have seen that throughout the testimony of the DYFS workers. Another problem, too, is -- you



had the testimony of Nick Andrian -- false accusations. If you spread out and work to have a church provide services, or different charitable organizations provide the services that are now covered by DYFS, if they come under DYFS authority, they will be under DYFS' thumb. They would receive the funding from DYFS. I have seen it happen in the case of a day care center, too. They are under the thumb there, and to get their funding they cooperate with DYFS, which means that they will not take the side of the parent, if DYFS feels there has been abuse.

You don't need that kind of liberty restriction in America. You do have a problem where DYFS does make false accusations. So, if you are going to work with something like this, a good alternative would be to have a publicity campaign, saying: "We need organizations willing to take on the task" -- entire organizations -- and then make them not answerable, or not associated with DYFS. They don't even have to be State-funded, but just open a channel like that, where DYFS no longer becomes the legal agency solely responsible for this, so that these can be referred to State agencies, and a parent could even have a choice of agencies that might be available. That might be an option that could be considered.

But, certainly it would eliminate the paperwork, because a charitable organization can't operate with the inefficiency that Federal organizations, or State organizations are at liberty to do.

Because of all the pressure on social workers, one witness testified that perhaps the name should be changed from the Department of Human Services to the Department of Inhuman Services. I would have to agree with that, but for some alternate reasons. I would like to quote one of the social workers from Elizabeth: "The safety of the children hangs in the balance -- our children, our most precious resource." It was brought out -- I think by Senator Brown, I'm not sure --

that DYFS doesn't make children. It's parents. In the process of childbirth, you have the child there, and there is a bond that is developed between the child and the mother that can't really be torn apart or broken -- that isn't severed.

Now, I would like to go into a case of child abuse. You have heard a lot of cases. People have brought up different situations, and things. This one is different. It is different for several reasons. For one thing, it highlights some areas, not just saying, "Look, isn't this awful. We need more funds." It shows some areas where we can put in some constructive work -- some constructive changes. By no means, do I have listed here, nor will I present to the Committee here, everything that really needs to be done. I have other ideas that can be done to change the laws in the State, to help to make things a whole lot better.

In this case that I am going to present before you today, the father and the mother of the child were accused of sexually molesting the children. It was a bitter battle for the State, and a very long battle. It took a period of several years. Finally, in the end, the State won, and the parents took it up on appeal. Well, it looked to all appearances that DYFS did their job; they won the case. For one thing, the parents were brought up before a criminal trial, which the parents won. The jury acquitted the parents. But still DYFS was able to get the children out of the home. It wasn't right. Let's hear something from the other side, too.

We have heard a lot of cases from DYFS' side. Let's hear from the other side, and see what effect it had there, too. The children were aged eight and nine. They were born in 1977 -- December of 1977 and the spring of 1979. They were, in fact, removed illegally from the home. The documents prepared -- and this will be proven in the appellate brief-- The documents prepared for the removal of the children were falsely sworn. When you have a document for the children, the law

requires that it detail explicitly what the charges are, and it can't be by way of inference. Well, the charges were very explicit. They said, "Here is what happened," and there was very specific sexual involvement. But when you heard the testimony on the stand, no. The testimony was that the child never made any such accusations. These were all gained by inference, clearly against the law.

The accusations were gained from information-- They were obtained by improper inference from the use of sexually explicit dolls. At the time of the removal of the children, the children had not made any accusations of sexual abuse. The little girl, aged four, I believe it was, was given dolls -- sexually explicit dolls -- and was told, "This desk is a bed. These dolls represent members of your family." The child was told to play with the dolls. The child refused to play with the dolls. She was forced to play with the dolls; was forced to play with them on the desk, which represented the bed, and as a result, there was no alternative for the child, except to show them in a way where a social worker would look at it and determine it as a sexual configuration. This is all clear from the transcript.

On the day of the removal, you had six-- Not on the day of the removal, but there were six different physical medical examinations of the children -- of the two children. Out of the six individuals--

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Mr. Kliever, may I interrupt you for a minute? I would just like to know where you are going with this example, because the hearing is really dealing with the staffing of DYFS and the caseload problem, and I don't know what relevance -- even though the report you are relating is very interesting -- it has to our function as a Legislature to make recommendations to change the law. Maybe you can enlighten me as to where you--

MR. KLIEWER: Thank you for that information. Yes, it has a great deal of relevance in this case, because this problem is not a single example. Nick Andrian brought up other examples that exist in the State. The problem is, when you have an agency that has so grossly abdicated its responsibilities and turned the other way around with them-- See, these children were molested under DYFS' custody.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: What I don't understand is, what you are relating has nothing to do with DYFS. It has to do with the prosecutor's office or the individual--

MR. KLIEWER: No, it is DYFS, because this is all under DYFS' auspices. DYFS knew these things were going on. They knew about the problems in the case. They kept the children in an environment where they knew the children were sexually abused.

SENATOR COSTA: Are you with the Coalition for the Unjustly Accused, Mr. Kliewer?

MR. KLIEWER: I am a member of it, yes. The problem is, after--

SENATOR COSTA: In the interest of time, though, I would appreciate it if you would get right to your point.

MR. KLIEWER: I will get right to the point. I will skip over as much as I can, because it is reviewed here.

SENATOR COSTA: Fine, very good.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Are you going to give us a copy of your statement?

MR. KLIEWER: I am going to give you a copy of this, but the thing is not related to the case I have over here, and I don't have a copy ready. This case is a lot of notes.

SENATOR COSTA: We have heard about cases where people have been unjustly accused. We have heard what people have said about DYFS, and I understand what you are saying. The inference is, when you are questioning children, and putting something into their minds-- That is what you are getting to.

I am just trying to-- We do have someone else who has to speak, so I would appreciate it if you would get right to it.

MR. KLIEWER: I will say this much.

SENATOR COSTA: Tell us what you feel we can do right now, as far as DYFS is concerned.

MR. KLIEWER: See, this is relevant to the case. I am going to go into that to give some other suggestions. First of all--

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Maybe I can shorten it by asking a question. What I am concerned about is, DYFS has 23,000 employees, as I understand it.

MR. JOSEPH (from audience; no microphone): No.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: It does not?

MR. JOSEPH: It has 3400.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: I'm sorry. DYFS has 3400 employees. The individuals you are talking about -- and I have no reason to doubt that what you are relating happened-- My question is, is that systematic -- is that a problem that is system-wide -- or is that a couple of individuals?

MR. KLIEWER: Oh, no, it is a system-wide problem. In fact, it is not only statewide, it's nationwide. There is a national organization -- VOCAL -- with chapters in, I think, every state, dealing with this very specific problem. It is a problem built into the system. What I want to get at is--

SENATOR AMBROSIO: May I ask you, Mr. Kliewer, because I don't want to cut you short-- We are aware of exactly the problem you are talking about. What I am looking more for are suggestions for solution to the problem, rather than examples. I can give you, probably, more examples than you can give me, in terms of those things that have happened.

MR. KLIEWER: I'll tell you what then, from what you have said, I already have a copy of the examples on the case. I am going to mention practically nothing left from that -- maybe one or two points -- and then go into the rest of the testimony, where I have some constructive suggestions.

SENATOR COSTA: Good. He has his testimony, and he will give it to us. (in response to question from aide)

MR. KLIEWER: If you will promise to read it.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Sure. I have a whole pile here ready to read.

MR. KLIEWER: I will need about 15 more seconds.

SENATOR COSTA: In fact, it will all be made part of the record.

MR. KLIEWER: Okay. I'll say this much: I am the father of those children. I was the one accused. They molested my son to the point where his penis was black and blue. They ruptured my daughters hymen under DYFS' care. On the day of their removal from the home, they found nothing wrong with the children physically. And there have been numerous instances of sexual activity imposed upon my children under DYFS' care. The judge has not addressed this properly. I am appealing it myself. I learned what it takes to be an appellate attorney, and I am going to win that case.

SENATOR COSTA: Mr. Kliewer, are you the falsely accused parent?

MR. KLIEWER: Yes, I am.

SENATOR COSTA: And you're saying they put your children into a foster home where they--

MR. KLIEWER: Into a foster home.

SENATOR COSTA: --were sexually abused?

MR. KLIEWER: Yes. They keep them in those kinds of homes. They do not address the problems. The child was abused to the point where his penis was black and blue and red. They testified that a four-year-old boy could ejaculate, and had ejaculated in the foster father's hand. But the problem is, I could go on and on and on with horror upon horror, that would just turn you--

SENATOR COSTA: May I ask something? Were you accused by your wife?

MR. KLIEWER: Pardon?

SENATOR COSTA: Were you accused by your wife?

MR. KLIEWER: No, I was not. Both my wife and I were accused. We are both innocent. We were acquitted before a jury trial. There is, in the New Jersey Constitution, a provision that once you are acquitted, you cannot be tried a second time. That provision was ignored by the judge.

SENATOR COSTA: I understand that if it is pending, we cannot discuss your case.

MR. KLIEWER: Okay, but you may have a review of the material. When the appellate brief is available, I can make it available to you, if that would be of any help in some of the legislative matters, or in any investigations of DYFS.

Let's get into some business, things that could make a tremendous difference to DYFS; reducing the amount of funding necessary for DYFS, and come up with some alternative suggestions. I have already mentioned some before the Committee. I have already mentioned two, and I may be wanting a transcript of this.

Robert Bowell, the supervisor from Asbury Park, testified that he has no way to evaluate his workers. Now, that is unheard of in a business environment. In a business environment, you don't have that. If you don't have a way to evaluate your workers, you don't really have a department. You can't run a department that way. There are ways that could be built in to evaluate workers. Like in the case of accusations, you can get a red-light type of indication when you have a problem with a social worker. For example, you can take a ratio of the number of accusations made, and I think DYFS should have these statistics for the State -- the number ratio, and they should be by social worker, too. The number of accusations made where you have physical evidence, and those made where you don't have physical evidence. But you should have that kind of a ratio, for a trend, if nothing else.

SENATOR COSTA: Mr. Kliewer, I am going to stop the hearing at four o'clock, and I do have one more person to speak. So, I would appreciate your making your suggestions and leaving your transcript with us.

MR. KLIEWER: I'll do that. It is my suggestion that children would not benefit from additional funding to DYFS. The overload in the caseload comes heavily from false accusations, like you have here. I have heard many of them. A reduction in funding would well be in order in a case like this. It would allow DYFS to concentrate on cases that are valid, and not get into cases where evidence has to be fabricated. From that standpoint, it is my strongest recommendation that the funding be cut back, and perhaps some alternate situations, totally independent, not answerable to DYFS, be given some legal authority, as I discussed earlier, and similar to the ones you brought up, Senator Costa.

SENATOR COSTA: Thank you very much.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Thank you, Mr. Kliewer.

SENATOR COSTA: Leslie Pallard, shop stewardess? (no response)

MR. KLIEWER: Where do I leave this? (referring to written material)

SENATOR COSTA: Right here with Amy Fischer, our Committee Aide.

If Leslie is not here, I think I have had everybody. We have a few people who were going to be here today, but they said we could call them at their office for some information. One was Muriel Brantley from the Newark Central District Office of DYFS, William Ulrich, the County Manager of the Monmouth County District Office, Daryl Bender, of Camden, and Eileen Crummy from the Middlesex/Perth Amboy District Office of DYFS.

Other than that, I don't think we have anyone else. Are there any comments you would like to make, Director Waldman?

MR. WALDMAN: Senator Costa, I would just like to express my personal appreciation to you and the Committee for having the hearing today. I listened a great deal. I believe I have learned a lot, and have had a lot of issues identified.

I would like to reiterate the statement that I made at the opening of the hearing: If you would like, I would like to get back to you in a number of months, and give you an update on the progress of my early tenure, and what accomplishments and issues remain over time.

SENATOR COSTA: I hope this has been fruitful, as far as your coming on board now and seeing what the problems are, as people have seen them. I guess we can't stress enough, to try to have as our DYFS workers, people with compassion in caring for children.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Mr. Waldman, if I might-- One of the things that has come to me loud and clear through this hearing, is the dichotomy between social workers and office workers. I have some experience in that, because I was involved in a mental health center for some 15 years. Social workers, by nature, are not people who get involved in paperwork. They want to serve people; they do not want to fill out forms.

I have seen, firsthand, the State's overburdening of State agencies, and other organizations which have to respond to State agencies, by the reams and volumes of paperwork they must complete. Do you see that as a problem?

MR. WALDMAN: I definitely see it as a problem. I think it is a challenge to us to minimize the amount of paperwork, to get the most professional service out of our social workers. It is an issue I really do want to look into. My staff has advised me that there are certain legal requirements, certain statutory requirements -- requirements that if we didn't do them in certain instances, we would be liable to lose some Federal funds.

As was mentioned here earlier, I think there are some innovative ways whereby we could combine some of the efforts, using some of the latest technology that is available. There were some good suggestions made today by the Committee about having dictating machines available in cars, for the workers who are able to do it. I think we have to look at all of those things and, again, try to achieve that delicate balance of accountability and maximizing the professional time of our staff.

SENATOR AMBROSIO: Thank you.

SENATOR COSTA: Just to go on a little about that, I made that suggestion because I feel since they have to travel a lot, and since it is right in their minds at that time -- they have just left a case -- they could give the report right then and there. But, you know, I asked the question here, and I was told they do have these recorders, but if you don't have the follow-through -- the person on the other end to do the typing -- what good is the recorder?

I hope you will follow through on that, because I think it would be a big load off the caseworkers, and they could do their job much more efficiently. I would like to see a reversal of that ratio, where some spoke of 90% paperwork and 10%, and somebody else said 75% and 25%. I would like to see that reversed -- 10% on the paperwork and 90% on the casework.

With that, I appreciate everyone coming today. I appreciate your patience. It has been a long day, and thank you very much. I hope we have all learned something.

(HEARING CONCLUDED)

APPENDIX

JOYCE E. MUNKACSI
CO-CHAIR, GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE
ON CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT
AND ASSISTANT PROSECUTOR,
MIDDLESEX COUNTY

NEW JERSEY SENATE COMMITTEE ON

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

PUBLIC HEARING ON DYFS

SEPTEMBER 22, 1987

THANK YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY BEFORE YOU CONCERNING AN AGENCY THAT I HAVE WORKED WITH, FOUGHT WITH, AND HAD AN INTENSE PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH OVER THE YEARS, BOTH IN MY CAPACITY AS AN ASSISTANT PROSECUTOR IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY FOR 17 YEARS AND AS CO-CHAIR OF GOVERNOR KEAN'S TASK FORCE ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT FOR THE PAST 4 YEARS.

I AM KNOWN BOTH IN MY COUNTY AND WITHOUT AS SOMEONE WHO PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY SPEAKS OUT ON BEHALF OF DYFS WORKERS. THEY ARE SOME OF THE BRIGHTEST, MOST DEDICATED PEOPLE I KNOW IN PUBLIC SERVICE. THEY WORK HARD AT AN IMPOSSIBLE JOB, SUFFER GREAT STRESSES AND DESERVE WHATEVER HELP THIS COMMITTEE, DYFS MANAGEMENT, AND, INDEED, THE PUBLIC CAN GIVE THEM.

I APPLAUD THE NEW INITIATIVES THAT DYFS MANAGEMENT UNDER TOM BLATTNER AND NOW BILL WALDMAN, HAS UNDERTAKEN TO INCREASE SUPPORTS TO THE CASEWORKER. IN PARTICULAR, I HAVE SEEN THE MORALE OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY DYFS WORKERS IMPROVE WHEN THEY RECENTLY MOVED FROM CROWDED, DIRTY OFFICES IN NEW BRUNSWICK TO

A NEW FACILITY IN EDISON. BUT MORE THAN JUST IMPROVING THEIR PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT, MANAGEMENT HAS ENCOURAGED WORKERS TO STAY IN FIELD POSITIONS BY WAY OF THEIR CAREER LADDER PROGRAM WHICH GIVES THEM THE OPTION OF STAYING IN THE FIELD AND ALSO RECEIVING THE HIGHER PAY THAT THEY WOULD HAVE GOTTEN IN A SUPERVISORY POSITION RATHER THAN HAVE TO GIVE UP A ACTIVE CASELOAD IN ORDER TO MAKE MORE MONEY AT A DESK JOB. THE NEW POLICY OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR DECISION MAKING IN DIFFICULT CASES IS ONE THAT SHOULD MAKE EVERY CASEWORKER LESS STRESSED AND FEARFUL. AND DR. CAHILL'S STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR FIELD STAFF IS A LONG-NEEDED ONE.

HOWEVER, MUCH AS WE SEEK TO ALLEVIATE OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND BURNOUT AMONG PROTECTIVE SERVICE WORKERS, WE CAN'T INSULATE THEM FROM THE HOSTILITY THEY RECEIVE FROM MANY OF THE FAMILIES THAT THEY ARE COMMITTED TO HELP. THAT JUST GOES WITH THE TERRITORY. I HAVE RECEIVED OVER THE YEARS, MANY COMPLAINTS FROM FAMILIES THAT DYFS WORKERS ARE OFFICIOUS MEDDLERS. I HAVE BEEN CALLED BY ATTORNEYS WHO WANT ME TO INTERCEDE WITH DYFS TO SUPPORT A PARTICULAR POSITION OF THEIR CLIENTS IN MATRIMONIAL OR CUSTODY DISPUTES. JUDGES CRITICIZE THEM, IN PART, I THINK FOR BRINGING THEM SOME VERY DIFFICULT, HUMAN PROBLEMS TO DECIDE. POLICE OFFICERS COMPLAIN THAT THE DYFS WORKER IS NOT DOING WHAT THEY THINK SHE SHOULD BE DOING. THEY ARE TOO

SLOW TO REMOVE A CHILD AT RISK OR THEY ACT TOO PRECIPITIOUSLY.
MANY COMPLAINTS - FEW COMPLIMENTS. PERHAPS WE SHOULD HAVE A
STATEWIDE DYFS WORKER APPRECIATION DAY.

IN 1984, THE NEW JERSEY LEGISLATURE APPROVED A \$18.8 MILLION
SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION TO HIRE NEW CASEWORKERS TO MEET THE
SHARP INCREASE IN REPORTED CHILD ABUSE CASES IN THE STATE.
I'M SURE THAT THIS COMMITTEE WANTS TO KNOW WHAT IMPACT THAT
MONEY HAD ON THE SYSTEM. ARE CHILDREN BEING BETTER PROTECTED
BECAUSE OF IT? HAVE SERVICES TO FAMILIES IMPROVED BECAUSE OF IT?
I MUST GIVE A QUALIFIED, YES, I THINK SO. THE AVERAGE CASELOAD
PER WORKER HAS DECREASED. ALTHOUGH, 40 CASES PER WORKER IS STILL
WAY TOO HIGH. THAT WORKS OUT TO AN HOUR PER WEEK PER CASE INCLU-
DING PAPERWORK. IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY WE HAVE 3 DYFS DISTRICT
OFFICES THAT HAVE HIGHER ALLOCATED CASELOADS. IN THE EAST
BRUNSWICK OFFICE THE RATIO IS ONE CASEWORKER TO 49 FAMILIES. IN
PERTH AMBOY, ONE TO 42. IN NEW BRUNSWICK OR WHAT IS NOW THE
EDISON OFFICE, 1 TO 47. IN THE IDEAL WORLD, THE CASELOAD, IN
MY OPINION, SHOULD BE HALF OF THAT.

DIRECTOR WALDMAN REFERRED TO THE MANY RESPONSIBILITIES OF
CASEWORKERS, AMONG WHICH ONE IS THE TRANSPORTATION OF CLIENTS TO
MEDICAL AND THERAPY APPOINTMENTS OR FAMILY VISITS. IF THERE
IS NO SUCH POSITION AT PRESENT, WHY NOT HAVE TRANSPORTATION

AIDES TO DO THAT CHORE AND FREE CASEWORKERS FROM THAT ONE SMALL RESPONSIBILITY.

ON THE PLUS SIDE, DYFS WORKERS ARE FAR BETTER TRAINED TODAY AND HAVE A GOOD KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT CONSTITUTES A THOROUGH AND COMPETENT INVESTIGATION. THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN LAW ENFORCEMENT AND DYFS, WHICH WAS ENCOURAGED BY FORMER COMMISSIONER GEORGE ALBANESE AND FORMER ATTORNEY GENERAL KIMMELMAN IN 1983 WHEN THE WORKING GROUP WAS FORMED TO DO JUST THAT, HAS BEEN GREATLY STRENGTHENED. THE WORKING GROUP WHICH I CHAIRED RECOMMENDED THE FORMATION OF THE TASK FORCE WHICH HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN INITIATING JOINT TRAINING OF POLICE AND DYFS CASEWORKERS, FIRST AT SEA GIRT AND THEN ON A COUNTY-BY-COUNTY BASIS. AS A RESULT, REPORTS OF ABUSE ARE BETTER INVESTIGATED, MORE CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN ARE BEING PROSECUTED AND MORE CHILDREN ARE THUS BETTER PROTECTED.

THE TASK FORCE, FROM ITS INCEPTION, HAS BEEN CHARGED BY GOVERNOR KEAN WITH, AMONG OTHER THINGS, TO "PROMOTE AWARENESS OF THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN NEW JERSEY." I THINK WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED THAT GOAL, A CONCOMMITANT COMMISSION IS THAT WE "MOBILIZE CITIZENS AND COMMUNITY AGENCIES IN A STRONG, PREVENTION-ORIENTED, PROACTIVE EFFORT TO ADDRESS CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT." WE HAVE BEEN DOING JUST THAT AND ARE COMMITTED TO CONTINUE OUR BEST EFFORTS BECAUSE

WE BELIEVE, AS DOES DIRECTOR WALDMAN THAT DYFS CANNOT BE ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE. THEY ALONE CANNOT POSSIBLY SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF CHILD ABUSE AND FAMILIES IN CRISIS. THERE MUST BE COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES THAT WILL TAKE OVER AND PROVIDE HOMEMAKER SERVICES, DAY CARE, MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY, MEDICAL CARE, CRISIS NURSERIES, AFFORDABLE HOUSING - ALL THE THINGS THAT FAMILIES IN CRISIS MUST HAVE SO THAT CHILDREN IN THOSE FAMILIES HAVE A CHANCE TO GROW UP WHOLE AND HEALTHY.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION.

ACNJ

Association For Children Of New Jersey

September 15, 1987

TO: Honorable Catherine Costa, Chairperson
Members, Senate Children's Services Committee

FROM: Ciro A. Scalera, Executive Director
Cecilia Zalkind, Assistant Director
Association for Children of New Jersey, (ACNJ)

RE: PUBLIC HEARING ON DYFS

As a statewide child advocacy organization, the Association for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) has a long tradition of commitment to children and families in the child welfare system. We believe strongly that the children within this system are those to whom the state owes its greatest responsibility. We have advocated for these children on several fronts: through the legislative process, through budget analysis and review, through efforts to encourage public scrutiny of Division of Youth and Family Services data and through participation in numerous task forces, committees and projects designed to improve the delivery of child welfare services in our state.

We come before you today with a nonpolitical agenda, fully aware that the recent administrative changes within the Division create a potentially political climate for this hearing. We are not interested in a lengthy assessment of the successes and failures of the past nor in an investment in further effort and time in justifying the change. Our agenda is more forward-looking and urgent.

In short, our agenda today is children and whether the current child welfare system is adequate to meet the needs of the children and families it is supposed to serve. We believe strongly that the time has come for the adequacy of this system to be measured not in terms of policy but rather in implementation and practice; not in terms of the overworked caseworker but rather the impact on the wellbeing of children as the result of staff turnover and increased caseload size; and not in terms of how much funding is being provided to community agencies but rather what services that money is purchasing and providing.

Our theme is responsibility, not only of the administrative agency, but also of the Legislature and the community. Providing

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funding for necessary social services is insufficient without also requiring accountability - both for the expenditure of those funds and to the families they are designed to help. The desperate plight of an increasing number of New Jersey families - the homeless, the poor, the children at risk of child abuse and neglect - continue to demand that we require accountability and responsibility for those children and families.

A second important theme to our testimony today is the responsibility of the state to strengthen families. The concept of permanency - that every child has a right to a permanent family of his own - has been the philosophical underpinning of the child welfare reform movement of the last ten years. But efforts to achieve permanency do not and should not begin after a child has been separated from his or her family. Our social service system has an even greater responsibility to ensure that support services are provided to families to keep them together in the first place.

Our recommendations for this committee today are very specific and practical. Over the last five years we have engaged in a number of cooperative efforts with DYFS to improve the social service delivery system. The continuing American Bar Association, ACNJ and DYFS Committee, for example, has been successful in improving the adoption system in the state. We are currently involved in a federal grant project which is examining timely decision making for children in out-of-home placement. These efforts have made us a bit impatient and we are anxious to direct our efforts - and the attention of this Committee - beyond the policy, beyond the rhetoric, beyond the planning and promises, to an assessment of whether the implementation of these policies, plans and promises has been successful.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS AND ADEQUACY OF THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM MUST STRESS IMPLEMENTATION, NOT POLICY

If the efforts and success of the child welfare system were to be judged on the basis of its philosophy and policy, there would be no reason for this hearing today. But implementation of that policy is far more difficult to undertake successfully and to assess. Our advocacy efforts in this area lead us to question whether there really is a system in place - of standards, timeframes, and monitoring - to translate this policy into effective practice.

Our first concern involves the area of protective services - the point of entry into the child welfare system for the majority of children and families. Is the Division meeting its legal obligations and responsibilities in this area? We have received a number of calls from parents during the last year concerned about child abuse cases that Division staff have refused to investigate, primarily when the abuse allegation involves a custody dispute. We have also been told that response time is slow - that, although the law is clear on how quickly the Division must investigate an abuse allegation, some cases are not seen for several days or even weeks.

We are also concerned about discrepancy in practice standards from one DYFS office to another. Would, for example, an abuse complaint made

and investigated in Bergen County be handled the same way in Essex or Camden County? Can a family be assured of the same treatment anywhere throughout the state?

We are also concerned about services to families once a case has been accepted for Division intervention. What kind of services are being offered to stabilize families and to keep them together? How much of an effort is made to ensure that out-of-home placement is truly a last resort? How thorough and effective are services to families who are served in their own home to ensure that the child is safe from further risk of harm? Again, are these services provided uniformly throughout the state as opposed to at the discretion of/or practice within the individual office.

Once a child comes into placement, what services does the Division provide to ensure that he or she will leave placement in a timely manner, either to return to his family or to move on to adoption? Are there effective systems in place in all offices to ensure that the child will not remain in the out-of-home placement system longer than is necessary?

A serious concern of our Association, which we have expressed repeatedly to the Division, is the quality of care for children in out-of-home placement. We believe that, despite the best efforts of good quality foster homes and other placement alternatives, children often suffer in the out-of-home placement system. A look at some of the common effects of foster care - including repeated moves from one foster home to another, infrequent contact with parents, separation of siblings and risk of physical and sexual abuse - suggest that for many children, the very system designed to protect them results in more serious harm.

We believe that the time has come for the Division to assess the adequacy of all of these services in terms of actual practice. Are there standards in place that are consistent, clear and adhered to by every Division worker irrespective of their particular office or county? Are there clear timeframes for providing services and achieving case goals? And, most importantly, is there an effective monitoring system in place in every office to ensure that these standards and timeframes are being applied appropriately and effectively?

We also believe strongly that the community has a role in assessing these services and practices. We are aware that the Division has evaluated some of these services through its quality assurance reviews. This information should be open to public scrutiny. Input from outside the Division is essential to ensure that all the important questions are asked and to further ensure that the findings are used to improve the quality of services.

ALLOCATION OF STAFF RESOURCES MUST BE ASSESSED IN TERMS OF THE IMPACT ON THE WELLBEING OF CHILDREN IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM.

Standards, timeframes and monitoring cannot be assessed without an evaluation of staff resources. Policy cannot be implemented without

the appropriate staffing levels to deliver the services. ACNJ shares this committee's concern with the allocation of current staffing resources within the Division.

In 1985, ACNJ, along with many other community groups and this Legislature, supported a supplemental appropriation of \$12.8 million for the Division to hire an additional 500 caseworkers. Our support stemmed from the fact that allegations of child abuse and neglect had doubled in 1984, putting a tremendous burden on Division staff. We also supported the appropriation because the Division had made a commitment to developing community resources to support and treat families under its care.

Today we join with you in asking for an accounting of that appropriation. Were the additional staff positions filled? If so, where were they deployed? What was the impact on the individual offices? Now that the numbers of allegations have stabilized, have these positions been redeployed to other overburdened areas? For many years, there has been recognition that the urban counties have faced more acute problems. Have staffing allocations addressed this?

ACNJ has not conducted an independent analysis of staff allocations within the Division. Issues of staff resources, caseload size and staff turnover, however, have surfaced in many of the committees in which we participate. Our federal grant project is currently examining some of these concerns in the context of national standards and practice, and we will report on this when the committee completes its activities next March.

In reviewing some of this information, however, we have noted several issues which might be of assistance to this committee in its oversight of staffing allocations. First, any calculation of caseload size must be based on accurate and meaningful information. An analysis that merely divides the total number of staff will not accurately reflect true caseload size. There are many administrative and resource positions within the Division which do not and should not carry actual cases. An accurate determination of caseload size must be made by looking at only those positions involved in the delivery of direct services.

Staffing turnover and vacancy rates comprise the second issue essential in an assessment of staff allocations. We understand that staff turnover within the Division has been very high. One of the district offices involved in our project experienced a loss of 50% of its staff in 1986. Although these positions were ultimately filled, the training of new staff takes considerable time which has a significant impact on the delivery of services. In the interim, cases are shifted for coverage from one worker to another or even worse, are left uncovered.

Our primary concern in looking at the issue of staff turnover is the impact on children and families. All of the issues we raised in regard to implementation and practice are particularly dependent on an experienced, stable staff. Staff turnover results in cases being handled by many different caseworkers. Obviously, the continuity of

casework services and planning is disrupted and children suffer. Sometimes the result is a prolonged time in out-of-home placement. An assessment of staff allocations must include a look at the reasons for staff turnover as well as the efficiency of procedures, including civil service, to fill vacant positions.

We are also concerned by what we see as increased pressure on certain segments of the child welfare system. Division statistics reported in July 1987 indicate that there has been a decrease in the number of cases served by almost every district office in the state. At the same time, the number of cases moved to the four Adoption Resource Centers has increased dramatically. From July 1986 to July 1987, the ARC offices experienced an increase of 423 cases, a significant percentage of their current total caseload of 2157.

We are particularly concerned that sufficient resources be available to maintain the adoption system. Through the ABA Committee, chaired by ACNJ and convened in 1984, the Division's Adoption offices were opened to considerable public scrutiny. As a result, standards for adoption services were improved, timelines were decreased and more effective monitoring was instituted not only within the Division system but in the courts and Deputy Attorney General's office as well. We are very concerned that the Division look at staffing levels for these offices to ensure that the quality and efficiency of this system not be lost because of the dramatic increase in cases served by those offices.

AN ASSESSMENT IS NEEDED OF THE AVAILABILITY OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

One of the strengths of the Division over the last several years has been its support for community-based services based upon the recognition that the cases of tens of thousands of New Jersey's children and families cannot be the responsibility of the state alone. The Division has made a clear commitment to the importance of community-based services and has backed up this commitment with considerable funding.

Although we strongly support these initiatives and urge that they continue, we believe that the time has come to take a hard look at what services are being provided in local communities. It would be impractical and shortsighted to commend the Division for its commitment to funding such programs without also looking at what services this funding has purchased.

First, and most important, are the services which the Division has funded over the last several years being used by Division staff for the children and families they are mandated to served? Are staff on the direct service level aware of these available services? Are referral guidelines and program goals clear to all staff? Has there been any assessment by the Division of the quality and effectiveness of such programs? What is the impact of such programs on strengthening families?

Second, have these programs been developed in response to the greatest and most pressing client needs? Several recent reports, for example, including those of the Division itself, have documented the relationship between homelessness and the resulting break-up of families and placement into foster care. Some reports have suggested that as many as 40% of all out-of-home placements occur because of homelessness or housing-related problems. Yet there has been very little information available about programs that the Division has developed or supported to address this very serious problem facing families in New Jersey today.

Similarly, there is a growing alarm about the availability of facilities for children who need more treatment-oriented placements such as group care, teaching parent families or residential placement - than traditional foster care services can provide. What programs have been developed to meet the needs of these children? This will be addressed more fully in the testimony of the New Jersey Association of Children's Residential Facilities. We share their concern that children needing out-of-home treatment services are instead being placed in detention, shelter or correctional facilities. We are also concerned about what we perceive as a growing population of children who are being placed in out-of-state treatment facilities because there are too few treatment alternatives available in New Jersey.

Although we are concerned about what the Division of Youth & Family Services is doing to ensure that such resources are developed, we are also very well aware that the problems go beyond this one system. We have very serious concerns about the entire out-of-home placement system for children in our state. The critical problems and needs of these children are the responsibility of other state entities including the Department of Corrections, Division of Mental Health and Hospitals and Division of Developmental Disabilities. Our concerns and comments are directed at these agencies as well.

Our recommendation that the Division take a hard look at the services they have developed is not based on a concern that those programs that have been funded are inadequate or ineffective. Quite the opposite is true. Many positive initiatives have been developed which must be maintained. Among the most successful are the joint programs for juvenile offenders developed by the Division of Youth and Family Services and the Division of Juvenile Services of the Department of Corrections. Initiatives such as these must continue and grow and a comprehensive evaluation of their effectiveness can only support their continuation and, hopefully, expansion.

What we are advocating for is simple program monitoring and evaluation in the perspective of greatest client need. This is a recommendation that should be supported by every agency receiving funding from the state. Monitoring and evaluation is essential to assess the effectiveness and availability of programs and to foster coordination so that they may be utilized with the greatest efficiency and success. The underlying goal for all of us must be the wellbeing of the children and families of New Jersey who must depend on the state for their future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of our concerns, some recommendations which we would make today are:

- 1) Division data on its services, practices, and outcomes must be made readily available for legislative oversight and public scrutiny.
- 2) An immediate implementation review of Division policies and practices must be conducted with respect to standards, timeframes, resources and monitoring to gauge the overall condition of case practice in the District Offices. Following such a review, the information for which we believe already exists within DYFS and in other related projects in our state, DYFS should make any necessary administrative changes designed to implement the review's recommendations.
- 3) A special emphasis must be directed toward children and families in the out-of-home placement system - foster care, treatment homes, group care and residential care with a focus not only on the availability of these services but on the quality of care.
- 4) An evaluation must be undertaken of the availability, effectiveness and appropriateness of Division - funded community based services.
- 5) The availability and adequacy of programs for children needing interdivisional and interdepartmental services must be reviewed and formal agreements clarifying roles and responsibilities with the other divisions, inside and out of the Department of Human Services, should be executed.



ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDREN OF NEW JERSEY

17 Academy Street, Suite 709
Newark, New Jersey 07102

October 3, 1986

Thomas Blatner, Director
Division of Youth & Family Services
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Princeton, New Jersey 08625

Dear Tom:

This letter will serve as a follow-up to our ongoing discussion about ACNJ's concerns with the child welfare system. We have taken the opportunity to review the data which you shared with us and to consider it in light of problems discussed at the ABA committee and the Adoption Advisory Committee, among other groups with which we participate.

We are primarily interested in two broad issues. First, we would like a follow-up to the data in terms of clarifying some questions about the data we did receive as well as reiterating our request for the additional data which we have not yet received. Secondly, from our analysis of the data, we have identified three areas which we believe are of serious concern: the length of time children remain in out-of-home placement, the quality of care for children in out-of-home placement and the availability of services to parents to prevent placement or to effect timely reunification.

We believe that the forum of concern for these issues has broadened in view of Senator Brown's interest in the child welfare system as well as the appointment of a new Commissioner of Human Services. The issues which we cite below represent a focus of our advocacy efforts in this area and an agenda for our activity in the federal grant project which we will begin in October.

DATA CONCERNS

A. CLARIFICATION OF EXISTING DATA

In reviewing the quality assurance reports and the data which you shared with us about the foster care system, we have identified some areas that need clarification. Basically, we need more information about the process which selected the children who were assessed as well as what measurements were used. For example, in the data measuring the length of time an average child spends in placement, you indicated that 14% of children in out-of-home placement remain there over 4 years. Does this figure include the children supervised by the four ARC offices? Additionally, does this figure reflect the clients' placement history? Was only the date of last placement for a child measured or does this figure represent the length of time in placement based upon the date the child entered the system, irrespective of subsequent placements?

We also found the use of averages somewhat misleading. Average visitation between parent and child, for example, reported at 7.6 visits per year, can show a marked difference if, as we assumed, the intensive visitation that occurs just prior to a child's return home is included. Additionally, if a child is visiting with both parents, are such visits counted separately? We are suggesting that the data include medians, maxima and minima, as we were shown in some of the quality assurance reports, and that the unit of measurements be defined at the lowest measurable level, i.e., by district office.

The data that you shared with us reflects a snapshot of children in the child welfare system at a specific point in time. Perhaps a more detailed cross-sectional analysis of the foster care system would be more valuable, especially if related to some time series data that tracks a child's progress through the system.

B. REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL DATA

In our prior data requests, we requested some further information which we have not yet received. We are very concerned about the rate of recidivism or replacement in foster care, including children who return to parents or relatives and then come back into placement as well as children who move from one foster home to another. It is difficult to measure the effectiveness of services designed to facilitate family re-unification, for example, if there is no data about the percentage of children who remain at home once the goal of family re-unification is achieved.

We are also concerned about the lack of data regarding Division services to children during placement. How often are children placed out-of-county? How often does the caseworker see the child? How often are sibling visits arranged? How often and what types of services (i.e., medical, psychological, educational, etc.) are provided to the child? What information exists about the rate of sexual abuse in out-of-home placement? How are such cases reported and how are they handled by the Division?

A picture of where the out-of-home placement population fits in the total system would also be useful. What percentage of the Division's caseload receives in-home services as compared to the percentage of cases which require out-of-home placement? It would be helpful for our purposes if you based these percentages on cases accepted for ongoing Division supervision and excluded those cases in which an abuse and neglect referral was made but not substantiated and therefore not accepted for ongoing services.

It would be also helpful to follow up on some of the initial data which was shared with us. We understand that a third series of quality assurance reviews followed those which were reported to us. Did they reflect an improvement or worsening of services? Will this information be shared with us? Additionally, since a year has elapsed since the Division identified case goals for all of the children under its supervision, will there be any follow-up to assess whether or not these goals were met? If so, will this information be shared with us?

SPECIFIC ISSUE CONCERNS

A. LENGTH OF TIME IN PLACEMENT

We continue to have some serious concerns about the length of time children spend in foster care. Our concern about how long children remain in placement is directly related to the issue of permanency. While it is clear that permanency has become a strong philosophy and policy of the Division, we question whether or not the policy has actually been implemented into practice to reflect timely permanency either through re-unification or adoption.

Administrative and supervisory supports as well as strong leadership are essential to the delivery of effective permanency services. As you know, we are seriously concerned about a worker's ability to give significant time and attention to a foster care caseload when he or she must also respond to crises in other, more demanding cases. What has been the impact of the increased child abuse and neglect reporting on the line worker? We understand that caseload size has again increased and that some workers have caseloads of 60-80 children or more. Do district offices still have permanency units? Is the caseload size in these units manageable?

The decision-making process itself has been an issue of both the ABA Committee and the Adoption Advisory Committee. Are workers receiving adequate administrative supports for difficult case decisions? Is there managerial monitoring and accountability to assure that decisions are being made and implemented in a timely fashion? Are cases being documented adequately so that should the case go to court, no further delays occur while new documentation is obtained?

We also have some concerns about standards for district office staff in preparing cases for adoption planning. Those cases considered for adoption seem to depend, in great part, on the individual deputy attorney general who represents the particular district office. In a sense, this places the casework decision process in the hands of the DAG rather than the DAG providing legal representation after the division has identified a case goal. What concerns us about this practice is its chilling effect: depending on individual DAG standards, certain children are never even considered for adoption planning because of a perception that the guardianship petition will not be successful in court.

This issue is of serious concern to us because it seems to create a group of children who are not receiving permanency services and who, ironically, are most in need of stabilization. These are the children who have parents or relatives who are periodically involved and who maintain sporadic contact with the Division. Additionally, these are the children to whom the foster parent has made no adoption commitment. Generally, workers perceive guardianship as impossible in these cases: the parents' involvement, however minimal, negates the failure to plan around for guardianship and the lack of adoption commitment by the foster parent eliminates the best interest argument based on psychological parenting. It seems to be these children who remain in the system for a long time while the Division works toward family re-unification, who suffer the most frequent replacements and who are unable to achieve any stability.

We need to take a hard look at those children that remain in out-of-home placement the longest amount of time. Are they the children to whom neither their parents or foster parents have made a commitment? Are they the children who are replaced frequently from home to home? Are they the para-foster care cases? Are they the older children? If so, are they children who grew up in care or were they placed as teenagers? Unless we are able to look at the characteristics of these children, we will never fully be able to determine if the system is directing appropriate services to their needs.

B. QUALITY OF CARE IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

Our second major concern about the out-of-home placement system is what we view as the quality of care for children in placement. Division data on this issue is depressing. Your rate of replacement statistics, for example, indicate that the average foster child experiences at least three placements while in care. Since you have not measured recidivism and since this figure includes children who are in placement for a short period of time, we estimate that the actual rate of replacement may be even higher. We are concerned because we are seeing a population of children without stability, who move from placement to placement and eventually end up in residential care.

Similarly, your statistics regarding the separation of siblings in placement are also disturbing. According to the quality assurance reports, 60% of the children in placement are separated from their siblings. If this figure is based upon initial placement in foster care, it is likely that this percentage is even higher since siblings are often separated when replacement occurs. We are concerned about the efforts the Division is making to ensure that children remain together or at least see each other regularly if they are placed separately.

The rate of parent-child visitation is also a serious issue. The quality assurance reports indicate a statewide average of 7.6 visits per year. We are concerned that parent-child visitation that occurs slightly more than once every two months is not sufficient to maintain the family relationship during placement and to effect family re-unification. We are also concerned that the high rate of out-of-county placements compounds this problem.

We have very little sense of Division standards for the caseworker's role and responsibility to the child in foster care. We are aware of the Division's minimal visitation requirements but are not sure that workers are providing services to the child - both in concrete terms (such as arranging counseling, education, and medical services, etc.) or in less tangible terms such as being available to the child as his advocate in the system and his link to his family.

The picture that emerges is one of children lost in the system. The average foster child loses everything he has when he comes into placement - not only is he separated from his parents but he more than likely is placed apart from his brothers and sisters. He is more than likely removed from his community and placed in another town or county. He must leave his school, his activities, his friends, any extended family he has. His first placement is not likely to be his last and his time in the system will not be short. Once in placement, he will not often see his parents, his siblings or even his

caseworker. One must question whether the consequences of care justify the need for placement.

The development of well-trained, qualified foster parents is an essential element of the system. We are aware of and support the Division's efforts to recruit, train and maintain a network of foster homes. Yet one must question Division efforts to retain these foster homes. Are services to foster parents a significant priority in the district office budget and policy? Has the concept of partnership, supported strongly in policy, been implemented in actual practice? Are supports to foster parents available to encourage their development into experienced caregivers?

C. SERVICES TO PARENTS TO PREVENT PLACEMENT OR TO EFFECT TIMELY RE-UNIFICATION

We believe that we cannot ethically raise issues such as termination of parental rights and timely decision-making without looking at those services available to parents to prevent out-of home placement or to effect timely re-unification. The federal Adoption Assistance Act requires that reasonable efforts be made to prevent placement. We are aware that the Division has been aggressive in providing funding to develop and implement community-based services for families. It seems an appropriate time to evaluate whether or not such services have been successful. Are they directed to the most appropriate population? Has there been any assessment of the utilization and success of those programs funded by the Division?

Similarly, are effective services being provided by the Division to reunify and stabilize families where placement has occurred? We are seriously concerned about some of the quality assurance data on this point. For example, parent-worker visitation averages 9 visits per year. Is this sufficient to provide support and services to a parent so that a child can return to his home?

The use of service agreements were also documented as problematic in the quality assurance reports. According to the data, although 89% of foster care cases had a DITS case plan, only 54% had actual service agreements. Of those, 26% were completed without the parent as a party to the agreement. We stress the importance of this issue because 80% of the children in placement are there under the authority of a voluntary placement agreement. The service agreement, therefore, is the only document outlining parental and agency responsibilities.

Finally, we are concerned that there seem to be strong standards for the documentation of termination of parental rights cases but not for family re-unification cases. It seems ironic that the effort to search for a child's family members is usually intensified when the case goal changes to adoption. Similar efforts at the time of placement could have provided family resources to support the child at home. Has the Division measured the effect of such efforts? Has there been policy on standards for documentation regardless of case goal?

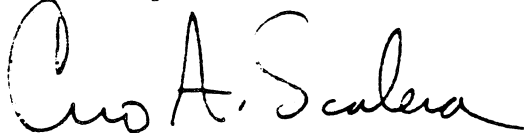
We cannot conclude without acknowledging the strides the Division has made. We strongly support your efforts to provide community-based services to the families and children you serve. We believe that the Division has made a strong commitment to the adoption system and to foster parent concerns. We are also aware of Division efforts

to develop new initiatives such as the legislative proposal for long-term foster care custody and new policy on open adoption and the use of risk foster homes. We are, however, concerned that it is somewhat premature to look toward new policy before the problems within the basic system are fully addressed. Our fear is that new goals will be developed not to meet the needs of children but to account for children the system has failed.

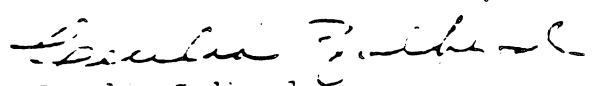
ACNJ remains strongly committed to the children in the child welfare system. The issues and concerns we raise in this letter are reflections of that commitment. We believe that the children within this system are those to whom the state owes its greatest responsibility: those children for whom the state has intervened and undertaken a parenting role. We are concerned that the policies to be implemented, that services and supports be provided, that management provide accountability to ensure that no child suffers the consequences of a system that has not met his needs.

In conclusion, we would like to express our appreciation for your cooperation in our efforts. Your willingness to share data with us and your support of our participation in various Division task forces and committees has allowed for public scrutiny of this important issue. We would welcome a meeting to further discuss those concerns we have addressed.

Sincerely,



Carlo A. Scalera
Executive Director



Cecilia Zaikind
Government Relations Coordinator

cc: Senator Leanna Brown

**TROUBLED YOUTH IN NEW JERSEY
CRITICAL ISSUES**

**NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES
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Julie Turner, Executive Director

September, 1987

TROUBLED YOUTH IN NEW JERSEY
CRITICAL ISSUES
SUMMARY

New Jersey's system of caring for troubled children has reached a crisis situation in which:

- * There are not enough beds; detention centers, shelters psychiatric units, correctional facilities, and DDD and residential treatment programs are at or over capacity; Over 500 children are placed by DYFS out of state.
- * A troubled New Jersey child is more likely to be placed in a locked or temporary placement than in a residential treatment program.
- * Increasing numbers of children are being placed in corrections, shelters, and detention care.
- * A pattern of inequality exists with the likelihood of a child's being placed in a treatment program versus being placed in a correctional or temporary facility varying significantly by county.
- * The number of New Jersey children placed out of state has increased almost 60% in two years; at the same time the number of in-state residential treatment programs has dropped substantially.
- * The DYFS placement process is cumbersome and time consuming, often resulting in children waiting six months or more in "temporary" settings and/or being denied appropriate treatment.
- * The source of funding may play an inordinate role in determining a child's placement.
- * Major changes in the entire child welfare, juvenile justice, children's mental health system are necessary; A Department of Children's Services is called for.

TROUBLED YOUTH IN NEW JERSEY
CRITICAL ISSUES

In one of her last keynote addresses, Margaret Mead announced that, based on her many years of research, she now knew what to do about adolescents in America. As the audience eagerly awaited, she carefully explained her "solution": "The minute they turn thirteen, put them in the attic and lock the door; do not, under any circumstances, open the door until they turn twenty." Although at times an appealing thought to parents of teenagers and to others in the community, this is not seen by most as a socially acceptable solution to dealing with difficult youngsters.

For New Jersey's most troubled children, a variety of Departments, Divisions and agencies provide a variety of "solutions", often involving placement of the child in some type of residential program, some of which offer no more resolution to a child's problem than Margaret Mead's attic, but do serve the purpose of getting them out of the community. The most difficult children may be placed in "temporary" shelter and detention care, correctional facilities, psychiatric hospitals, or treatment facilities, including residential treatment centers, group homes, and teaching parent families (specialized foster homes).

In reviewing statistics provided, by different sources, we find a discriminatory non-system, full to over-capacity. While the statistics are not entirely comparable, they paint a vivid picture of 1) insufficient beds, 2) insufficient beds allocated for treatment, and 3) entry into treatment vs. correctional placement varying considerably according to county. Numbers, while valuable in pointing to patterns and in raising questions, tend to obfuscate the children which they represent. It is worth reminding ourselves constantly that each number represents a child--an abused, troubled, handicapped, delinquent, and/or disturbed child--a child worthy of our attention and care. It is also worth reminding ourselves what the different placements mean to a child, stigmatized as "crazy" or "criminal", waiting in limbo powerless to see or effect his future, or sent hundreds of miles from home and community.

No Room at the...

New Jersey's child welfare/juvenile justice/ children's mental health "systems" have reached a crisis situation in which there are not enough

beds for troubled youth in any system. Excluding foster care, most of New Jersey's troubled children who are placed outside their homes are served by several systems, all of which are full to overflowing:

-Detention centers are over capacity with the average population having increased 32% in two years.

-Shelters are near capacity with their population having tripled in two years.

-The two state psychiatric hospitals are at or over capacity, (at the time, the plan is to substantially cut long-term beds).

-All CCIS units are at capacity with waiting lists. The TRIS waiting list is six weeks for emergencies.

-DYFS funded residential treatment centers and group homes are near capacity with an additional 500 or more children placed out of state. Out of state placements have soared over 50% in two years.

-DDD facilities are at capacity with approximately 150 children placed out of state. Having a child accepted by DDD is described as a "near impossibility."

New Jersey's ill planned non-system of caring for troubled children has reached a crisis in which all the diverse agencies are at or over capacity with those children who are accepted for services. No figures are available on the number of children denied services.

Where Have All the Children Gone?

Not only are there insufficient beds, the allocation is such that a troubled New Jersey child is more likely to be placed in a highly restrictive, locked stigmatizing (correctional or state mental hospital) facility or in a "temporary" shelter or detention center (which provide no treatment) than in a less restrictive treatment program. Of the approximately 3,900 children placed outside their homes in other than foster care (of DDD facilities, CCIS units, or privately funded placements):

-23% are in shelter or detention centers. Many wait six months or more, in a limbo status, in these "temporary" settings, receiving no treatment.

-39% are in correctional settings-DOC facilities or detention.

-25% are in Department of Corrections facilities.

-Approximately 56% are in correctional, state psychiatric hospitals, or temporary shelter or detention care.

-Only 44% are in non-restrictive treatment programs. Since the non-restrictive placements (unlike correctional, detention and shelter placements) serve children of all ages, the percentage of adolescents receiving treatment services is probably considerable lower.

Increasing number of children are being placed in correctional, detention and shelter facilities.

-In 1985, juvenile committments to corrections numbered 794. In 1986, 974. Waiting lists for correctional placements soared as high as 173 in April 1987. The increase in correctional committments came primarily from four counties (Passaic, an increase of 47; Camden, an increase of 46; Hudson, an increase of 38 and Essex, an increase of 27).

-In January 1985, children in shelters numbered 117; in February, 1987, the number tripled to 352.

-In 1985, the average daily detention population was 431.7; in the first five months of 1987, 571.

-While an increasing number of children are being placed in correctional facilities, according to a recent JDDC paper, within one year (between the first six months of 1985 and the comparable period of 1986) court referrals to DYFS decreased by 41.9%, from 215 to 125.

In addition, in 1986, 298 children were committed to state hospitals (141 to Arthur Brisbane and 157 to Trenton) while an estimated 1,254 entered CCIS units. Children in "temporary" detention and shelter care averaged about 887 in 1986; an additional 1271 were committed to correctional facilities or state hospitals for a total of 2159 (this does not include those temporarily committed to CCIS units). Only 1721 were in treatment facilities, of which over 500 were placed out of state. Thus for every five children placed in a restrictive or temporary placement, only four were in a non-restrictive treatment facility.

Some Are Lucky, Some Are Not

The likelihood of a child being placed in a non-restrictive treatment facility versus being placed in a restrictive or temporary facility varies significantly depending on the child's county. In Passaic county, for instance, for every child in a treatment facility, 4.4 were in restrictive or shelter care; only 18% were in treatment facilities. In neighboring Bergen county, 63% were in treatment facilities. 50% of Passaic's placed (other than foster care) children are in Department of Corrections facilities;

Only 10% of Bergen's. 72% of Passaic's were in correctional/detention settings compared to Bergen's 25%. Comparing Passaic to Essex, a Passaic child had less than half the chance of being placed in a treatment facility (39% Essex to 18% Passaic) and twice the chance (50% Passaic to 24% Essex) of being placed in a correctional facility. The number of children committed to corrections does not appear to correlate with the number of offenders nor the number of offenses:

County	# of offenders 1/1/87-3/31/87	# of offenses	Correct. committ. 1986	Corr. Comm. # offenders (annualized)
Bergen	949	1416	18	0.4%
Passaic	282	445	172	20.3%
Essex	2573	4260	143	1.8%

While Passaic County is extreme, in reviewing the figures, there are significant differences between other counties. The discrepancies also include children committed to state psychiatric hospitals. The percentage of this group (of the placed as defined) in state hospitals ranged from highs of 19.6% of Morris children and 17.1% of Middlesex children to lows of 1.6% in Bergen and 0 in Gloucester and Warren.

The pattern of inequity continues to hold true as we compare the number and types of placements to the total population, age 10-19. It is clear that the wealthier, less urbanized counties with lower minority populations place relatively few children in correctional, short term or treatment facilities in comparison to the poorer more urbanized counties. Seven counties placed 20 or less per 10,000 (Bergen, Burlington, Gloucester, Hunterdon, Morris, Sussex, and Warren). Seven counties placed more than 40 per 10,000 (Atlantic, Camden, Cumberland, Essex, Hudson, Passaic, and Union). However, it is important to note the differences between these counties

County	Detent. Correct.	Treat ment	Total	# of- fenders	#of- fenses	Corr. Comm.	Corr. Com. offenders
Passaic	35.1	9.0	48.9	282	445	172	20.3
Camden	26.5	19.8	51.1	867	1344	169	6.5
Atlant.	23.4	21.1	48.4	534	951	63	3.9
Cumber.	21.6	20.7	44.5	430	938	22	1.7
Union	19.2	15.7	44.1	967	1687	75	2.6
Essex	18.7	19.3	49.3	2673	4760	143	1.8
Hudson	15.0	25.7	49.1	964	1487	66	2.3

In looking at the five who place 48-51 per 10,000, the difference of less than three per 10,000 is less significant than the proportion placed in correctional versus treatment. Hudson, with a total of 49.1 places only 15 in correctional settings while sending 25.7 to treatment facilities. Passaic, on the other hand, while placing 35.1 in correctional settings, sends only 9 to treatment facilities. In comparison to Passaic's meager 9, Camden, Atlantic, and Essex send over 19 per 10,000 to treatment facilities. There is no correlation between the number of offenders and offenses and those committed to correctional facilities. Comparing the number of children committed to the number of offenders, we find a wide range between 1.8% and 20.3%. Only 0.4% of Bergen offenders were committed.

It is not within the purview of this paper to analyze the reasons for the serious differences in the treatment of children based on their county. An in-depth study, analyzing a range of factors, seems indicated. Regardless of the reasons, there are serious public policy concerns when one finds a clear pattern of inequitable access to non-stigmatizing less restrictive treatment programs and an inequitable and inordinate utilization of correctional facilities.

Out of Sight.....

Over the past years, New Jersey has been unwilling to make a commitment to serve its handicapped, emotionally disturbed, and troubled youth by developing and maintaining a range of residential treatment facilities and community based services. The misallocation of resources and the reluctance of New Jersey to plan in a comprehensive way and support services for its children is demonstrated not only by the substantial number of children in non-treatment facilities, but also by New Jersey's "exporting" a large number of its most needy children for placement in other states. At the same time that increasing numbers of children are sent out of state, the number of in-state residential treatment centers has dropped substantially.

-The ACNJ (Association for Children of New Jersey) 1975 study of residential facilities listed 28 private residential facilities (excluding specialized substance abuse and maternity facilities); in 1987 DYFS lists fifteen (including two also licensed and used primarily by DDD) excluding

specialized facilities.* Actually one, Boys Town has become a group home, cutting the number to 14.

-In 1975, 1013 New Jersey children were placed in New Jersey residential treatment centers; in April, 1987, only 664.

-During the same time period, there has been an increase in the number of children placed in community based homes (from 176-237) and in teaching parent families (from 0-178). With these group home and teaching parent family beds, if the 1013 New Jersey residential beds had been maintained (developed and funded to serve the appropriate populations), New Jersey would be able to serve approximately 1428 children in state, thus cutting down substantially on the number of children sent out of state.

-Of the 14 existing residential treatment centers, two are new since the time of the ACNJ study (Project Use and Devereux Deerhaven). In other words, in just over twenty years, 16 of the 28 facilities closed (or were modified into smaller group homes). In addition, other new programs were developed and closed during this time.

-Over the years, there has been limited support by DYFS and DHS for the treatment facilities. Costs of comparable state-run residential treatment centers are approximately double those of private facilities. In spite of turnover rates approaching 100% annually in child care staff (and its negative impact on needy children), the Department of Human Services has been unwilling to fund a moderate salary increase. Salaries for the state child care staff are considerably higher than those of private facilities. This critical salary issue is indicative of a pervasive lack of support of the private agencies which provide most of the in-state residential treatment.

-From 1985 to 1987, the number of children placed out of state has risen from 318 to 506, an increase of over 50%!

-In spite of the number of children placed out-of-state, no comprehensive study has been done to evaluate their needs nor has there been a comprehensive plan to develop and maintain programs in state to meet their needs

*Aims, Bancroft, Bonnie Brae, Children's Home of Burlington, Children's Psychiatric Center, Devereux, Volley Center, Kilbarchen, Mount St. Joseph, Mount Scott, Project Use, Ranch Hope, Somerset Hills, and St. Peter's.

The "exporting" of troubled children has a serious impact on the possible quality of care they receive, on the individual children and their families, and on the New Jersey child care system.

-In-state facilities must meet rigorous state standards and are regularly monitored in both announced and unannounced visits. Stringent (and appropriate) institutional abuse and neglect regulations apply and are enforced. Out of state facilities do not have to meet similar stringent standards nor are they subject to comparable levels of monitoring.

- Community people (board members, volunteers, and others), visiting family members, DYFS caseworkers, school personnel, and child placement review members provide additional informal monitoring, and can (and will) report possible problems for immediate investigation.

-Utilizing both the formal and informal referral systems in-state, a child ready for discharge can be more readily and appropriately moved home or to a less restrictive setting. Other New Jersey resources are more readily available to the child and family, thus helping insure better continuity of care.

- For most children, continued and regular contact with their families is essential. Even for children for whom (because of their own severe disabilities or because of the severe dysfunction of the family) return home is not a viable plan, visits-at the facility or at home, and regular telephone contact are important. When the plan is return home, frequent visits are essential to help insure that the child remains psychologically a part of the family.

- Visits and regular contact by the DYFS caseworker and local school-essential in planning a child's return-are less likely for children placed out of state.

-The ability of the facility to work with the family around the child's problems and toward return home is minimized as the child is placed out of state.

-Although many of the children placed out of state are within fifty miles of New Jersey, children placed in Delaware and Pennsylvania, for instance, are often a three hour or more drive (with limited public transportation) for families from northern New Jersey, a serious obstacle to regular visits.

New Jersey's reliance on other state's facilities has allowed it to avoid planning and developing the necessary range of services in state.

At this time, there are not sufficient beds in state, nor are there programs designed to meet the specific needs of many of the children placed out of state. Facilities do not exist in state based on a needs assessment and a comprehensive plan. The few remaining facilities determine their own plan and program, changing only in response to changing referrals. Exporting children is an easy , and in the short-term less costly, "solution" to developing and maintaining the needed in-state programs. In long term, it is expensive and detrimental to New Jersey's children.

It's Easier to Get Into Harvard

The DYFS placement process is a cumbersome complicated one in which a minimum of six months is not uncommon. Obtaining the diagnostic workups, educational classification and funding approval (or non-approval), preparing the summary, obtaining necessary DYFS (District Office, Regional, and/or Central Office) approvals are only the first steps in a non-coordinated process. At any point in this initial phase, a variety of barriers can emerge. Criteria for determining which children are appropriate for placement seems to vary between district offices.

Once the package is complete and a decision made that some form of residential placement is necessary and appropriate, phase two begins. In the majority of cases, placement packages are sent out shot gun fashion to a large number of "least restrictive" (an euphemism for less costly) placements, even when the caseworker does not feel these are appropriate for a child (case records note-"He has to be rejected by the group homes before I can apply to the residential treatment centers he needs.) Once rejected on round one, a similar process is carried out on round two. If again rejected, exceptional funding is sought to permit placement in certain facilities, and the serious search for an appropriate placement begins. With few exceptions, most DYFS caseworkers have little knowledge of the different facilities; decisions are made not by the caseworker based on how they see the needs of the child, but rather by which facility has an opening and is willing to serve the child.

Obviously this is a frustrating and costly process which does not meet the needs of children desperately in need of treatment. Caseworkers spend valuable time preparing multiple packets for agencies which are inappropriate (including referring an adolescent girl to a facility serving

young boys). Agencies spend valuable staff time reviewing children clearly inappropriate for their program. In the meantime, parents, judges, and the community become angry and frustrated. Caseworkers become angry and defensive about being blamed for a process over which they have little control.

And the child waits and waits and...often deteriorates. Children sit in "temporary" holding facilities-shelter and detention-receiving no treatment and frequently minimal educational services. They may move from one foster home to another and another. They may be excluded from school. They may act out, run away, attempt suicide. Their escalating behavior- in response to being in limbo-may then make them inappropriate for facilities which could have served them six months earlier. One child who had sat in the shelter for months explained her running away: "At least I got to see the judge. I just wanted someone to tell me what's going to happen to me." Given the non-functional placement process, there is no rational answer to her question.

Money Makes the Placements Go Round

No placements-be they shelter, detention, corrections, state hospitals or treatment facilities-are inexpensive. What does differ is: who pays the bill? While never publicly or officially stated, this may be a major factor in delaying or preventing placements, and may partially explain the high number of correctional placements from some counties.

Detention: The county pays; no school funding

Shelter: The county pays a substantial part; the cost to DYFS is lower than a treatment facility; no school funding

Corrections: Department of Corrections; county pays nothing; low cost school funding-schools can not refuse to fund

State Hospitals: DMH (Medicaid)-Counties may pay a portion; low cost school funding-schools can not refuse to fund

Treatment facilities: DYFS funded-Counties pay a quarter of the cost; education costs vary; none to sending school district in most group homes and teaching parent families; in residential treatment centers, varies, but are often higher than in corrections and state hospitals; schools can and do delay or refuse to provide funding.

Clearly it is in DYFS's and the local school system's fiscal interest to move slowly, if at all, in placing a child into a treatment program. It is also in DYFS's, the school's and the county's fiscal interest to define a child as more appropriate for corrections. Two examples highlight the problem. At a time when Arthur Brisbane is overcrowded, a DYFS region refused to place disturbed children in a less restrictive (and less costly- but not to DYFS) facility which had accepted them because of the region's budgetary constraints. A facility, in one year, accepted sixteen children from one school district. Not one entered the facility because the school district refused to provide funding. It is not inconceivable that judges, facing overcrowded detention centers and frustrated by the DYFS placement process, decide to send a child to a correctional facility rather than to a more appropriate treatment facility. Thus, the varying financial responsibilities may, in some instances, determine where and when a child is placed rather than the needs of the child or the actual cost of care.

Not I Said the.....

It is both easy and difficult to assess responsibility for this non-system disaster. In public declamatory simplistic statements, Division and Department heads, Commissioners, legislators, agencies and child advocates can (and will) easily and loudly blame everyone else. With fervor, one can blame:

1. One's predecessor(s). All of them!
2. Lack of funds (from the legislator, from DYFS to fund programs, from the local governments, etc.)
3. The other divisions for not taking responsibility for their children.
4. counties/municipalities " " " " " " "
5. The state " " " " " " "
6. The schools " " " " " " "
7. Private agencies " " " " " " "
8. # 3-7 for not cooperating, coordinating, planning.
9. Poverty
- 10 Racism
11. Lack of prevention, or education or....

While each of these factors play a role in the current situation, the problems are long standing and no easy answers fully explicate nor resolve the problems. What is clear is that we can and do devote considerable

energy attempting to establish blame; what this accomplishes is a diversion from looking at underlying problems, a confusion in the minds of the public and the legislature, and a propensity for quick fix solutions in a time of crisis. (The current mental health "plan" is a sterling example of such a quick-fix non-plan "solution".) Rather than searching for the scapegoat, it may be more constructive to look for underlying themes which have resulted in the current situation.

1. An overemphasis (whether based on philosophy or on fiscal reasons) on least restrictive rather than most appropriate. Rather than recognizing that some children require residential treatment for some period of time, and working to insure quality and appropriate treatment facilities, many (including child advocates) view almost any form of out-of-home treatment as a (somewhat necessary) evil. Community based is not a panacea!

2. Flowing from this philosophy, New Jersey has been unwilling to make the commitment to develop and maintain the necessary range of services for its most troubled youth, including sufficient and appropriate treatment beds.

3. Within their existing budgetary constraints, mental health and corrections have placed less emphasis on serving children than adults, thus diverting resources from children.

4. Fiscal responsibilities may play an inordinate role in determining where and when a child is placed. The actual cost may be less a concern than whose budget is being tapped. When it is easier and cheaper to allow a child to remain in "temporary" shelter and detention care, there is less incentive to DYFS to revise an unwieldy placement process. School districts can prohibit a child's receiving treatment for financial reasons.

5. A pervasive penny-wise, pound-foolish philosophy undercuts the development and maintenance of quality programs. Bureaucrats too rarely articulate publicly the actual cost of quality care and advocate strongly for the necessary funds.

6. With a variety of agencies, divisions, and departments having responsibility, often no one is responsible and accountable. A multi-problemed youth (who may be: emotionally disturbed, of borderline intelligence, delinquent, abused/neglected, and a substance abuser) may have multiple case managers and multiple assessments. The result, all too often, is each agency, division, and department stating that he "doesn't belong because he is too _____ (fill in the blank) and should be _____'s responsi-

bility. More broadly, with the variety of agencies having overlapping responsibilities, it is difficult to hold any one fully responsible and accountable for systemic problems.

7. Planning takes place without comprehensive and comparable statistics being readily available on the children served by the various state and county agencies. There are apparently few statistics available on the children who are denied services.

8. At each crisis, quick fix plans are developed in a vacuum with little recognition of and input from other divisions and services, and without recognition of the impact of the newest plan on other services. "New" commissions, committees, and task forces are proposed and/or established to deal with a segment of the problem. "New" initiatives and programs are promulgated.

Regardless of the good will and best interests of professionals and advocates, the antique non-system of serving troubled children is not only fragmented and divisive, it is also costly, fiscally, and more importantly to the children and their families. Our approach to this non-system of caring for troubled children is comparable to trying to keep a twenty year old car running. At each breakdown, a new transmission, battery, or carburetor is provided to try to keep the rusty failing machine moving a few more miles. New coats of shiny paint are applied to attempt to cover the dents and rust, but quickly slough off. Regular maintenance is not carried out so, as in the oil filter commercial, we pay later. Over the long run, the repair bills mount, breakdowns increase, often at critical times, and the inefficient car becomes less safe. To carry the analogy a step further, the old wreck is jointly owned by different drivers who take it to be repaired by different mechanics (each guaranteeing-not in writing-a miracle). The repair bills always exceed the estimates and the repairs barely outlast the warranty. Each driver and mechanic blames the others for the problems. "If only you had fixed the hose when you put in the battery." "If only you had taken it to my garage." While a new car would be less costly and far more efficient, the various drivers not only can not agree on the model, they also have not agreed who will pay the down payment and whose names will appear on the ownership papers. The current crisis which includes insufficient beds, insufficient beds allocated for treatment, seemingly discriminatory placement of children, and the inordinate number of children placed out of state is symptomatic that the old wreck has

has again broken down. Do we do a quick-fix repair job, or do we now develop and invest in a new model?

Forward to the Future!

While it is easier to be critical, it is more difficult to formulate solutions (and even more difficult to implement the solutions into realistic programs). I would like to propose a general direction for children's services in this state. In proposing a new model, I would like to focus on one major structural change, and then focus on issues specific to residential services. There are many additional issues relating to prevention, child abuse/neglect, foster care/adoption, voluntary vs involuntary, and premanency which, while not discussed in this paper, are critical issues to be addressed in designing our new model. I would hope that the concepts in this paper provide an impetus for discussion, debate, additional ideas, revisions to this model, and most importantly, action.

Model

1. A Department of Children's Services be established which includes all children now served by DYFS, DDD, DMHH, DOC, and DOH.
2. Ongoing comprehensive needs assessments be carried out to include all children served by these agencies and children referred who are not served. While the needs assessment should be carried out on a state wide basis, it is essential to have local input.
3. The Department of Children's Services establish in each county an intake/diagnostic/assessment unit with the capability of completing a full work-up in one month.
4. A child and family have one case manager who is responsible for arranging appropriate services, regardless of the child's specific needs.
5. The Department of Children's Services be responsible for funding all long term placements (including what are now correctional, mental health, developmentally disabled, and treatment) (possibly with the counties contributing a percentage) and for funding county shelter/detention care after a limited time period so that the child's needs and most appropriate services determine the placement or non-placement rather than the funding source. Funding mechanisms be developed to provide incentives to counties/municipalities to develop community based programs which prevent entry into the more restrictive state system.
6. The Department of Children's Services, in establishing its funding

priorities, focus on children most at risk of out of home placement and most at risk of abuse and neglect.

7. An Office of Child Advocate be established, separate and distinct from the Department of Children's Services.

8. All children in out of home placement be reviewed by the child placement review boards acting as arms of the court.

Residential Issues

1. One major component of the needs assessment focus on those children who are in or are referred for an out-of-home treatment program to determine:

a. What community programs are necessary to maintain children in the community or to enable them to return more quickly? How many, where, with what components? Day treatment, respite care, expanded mental health, intensive family therapy, for instance, are options to be considered.

b. What additional residential (to the existing correctional, mental health, DYFS, DDD, shelter and detention) beds are needed to serve all children in state? How many? What specific programs? Where located? Can some of the existing beds be utilized for more appropriate programs? For instance, could shelters become community based treatment programs?

c. In developing an ongoing process of needs assessment, it is essential to develop a means for early identification of those populations for whom it is difficult to find appropriate services/placements (currently, for instance, arsonists, sex offenders, dually diagnosed) so that necessary programs can be developed in a timely fashion.

2. A change from a philosophy that least restrictive community based is always in a child's best interests. The guiding principal should be most appropriate (a child should not have to fail in the community or in several foster homes before receiving necessary treatment). For a variety of reasons, some children must be in a more restrictive environment for some period of time. Rather than an anti-residential philosophy, we should insure that the children who need residential treatment receive it at the appropriate time and for the necessary length of time, and with a quality program that meets their needs. At the same time, we should insure that no child is in a restrictive setting for lack of necessary community based programs.

3. Quality programs are costly. Certain populations require very high staff/child ratios. The caliber of the program is contingent on the quality of the staff. There must be a commitment on the part of the state to

recognize the need for and adequately fund quality programs, including providing both adequate salary levels and adequate staffing levels.

4. An ongoing training program must be developed and required for all child care staff.

5. A child should be able to move easily and quickly between different types of programs. A child in a residential treatment center who is suicidal must be able to enter a closed psychiatric unit immediately, be stabilized, and return to the center; or a child who has progressed should be able to move to a group home, specialized foster home or return to his family with the ability to re-enter the treatment center, if necessary. Underlying this concept is the need for one agency responsible for all out-of-home placements, regardless of their being "mental health", "corrections", etc. We must not continue a fragmented system in which varying divisions compete to develop specialized programs for "their" populations.

6. The residential programs should have primary responsibility for working with the families as well as the child, and should have the capacity of providing services to the family in the community where necessary. Too often now, the child is treated in isolation with the family's not being an integral part of the treatment plan. Families (if they receive treatment at all) may be served by overburdened DYFS workers or by local private agencies who have little idea of the child's needs, progress, or program. In order to help insure the child's reintegration into the family and community, the residential provider should be responsible for developing and helping provide after-care, in conjunction with the Department of Children's Services and community agencies. Too often now, children who "succeed" in a residential program "fail" when they return home because there is no planned and integrated program of after care.

7. A residential system be developed so that the majority of children are served within their region (or within a reasonable geographical distance) so that distance is not a barrier to regular visits, family therapy, and after care. Whenever possible, treatment programs should be located in those counties with the larger populations requiring placement. Within each region, there should be a range of services including the most restrictive (psychiatric hospitals, correctional), residential programs with specialized schools (these programs could provide a range or more or less intensive services), group homes, specialized foster homes, as well as, on a county (or cross county) level day treatment, respite care, etc. Children should cross

regional lines only when a) there is not a suitable program (with an opening) in their region and b) the geographical distance is not significant (children in bordering counties could be served equally well by either region) or, because a highly specialized program serving a limited number of children would not be cost effective on a regional level, placements should be on a state level. Consideration should be given to developing programs providing a range of these services. For example, a residential treatment center could also provide a day treatment program. Specialized services could be developed to serve children in a variety of programs; for instance, an "outward bound" type program could be utilized by children from any of the community or residential treatment programs.

8. Family participation in treatment should be required, with support from the court from the court, if necessary. All too often, families, overwhelmed by their child's problems, "dump" the child, and abrogate all responsibility and involvement. (In addition, families must be budgeted and required to contribute to the support of their children.) Only when it has been carefully determined that family reunification is impossible and that the family's involvement is detrimental to the child should the family not be involved. In such instances, termination of parental rights and/or emancipated minor status should be considered.

9. When a child is determined to be in need of residential placement, specific goals and objectives with reasonable time frames should be formulated. Ongoing (internal and external) monitoring must be carried out to help insure that progress is being made and that a child is moved to a less restrictive program when appropriate.

10. While it is clear that we lack specialized programs for certain populations (for instance, sex offenders, arsonists, autistic, dually diagnosed), an additional service area also must be developed. Some children can not return home. For children whose families are destructive, rejecting and dysfunctional, independent living programs must be available. For severely handicapped children who will require long term institutional or sheltered care, clear mechanisms must be established and enforced so that at a specific age they are "picked up" and served by the relevant agency (such as DDD).

11. Except for a very unique child with highly specialized needs, no child should be placed out of state. A program to develop the necessary resources in-state should be planned immediately and ^{fully} implemented within two years. If necessary, the legislature should mandate that (except for

a specific small number or percentage of children) all children be served in state and provide the resources necessary to develop the programs.

12. Educational funding must be available immediately to a child who requires out of home placement. No child should be denied the right to treatment based on the lack of funding from a school district. One possible approach would be for the Department of Education to assume immediate responsibility for funding and later billing the responsible school district. Another issue to be considered in the case of group homes is whether the sending school district should retain responsibility for its children.

Numbers and Questions

The numbers are not comparable (see page 19). Some reflect populations on a given day, others a yearly average, and others commitments in a year. However, these were the available figures. Figures also were not generally available with age breakdowns. Although one could anticipate some minor changes in percentages when using comparable figures, the figures point to clear patterns and raise more questions than they answer. Explanations require skilled research and very specific knowledge of the counties and of diverse agencies on a state and local level.

For example, coming from and knowing Bergen County, I was not surprised to find, within the low over-all rate of placement, the the low proportion of correctional placements and the higher proportion of placements in residential facilities. Not only is Bergen one of the wealthier counties, its county government has made a firm and lasting commitment to provide many services to its troubled youth. It has a long judicial tradition of seeking (and insisting on) treatment for troubled acting out youth, while utilizing corrections only for hard-cord delinquents for whom other alternatives are not suitable. The vast majority of its school districts not only are willing to provide educational funding, they frequently are strong advocates for a child. Parents often are also strong advocates for their children and are frequently able to negotiate the systems. The DYFS district office has recognized and supported residential placements when appropriate, while seeking and utilizing the many community services; it has an experienced residential unit with a knowledgeable supervisor. The many county agencies work to coordinate services and to develop comprehensive plans for children. The mind-set of many community figures and the resultant commitment clearly are factors that are not measurable by numbers.

While one might expect clear differences between the wealthier and poorer counties, I have no easy explanation of the reasons between the differences between Passaic and Essex. What explains the wide differences in the use by different counties of the state psychiatric hospitals and of CCIS units? What explains the high rate of total placements in Cumberland and Salem counties? Each review of the numbers raises additional questions about the varying patterns.

While I and others could offer reasonable guesses, they would be just that-guesses- and planning must take place on the groundwork of facts and solid research rather than guesses and theories. I would hope that policy makers would ask the hard questions and insist on answers based on facts and research rather than theories and philosophy. I would also hope that the answers would lead to action and change.

How Do We Get There From Here?

Clearly, some parts of the recommendations are easier to implement than others. We can, if we so choose, do a needs assessment, develop specialized programs, adequately fund salaries and staff levels, develop resources to serve children in state, and resolve the educational funding problem. Given the current crisis, these are minimal needs. Far more difficult, obviously, is the total rethinking and restructuring of a system so that all children are served by one agency. There are political barriers, civil service barriers, etc., etc. Which children should be served by public agencies and which by private? How do we utilize the existing buildings and agencies? What would it cost and how would it be funded? Because it is difficult does not mean that it should not be done. We have a choice to make: do we continue to patch and repair a failing wreck or do we plan and invest in an effective efficient new model?

Julie Turner

The Tables and the Figures

Information used in the tables and throughout the paper came from the following sources:

Population figures: U.S. Census Estimated 1985

DYFS placement and shelter figures-DYFS Statistical Caseload-Activity Report for April 3, 1987 was used for the figures used in Tables I-V, and reflect the number of children in various placements on April 3, 1987. Additional figures were derived by information provided by DYFS to ACRF.

1975 figures on children in residential placement- Long Term Residential Care of Children in New Jersey: A Report of the Residential Task Force, Association for Children of New Jersey,

State Psychiatric Hospital Commitments and CCIS admissions-Division of Mental Health and Hospitals. Reflects the number of commitments in FY 1986 and the estimated number of admissions to CCIS based on a two month period.

Department of Corrections-Commitments-New Jersey Division of Juvenile Services and JDDC. The figures in Tables I-V reflect the number of commitments in 1986. Probation-New Jersey Division of Juvenile Services; Detention-JDDC 6/24/86.

Offenders/offenses Administrative Office of the Courts-1/1/87-3/31/87

Table I shows the actual numbers as derived from the above sources. It must be remembered that the figures are for somewhat different time periods, and may show children in placement on a specific date or children committed during the year.

Table II summarizes the figures in Table I into various categories.

Tables III and IV show the relationship of children in various placements to the 10-19 population; the figures shown reflect the number per 10,000 population.

Table V shows the relationship between certain types of placements to the total number of children placed in corrections, detention, shelters, psychiatric hospitals and treatment facilities.

Table VI lists the number of offenders and offenses, and the relationship of those committed to corrections to the number of offenders.

Table I

County	pop. under 19	pop. 10-19	known to DYFS	placed by DYFS	RTC gp home pub inst	shelter deten- tion	correc- tions	psych hosp	proba- tion	
Atlantic	79,400	38,400	2,193	288	75	11	27	63	4	182
Bergen	207,600	108,100	1,770	248	112	19	28	18	3	341
Burling- ton	133,000	66,300	1,390	288	56	11	12	23	8	282
Camden	157,800	77,700	4,612	647	142	21	37	169	16	374
Cape May	30,800	15,200	790	97	18	3	3	13	3	51
Cumber- land	48,100	22,700	1,120	247	38	0	27	22	5	281
Essex	239,200	123,000	11,237	2151	207	88	87	143	50	1006
Glou- cester	70,500	34,900	736	188	41	5	7	5	0	126
Hudson	146,200	72,700	3,803	492	174	36	43	66	25	597
Hunter- don	27,100	13,800	387	44	7	13	0	4	1	62
Mercer	97,000	48,400	2,009	375	69	21	27	21	12	575
Middle- sex	170,600	84,600	3,275	401	92	34	33	43	44	453
Mon- mouth	157,200	79,600	3,026	586	131	18	20	67	32	497
Morris	126,000	61,500	830	134	42	7	15	8	19	287
Ocean	118,900	55,700	1,946	257	62	8	12	21	18	382
Passaic	140,500	70,000	1,733	268	63	10	74	172	23	602
Salem	19,300	9,800	634	100	10	5	2	4	3	101
Somer- set	61,900	32,000	567	76	32	11	9	30	11	148
Sussex	43,200	20,500	917	82	17	2	10	6	4	143
Union	126,600	66,200	3,392	451	99	34	52	75	27	582
Warren	27,500	13,600	672	68	8	1	10	1	0	95
New Jersey	2,233,100 1,114,800		52,581	9,001	1543	352	535	974	298	7176

Table II

County	corr. det.	det shelt	psych corr	cor/det psych shelt	rtc,gh p.i. t.p.f.	long term	total	total and DYFS	CCIS
Atlantic	90	38	67	105	81	148	186	382	12
Bergen	46	47	21	68	117	138	185	297	186
Burling- ton	35	23	31	54	58	89	112	331	24
Camden	206	58	185	243	154	339	397	819	84
Cape May	16	6	16	22	21	37	43	116	30
Cumber- land	49	27	27	54	47	74	101	301	0
Essex	230	175	193	368	238	431	606	2431	138
Glous- cester	12	12	5	17	46	51	63	200	6
Hudson	109	79	91	170	187	278	357	626	48
Hunter- don	4	13	5	18	7	12	25	49	0
Mercer	48	48	33	81	75	108	156	435	246
Middle- sex	76	67	87	154	104	191	258	521	48
Non- mouth	87	38	99	137	146	245	283	705	18
Norris	23	22	27	49	48	75	97	176	156
Ocean	33	20	39	59	65	104	124	308	18
Passaic	246	84	195	279	63	258	342	537	90
Salem	6	7	7	14	20	27	34	109	18
Somerset	39	20	41	61	37	77	97	126	30
Sussex	16	12	10	22	19	29	41	102	30
Union	127	86	102	188	104	206	292	605	60
Warren	11	11	11	12	12	13	24	79	12
New Jersey	1509	887	1272	2159	1721	2993	3880	10,808	1254

Table III

Relationship to 10-19 population (.0000)

County	known to DYFS	placed by DYFS	RTC gp home tpf	shelter	deten tion	correc- tions	psych hosp	proba- tion	CCIS
Atlantic	571	75	21.1	2.9	7.0	16.4	1.04	47.4	3.1
Bergen	164	23	10.8	1.8	2.6	1.7	.27	31.5	17.2
Burling- ton	210	43	8.7	1.7	1.8	3.5	1.2	42.5	3.6
Camden	594	83	19.8	2.7	4.8	21.8	2.06	42.5	10.8
Cape May	520	64	13.8	12.0	2.0	8.6	1.97	33.6	19.7
Cumber- land	493	109	20.7	0	11.9	9.7	2.2	123.8	0
Essex	914	175	19.3	7.1	7.1	11.6	4.07	81.8	11.2
Glous- cester	211	54	13.2	1.4	2.0	1.4	0	36.1	1.7
Hudson	523	68	25.7	5.0	5.9	9.1	3.4	82.1	6.6
Hunter- don	280	32	5.1	9.4	0	2.9	.7	44.9	0
Mercer	415	77	15.5	4.3	5.6	4.3	2.5	118.8	50.8
Middle- sex	387	47	12.3	4.0	3.9	5.1	5.2	53.5	5.7
Monmouth	380	74	18.3	2.3	2.5	8.4	4.0	62.4	2.3
Morris	135	22	7.8	1.1	2.4	1.3	3.1	46.7	25.3
Ocean	349	46	11.7	1.4	2.2	3.8	3.2	68.6	4.7
Passaic	248	38	9.0	1.4	10.6	24.6	3.3	86.0	12.9
Salem	647	102	20.4	5.1	2.0	4.1	3.1	103.1	18.4
Somerset	177	24	11.6	3.4	2.8	9.4	3.4	46.3	9.4
Sussex	447	40	9.3	1.0	4.9	2.9	2.0	69.8	14.6
Union	513	68	15.7	5.1	7.9	11.3	4.1	87.9	9.1
Warren	494	50	8.8	0.7	7.4	.7	0	69.8	8.8
New Jersey	472 417*	81 68.6*	15.4	3.2	4.8	8.7	2.67	64.4	11.2

* excluding Essex

Table IV

Relationship to 10-19 population (.0000)

County	Det corr	shelt det	psych corr	psych det- corr	det-corr psych shelt	corr psych treat	det-corr treat shelt	total placed
Atlantic-	23.4	9.9	17.4	24.4	27.3	38.5	48.4	99.5
Bergen	4.3	4.3	1.9	4.6	6.3	12.8	17.1	27.5
Burling- ton	5.3	3.5	4.7	6.5	8.1	13.4	16.9	49.9
Camden	26.5	7.5	23.8	28.6	31.3	43.6	51.1	111.8
Cape May	10.5	3.9	10.5	12.5	14.5	24.3	28.3	76.5
Cumber- land	21.6	11.9	11.9	23.2	23.8	32.6	44.5	132.6
Essex	18.7	14.2	15.7	22.8	29.9	35.0	49.3	197.6
Glous- cester	3.4	3.4	1.4	3.4	4.9	14.6	18.1	57.3
Hudson	15.0	10.9	12.5	18.4	23.4	38.2	49.1	86.1
Hunter- don	2.9	9.4	3.6	2.6	13.0	8.7	18.1	35.5
Mercer	9.9	9.9	6.8	12.4	16.7	22.3	32.2	89.8
Middle- sex	9.0	7.9	10.3	14.2	18.2	22.6	30.4	61.6
Monmouth	10.9	4.8	12.4	14.9	17.2	30.8	35.6	88.6
Morris	3.7	3.6	4.4	6.8	8.0	12.2	15.8	28.6
Ocean	5.9	3.6	7.0	9.1	10.6	18.7	22.3	55.3
Passaic	35.1	12.0	27.9	38.4	39.9	36.9	48.9	76.7
Salem	6.1	7.1	7.1	9.2	14.2	27.6	34.7	111.2
Somer- set	12.2	6.3	12.8	15.6	19.1	24.6	30.3	39.4
Sussex	7.8	5.9	4.9	9.8	16.7	14.1	20.0	49.8
Union	19.2	13.0	15.4	23.3	28.4	31.1	44.1	91.4
Warren	8.1	8.1	0.7	8.1	8.1	9.6	17.6	58.1
New Jersey	13.5	8.0	11.4	16.2	19.4	26.8	34.8	97.0 84.5 (excluding Essex)

det=detention; cor=corrections' shelt=shelter; psych=state psychiatric hospital;
treat= residential treatment centers, group homes, teaching parent families; total=
all DYFS placements and corrections, detention, state psychiatric hospitals

Table V

County	treat total	correc. total	cor.det total	det.sh. total	psych total	cor.det		treat long tm	treat corr psych
						shelt total	total		
Atlantic	.44	.34	.48	.20	.021	.54	.55		1.21
Bergen	.63	.10	.25	.25	.016	.35	.85		5.57
Burling- ton	.52	.21	.31	.21	.071	.42	.65		1.87
Camden	.39	.43	.52	.15	.04	.58	.45		.83
Cape May	.49	.30	.37	.14	.07	.44	.57		1.31
Cumber- land	.47	.22	.49	.27	.05	.49	.64		1.74
Essex	.39	.24	.38	.29	.083	.53	.55		1.23
Glous- cester	.73	.08	.19	.19	0	.27	.90		9.20
Hudson	.52	.18	.31	.22	.07	.40	.67		2.05
Hunter- don	.28	.16	.16	.52	.04	.68	.58		1.40
Mercer	.48	.13	.31	.31	.077	.44	.69		2.27
Middle- sex	.40	.17	.30	.26	.171	.43	.54		1.20
Mon- mouth	.52	.24	.31	.13	.113	.37	.60		1.47
Morris	.49	.08	.24	.23	.196	.31	.64		1.78
Ocean	.52	.17	.27	.16	.145	.33	.63		1.67
Passaic	.18	.50	.72	.25	.067	.75	.24		0.32
Salem	.59	.12	.18	.21	.088	.33	.74		2.86
Somer- set	.38	.31	.40	.21	.113	.52	.48		0.90
Sussex	.46	.15	.39	.29	.098	.44	.67		1.90
Union	.36	.26	.43	.29	.092	.55	.50		1.02
Warren	.50	.04	.46	.46	0	.50	.92		12.00
New Jersey	.44	.25	.39	.23	.07	.48	.58		1.35

Total=All the above placements:corrections, detention, shelter, psychiatric hospital, and treatment. Treatment=residential treatment centers, group homes, teaching parent families. Cor.=correctional facilities; det.=detention.Sh or Shelt= shelters. Psych= psychiatric hospital

Table VI

County	Offenders*	Offenses*	Corr. Comm.	Corr. Comm. Offenders +
Atlantic	534	951	63	3.9
Bergen	949	1416	18	0.4
Burlington	692	1222	23	1.1
Camden	867	1344	169	6.5
Cape May	73	123	13	5.9
Cumberland	430	938	22	1.7
Essex	2573	4260	143	1.8
Gloucester	340	606	5	0.5
Hudson	964	1487	66	2.3
Hunterdon	91	154	4	1.5
Mercer	808	1430	21	0.9
Middlesex	939	1540	43	1.5
Monmouth	961	1742	67	2.3
Morris	516	860	8	0.5
Ocean	553	1050	21	1.7
Passaic	282	445	172	20.3
Salem	145	237	4	0.9
Somerset	294	522	30	3.4
Sussex	147	287	6	1.4
Union	967	1687	75	2.6
Warren	123	263	1	0.3
New Jersey	13,248	22,563	974	2.4

*Four month period

+ on an annual basis

DYFS Placement Trends

Year	resid. care	res. in N.J.	res. out of state	group homes	shelter	teach. parent	rtc gh	rtc, gh teach. par.
1975	1629	1013	616	176	na	na	1805	-
1/85	942	643	318	205	117	101	1147	1248
2/6								
1987 4/3	1124	651	446	217	351	180	1314	1521
1987	1153	664	489	237	352	178	1390	1568
6/87			506					

Detention Trends

Average daily population	Admissions
1985	431.7
1st 5 mos. 1986	9,188
1986	3,916 (annual rate 9,398)
1st 5 mos 1987	4,514 (annual rate 10,834)

Department of Corrections Trends

	Average Daily Population			Total
	Institutions	Residential	Day Treatment	
1st 5 mos. 1986	608	291	234	1,133
1st 5 mos 1987	706	331	293	1,330
Increase	98	40	59	197 (17.4%)

Commitments

1985	794
1986	974
1st 5 mos 1986	468
1st 5 mos 1987	356

NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

The members of the New Jersey Association of Children's Residential Facilities serve children in need of long term out of home placement. The thirty group homes and residential treatment centers serve approximately 550 extremely troubled children who can not live at home or in a foster home. Most of the children coming under the supervision of our members are so damaged that caring and warmth alone will not remedy their problems. The individuals working with these children must also be highly skilled and well trained.

Child care salaries in residential facilities in which DYFS children are placed are abysmally low, with line child care workers' starting salaries at \$12,500 and child care supervisors at \$15,500. Comparable positions in DYFS facilities and in DDD and DMHH funded private facilities have significantly higher salaries. DDD and DMHH, recognizing the importance of qualified staff, have provided additional funding this year to upgrade salaries.

While the low salaries have been of concern for some years, more recently the inability to recruit and retain qualified child care staff has reached a crisis situation. A survey conducted by the Association documents the high turnover rate as well as the inability of facilities to attract educated, mature child care workers. This has a serious impact on the troubled children in care. Indeed, as a result of lack of qualified staff, facilities will become less able to accept and treat the most difficult children who may remain in the state hospitals, correctional facilities, "temporary" shelter or detention centers, or who are sent out of state to facilities which are not subject to the rigorous monitoring required of in-state facilities.

The child care crisis was brought to the attention of Commissioner Altman in October, 1986. The Association had hoped for an immediate infusion of funds to address the crisis; however, the Commissioner directed the Association to negotiate with DYFS. A series of meetings were held with representatives of DHS and DYFS. Based on a clear recognition of the crisis situation and its negative impact on children, there was consensus on the part of DYFS that the requested modest salary upgrade was necessary and reasonable. In late May, the Association was informed that the Commissioner had decided that there would be no salary increase.

It is worth noting that the cost of care in DYFS public facilities is substantially higher than in private facilities; the private facilities

average cost to the state is less than 60% of that of the DYFS facilities. Even with a moderate salary increase which would bring salaries more in line with those of comparable DYFS positions, private facilities would be far less expensive. In addition, with the unwillingness of the Department to provide the necessary funding to address this critical situation, many board members have serious questions about possible expansion to develop resources for children sent out of state, some as far as Wisconsin.

In October, 1986, the requested salary increase was \$2,000, with an additional \$500 for fringe and overtime. The total package was \$875,000. Eight months later, with the salary upgrades granted to DDD and DMHH funded facilities, the Association finds it necessary to request a \$3,000 increase (with \$750 for fringe and overtime) for a total package of approximately \$1,312,000. This would bring line child care starting salaries to \$15,500, child care supervisors to \$18,500 and masters level social workers to \$22,000.

FACT SHEET

	DYFS	DDD	DMHH	ACRF
Child care or youth worker	14,448-20,214			12,500
senior youth worker (experienced)	15,927-22,294		(BA) 15,500	12,500
child care or youth supervisors	17,558-24,584	18,500	15,500-	15,500
Caseworker (BA)	20,327-28,454		16,000	
MSW Social worker			20,000	18,800

DDD gave a 12% increase (5% for cost of living and 7% for salary equalization) on salary and fringe.

Costs of Residential Facilities*

	DYFS	private group homes	private etc's
1986 actual	53,268	21,892	26,242
1987 revised	53,751	27,769	27,769
1988 estimated	52,686	29,529	29,544

*Based on the Department of Human Services Budget Request, p. D-245

NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES
CHILD CARE WORKERS SURVEY-SUMMARY

Child care workers are essential members of the treatment teams in all residential facilities, and provide the twenty-four hour, hands-on care for New Jersey's most troubled children. In order to meet these children's needs, agencies must be able to attract and retain mature, educated, qualified child care staff. To provide stability and consistency for the children, there must be limited turnover. Training and experience are necessary.

A survey conducted by the Association of its member agencies in Spring 1987 clearly documents the crisis in recruiting and retaining qualified child care workers. New Jersey's most troubled children are being cared for primarily by young, non-college educated, inexperienced workers, the majority of whom stay with the agency for less than a year. There is a paucity of mature, experienced college educated workers for whom child care is a long term career. With rapid turnover, on-going in-depth training is not possible. The survey provides a clear picture of a transient, young inexperienced child care staff without the support of sufficient experienced career child care workers.

The survey showed:

Turnover rates approach 100%! In 1986, 216 new workers were hired in agencies with a total of 264 positions. In half the agencies, the number of new workers equalled or exceeded the number of available positions.

Less than 10% of the child care workers have remained in their positions for five years. 70% of the agencies have only one or no worker with five years experience. Over half the staff have been with the agencies for under a year; a third, under six months.

Only 42% of the child care staff have college degrees; 36% have only a high school education (or less).

Less than a fifth of the child care workers are over forty. 57% are in their twenties.

CHILD CARE WORKERS SURVEY

	GROUP HOMES	RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTERS	COMBINED TOTALS
Number child care positions	92	172	264
Number hired in 1986	89	127	216
Total individuals worked in 1986	110	220	330
Number of positions for agencies providing this information	53	136	189
Years with Agency			
5 years +	15 (14%)	10 (6 1/2%)	25 (9 1/2%)
3-5 years	11 (10%)	22 (14%)	33 (12 1/2%)
1-3 years	21 (20%)	47 (30%)	68 (26%)
under 1 year	59 (56%)	76 (49%)	135 (52%)
under 6 months	35 (33%)	44 (28%)	79 (30%)
Education			
High school or less	34 (32%)	62 (39%)	96 (36%)
High school + some college	19 (18%)	38 (24%)	57 (22%)
College degree	54 (50%)	58 (37%)	112 (42%)
Age			
40+	28 (25%)	23 (14%)	51 (19%)
30-39	28 (25%)	37 (24%)	65 (24%)
20-29	57 (50%)	97 (62%)	154 (57%)
Prior Experience			
5 years or more	3	3	6
3-5 years	8	13	21
1-3 years	10	16	26
less than 1 year	39	86	121

NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES
CHILD CARE WORKERS SURVEY

Child care workers are identified as a key component in effecting positive change in youngsters placed in residential treatment facilities. With increasingly troubled children entering the facilities, the necessity for mature, experienced, well-trained staff is critical. Child care staff are expected to function as an integral part of a treatment team; they must be able to understand, contribute to, and carry out the treatment plan, diffuse explosive situations, provide (in a non-abusive way) the controls necessary for an out-of-control child, identify children at risk, and provide the nurturing, care and emotional support so essential for needy disturbed children. As role models, they provide the continuity and stability the children have rarely experienced. Not only must they be caring individuals, they must have the training and experience to know how to understand and handle severely disturbed children. Ideally, a facility's staff should have: relative stability with limited turnover; a significant number of individuals with considerable experience; a mixture of ages, including a number of older mature staff; a college education with background/experience in the social services/child care fields.

In order to determine how child care staff in Association facilities meet these criteria, a survey of member agencies was conducted in the Spring of 1987, with members completing a questionnaire on their child care staff. Responses were received from eleven group homes and nine residential treatment facilities. Members were asked to provide information on the number of child care positions, the number hired in 1986, the length of time with the agency, their ages, and their educational and experiential backgrounds.

In reviewing the results of the survey, we find a varied picture with a small number of agencies having a stable, mature and educated child care staff. The vast majority of agencies have a significant number of young non-college educated inexperienced workers, and turnover of 100% or more in a year.

The figures reflecting staff turnover are startling. Within a one year period, 216 new child care workers were hired in agencies with a

total of 264 positions. With the exception of only four agencies, at least a third of the remaining agencies' staff were new; in approximately half of the agencies, the number of new workers hired equalled or exceeded the number of available positions. In these nine agencies, a small number of experienced staff (17 with three or more years with the agencies out of a total of 103 positions) provided an anchor for the 144 new and changing staff for the remaining 86 positions.

The picture of rapidly changing staff is reinforced by the results of the study on the total number of individuals who worked in 1986. For the agencies who responded to this question, 330 individuals filled 189 positions. Again, a small number (five) of agencies showed little or no turnover, with 44 individuals occupying 39 positions. For the other eleven agencies, the picture is far bleaker with 286 individuals occupying 150 positions. With only eighteen (of the 150 positions) being filled by workers with three or more years experience, one has a clear picture of a transient child care staff, staying an average of six months, without the experience and support of knowledgeable "old timers".

Unfortunately, the survey did not ask about vacancies. However, several agencies commented on having vacancies for varying periods of time as a result of being unable to attract adequate staff.

Career child care workers who remain with a facility for some years are key in providing stable role models not only for the children, but also for new inexperienced staff. Unfortunately, the results of the study indicate that a small percentage of workers-less than 10%-have been with their agency for five years or more. Excluding the two agencies who have ten very experienced workers between them, the percentage for the rest of the agencies plummets to 6% (15 workers). Only six of the twenty agencies have two or more child care workers with five years experience with the agency; six have only one, while eight have none. Only 22% of the child care staff have three or more years experience with their agency. Over half (52%) of the child care staff have been with the agency under one year; nearly a third (30%) have been with the agency under six months.

Many of the children in residential facilities have come from dysfunctional families and have experienced abusive and destructive parenting. Thus it is essential that they have the opportunity to

corrective relationships with older child care workers. It is also important to have older individuals who have raised children and have experienced "normal" child and adolescent behavior to provide this perspective to the child care staff as a whole. However less than a fifth (19%) of the child care staff are over forty. Two agencies account for a third (18) of these; excluding these two agencies, the percentage of those child care workers over forty in the other seventeen agencies falls to 14%. Over half the agencies have only one or no staff person over forty. The majority of the child care staff-57%- are in their twenties. In the residential treatment centers which serve the most disturbed children, 62% are in their twenties.

Child care workers are an essential part of the treatment team, and must have the educational background and experience in order to contribute to, understand, and carry out increasingly sophisticated treatment plans. Most facilities would prefer to be able to hire primarily college educated child care workers. However, only 42% of the child care staff have college degrees. 36% have only a high school diploma or less. Relatively few (19%) had a year or more experience prior to joining the agency.

The results of this survey give a clear picture of the crisis in attracting and retaining qualified child care staff: Exceptionally high-approaching 100%-rates of turnover; a paucity of experienced, well-educated, older individuals who remain with the agency; the majority of child care staff are in their twenties, without a college degree, and remain with the agency for less than a year. While this is clearly a crisis for the facilities, most importantly it is a crisis for New Jersey's most troubled children.

Julie Turner

TESTIMONY PREPARED BY
THE NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S FACILITIES
SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN'S SERVICES
September 22, 1987

I am Julie Turner, Executive Director of the New Jersey Association of Children's Residential Facilities which represents the private residential treatment facilities and group homes serving troubled children placed by the Division of Youth and Family Services. I appreciate having the opportunity to testify before you.

Last week I heard a child's story which I would like to share with you. The victim of severe physical and sexual abuse, "Lisa"-not her real name-had entered a residential treatment center acting like a dog-crawling, barking and growling, she had retreated from humanness in reaction to the inhumanity she had encountered in her short life. After years of treatment from a dedicated staff, she rejoined humanity and became a delightful little girl. Recently she was adopted by a loving family. Lisa's future is bright and hopeful.

I wish I could say that this was true for most New Jersey children who are so troubled that they require intensive treatment-children who, because of their own severe emotional or other handicaps or because of serious maltreatment, are unable to function in the community and require placement in a treatment facility or group home. These children vary in their background and needs: they range in age from five to twenty; they come from poor or well-to-do families; they are black, white, Hispanic or oriental; they can be autistic, runaways, suicidal, severely hyperactive, aggressive, destructive, and/or severely handicapped. They are often difficult to love, difficult to live with-a challenge to even the most dedicated. They are our most vulnerable children desperately in need of professional treatment and care. I invite each of you to visit any of our facilities to meet and know our and your children.

Unfortunately, New Jersey has not made the commitment to provide the necessary resources to adequately treat many of these youngsters. Over the years, there has been a pervasive neglect by the state in developing and maintaining the services necessary to treat these very difficult children. In my testimony, I will focus on only a few areas; however, the papers I have provided document a non-system which serves children poorly if at all.

A key component in treating troubled children is a trained and

qualified child care staff-the ones who live day in and day out with the children. They deal with the tears and tantrums, control the out-of-control child, provide the parenting, love and security these children have lacked. For this demanding job, New Jersey has been willing to provide a starting salary of \$12,500 for child care staff in private facilities-a salary well below that paid state employees doing a similar job, a salary, even in one of the wealthiest states, below the national average. The result of these abysmally low salaries is predictable; facilities are unable to hire or retain qualified staff; the attached paper (Child Care Workers Survey) documents turnover rates approaching 100%; it documents that New Jersey's most troubled children are being cared for by young, non-college educated, inexperienced child care workers, the majority of whom stay with the agency for less than a year. Even people who are dedicated-who would like a career in child care-can not afford to stay in this job.

What does this mean to the facilities and, more importantly, to the children? With vacancies and untrained staff, facilities are unable to accept troubled children who may wait in expensive overcrowded state hospitals. Facilities can not provide the training to rapidly changing staff, and can not guarantee the quality of care and even safety of the children. A recent article in "Child Welfare" on institutional abuse noted that: "The area of institutional abuse and neglect least addressed by state systems of child protective services appeared to be prevention. The scarcity of money available to residential facilities to develop and maintain adequate programs and qualified staff was noted as a major barrier. Unqualified and overworked direct care staff, receiving little training in child care methods or acceptable discipline and restraint techniques, was identified as one of the primary causes of maltreatment." Children, many of whom have experienced multiple placements and changes in their lives, again experience multiple changes in caretakers when they need consistency and stability. The unwillingness of the state to provide adequate salaries has resulted in a crisis which short changes-which neglects-the most troubled and needy children.

The salary issue, while the most critical at this time, is only one example of the long-term lack of support of adequate treatment and care for New Jersey's children. In the past fifteen years, over half of New Jersey's private residential treatment centers have closed; at the same

time, we export children to other states, some as far away as Wisconsin. Over 500 children are placed by DYFS out of state, an increase of over 50% in a year and a half. The unwillingness to develop and support facilities in state has resulted not only in our "exporting" our most troubled and needy children, it has also resulted in children being backed up in inappropriate placements. You are all well aware of the serious problems which occurred in the state psychiatric hospitals which were exacerbated by serious overcrowding. However, the back-up and overcrowding has effected every area; there are not enough beds in any system, and children are being denied treatment.

Detention centers are over capacity with the average population having increased 32% in two years

Shelters are near or over capacity with their population having tripled in two years.

The two children's state psychiatric hospitals are at or over capacity. All CCIS units are at capacity with waiting lists.

Children are more likely to be placed in a correctional facility, state hospital, or "temporary" shelter or detention center than in a less restrictive program where they can receive treatment.

Children wait in "temporary" care for months as a result of lack of placements, of an unwieldy placement process, of the unwillingness of school districts to provide educational funding.

A pattern of inequality exists with the likelihood of a child receiving treatment varying significantly by county.

The paper, "Troubled Youth in New Jersey-Critical Issues", documents the crisis in New Jersey's non-system of caring for troubled children and discusses a number of the issues in depth. I would encourage each of you to read, study, and raise the necessary questions with the appropriate state agencies.

Equally importantly, I would encourage this committee to provide the leadership in insisting and insuring that New Jersey's most troubled and vulnerable children receive adequate treatment and care. I would urge you to support legislation to provide adequate salaries to attract and retain qualified child care staff. I would urge you to provide the resources to develop and maintain the necessary range of programs in state.

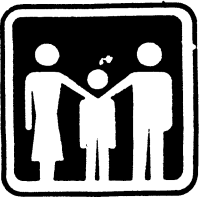
Quality care is not inexpensive. Not to provide quality treatment

is even more costly in the long run-increasing numbers in prison, on welfare, non-functioning adults-are a reflection of our unwillingness to provide services to children. Developing and supporting the necessary range of in-state programs can not be done cheaply; however we are now spending substantial sums on shelter, detention and correctional care and in out of state facilities which could be better utilized in providing treatment

You and we have a choice. Do we continue the disgrace that is New Jersey's non-system of neglect of its most troubled children, or do we provide the leadership, planning and resources to help our children develop into healthy functioning adults? I would like to be able to tell you of many successful "Lisa's" in the future. We need your help to do so.

Thank you.

Julie Turner, Executive Director
New Jersey Association of Children's Residential Facilities
590 Highland Avenue; Ridgewood, New Jersey 07450
(201) 652-5539



**TOUCH
A LIFE**

New Jersey Foster Parents Association

225 East State Street • Trenton, New Jersey 08608 • (609) 599-4772

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Honorable Catherine A. Costa, Chairman

Public Hearing to Examine and Review Various
Staffing and Caseload Issues within the
Division of Youth and Family Services

Tuesday, September 22, 1987
10:30 AM - Room 407
State House Annex, Trenton, NJ

Testimony of: NJ Foster Parents Ass'n.
Presented by: Sue Dondiego,
Legislation Chairman

My name is Sue Dondiego. I am a foster parent and Legislation Chairman for the New Jersey Foster Parents Association. I want to thank you for the opportunity to address this Committee today.

The issue of sufficient staff allocations and workable caseload sizes is not new for DYFS. It is an on-going problem, hampered at times by both external constraints and internal bickering.

Inadequate funding, employment requirements, untimely testing and even the location and condition of a District Office can be major barriers to filling positions. Ways must be found to eliminate these barriers to ensure vacancies will be filled promptly so additional cases will not be assigned to existing staff.

I think, at times, we all lose sight of the fact that children can become the victims of a system established to help them. We believe all children are entitled to a permanent home...either with their birth parents or adoptive parents. This goal must be time limited as a year or two, in the life of a child, can seem an eternity. Workers must have the skills and time they need to work with families, whether they be birth families, foster families or adoptive families.

How many cases should a worker be responsible for? We believe the number should be looked at realistically.

In 1984, when we testified in support of an additional 507 workers for DYFS, it was because child abuse reports had increased tremendously. At that time we did not realize the substantial impact substance abuse, AIDS and homelessness would have on children and families. The job of line staff and foster parents is not getting easier. It is becoming more difficult and complex.

We are recommending that the problems of families and children and the types and intensity of services required to help them remain a family, as well as the amount of work required to find a permanent home for a child, through adoption, be looked at seriously when determining caseload size, rather than by a ratio of worker to families and/or children.

We are not suggesting that DYFS be given an open ended funding source to hire staff. DYFS must be accountable. But perhaps DYFS needs some flexibility and the capability to hire additional staff, in a timely manner, if a genuine need arises.

One example of this is the fact that DYFS has done a better job of transferring cases from a District Office (foster care) to an Adoption Resource Center. Once it has been established that the goal for a particular child is adoption, that child should move through and out of the system as quickly as possible...but additional caseloads have only prolonged the process.

We hope a great deal of time will not be spent on further study of the problem of staffing allocations and caseload sizes, but rather on finding solutions. It seems to us, the question should not be what does DYFS need but what do families and children need.

Our Association has received the support of this Committee to help us provide quality care for our foster children. We are asking this same support, for DYFS, to ensure that all families and children receive the attention and services they deserve.

NEW JERSEY

CAP



CHILD ASSAULT PREVENTION

A Project of EIRC, 207 Delsea Drive, RD 4, Box 209, Sewell, NJ 08080 (609) 228-6000

September 22, 1987

TESTIMONY FOR LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS ON DYFS

Submitted by

Pat Stanislaski, Director New Jersey CAP Project

I imagine much of the testimony you will be hearing today will center around the issues of caseloads and level-of-service. Although we certainly believe caseloads to be high and advocate for additional personnel to increase the level-of-service to families, I am here today to offer support, as well, for an aspect of DYFS that rarely receives the commendation and recognition it deserves - prevention work. For three years, DYFS has joined forces with the National Assault Prevention Center in Columbus, Ohio, to offer New Jersey's children one of the most comprehensive and innovative prevention programs in the country. With support from the legislature, DYFS has funded the CAP program in all 21 counties. During this time, CAP has reached over 150,000 children and thousands of parents and teachers with strengthening information.

Based on a community approach to prevention, CAP, seeks to end the vulnerability of children to verbal, physical and sexual assault. Using public schools as its primary vehicle, CAP offers workshops for teachers, parents and children, encouraging assertiveness, peer support and communication with a trusted adult.

Although our primary focus is on prevention, cases of abuse and neglect inevitably come to light during CAP presentations. It is at such times that the close working relationship between DYFS and CAP is so essential for the successful resolution of the problem and the well-being of the child and the family.

In some counties, that relationship begins with a staff in-service presented by a CAP person and designed to familiarize the district office staff with the philosophies and procedures of the CAP program. It may culminate in a district office sending a caseworker directly to a school while the program is being done. That worker is then available for consultation on suspected cases of abuse and neglect. This kind of relationship between the two agencies maximizes the effectiveness both of CAP's prevention efforts and DYFS's intervention.

I am sitting before you today to help you understand the wonderful work being done by the Division of Youth and Family Services and to encourage your continued support of that very

necessary work. Despite the fact that their case loads are phenomenal and their offices understaffed, they continue, overall, to make a positive difference in the lives of the families they service. We who work so closely with them are painfully aware that, because of these problems, there are times when individual caseworkers or district offices are unable to render the level-of-service that they would like to give, that we all expect, and that the children and their families so desperately need.

I would like to ask you to do two things here today to strengthen DYFS and increase its level of service. You need to support DYFS financially - provide more workers, increase support services, help them maintain a high standard of service. Of equal importance, you need to believe in the work they are doing. You need to strengthen and create legislation that gives high priority to the protection and welfare of our children. You need to assess statistics, nationwide, that point to a less than 2% rate of false reporting. And, lastly, you need to pass laws that allow children to no longer bury secrets that eat away at them--secrets that only they and the offenders ever really share.

Your task is a difficult one but it is the only way that we will ever effect a change. Those of us who work in prevention, those of us who work in intervention can only work within the framework of the legislation you create. We encourage you to be there for us, to listen to us, to believe us, to help us make a difference.

Testimony before the Committee on Children

Dr. Janet Cahill

Glassboro State College

September 22, 1987

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. By way of introduction, I am an associate professor of Psychology at Glassboro State College. I am also a consultant to the DYFS/CWA stress management committee, which has been an ongoing joint venture for the past two and one half years. My area of academic and professional expertise is the field of occupational stress, particularly in human services. I have conducted several large research studies on this topic as well as consulted to human service agencies. I have a good working knowledge of the sources of stress involved in human service agencies in general and DYFS in particular.

The focus of my testimony today will be twofold. I would first like to review the efforts that the stress management committee has made to improve the work environment of the agency. Secondly, I will identify some problem areas which remain in the agency despite these efforts.

The labor\management stress committee grew out of a mutual concern that there were unacceptably high stress levels within the agency. It was understood by all parties that these high stress levels was having a negative impact on both workers and the clients they serviced. I should point out that the scientific literature in this area has long ago established the fact that there are a number of powerful sources of

stress and burnout that are endemic to human service work. It is also widely accepted that having a demoralized staff who are experiencing a number of physical and psychological symptoms themselves has a profoundly negative impact on the quality of services delivered.

This recognition led the committee to explore ways to reduce stress in the agency. This process has been an ongoing one and has led to a number of important and innovative programs. I think it would be useful to briefly outline the components of the program at this point:

1) Initial training session- this educational program is done in the district offices and is designed to familiarize the work force with the common symptoms and causes of stress, as well as giving them some strategies for dealing with it. This educational piece is an important foundation for the remainder of the program.

2) In-service days- after a local office has received the initial training, they are able to schedule monthly in-service days. These days are designed to provide further training, as well as to provide some protected time for completing outstanding tasks. This is of particular importance since the ordinary pace of work in the offices makes it extremely difficult to finish a given task. This ongoing component also includes a recreational package similar to models common in private industry.

3) Supervisory training- the quality of supervision has consistently been shown to be one of the most important factors in staff retention and development. First line supervisors are also known to be under significant sources of stress themselves. The committee therefore decided to provide supervisors in offices involved in the stress program with

supervisory training designed to both increase support to the workers they supervisors, as well as to the supervisors themselves.

4. Change of shift hours- this component is part of a broad effort to make provide alternative work schedules for employees. This has allowed the work force to be more responsive to both their clients and their own families. This type of program has been shown to be a very useful strategy for reducing staff turnover.

5. Paperwork/computer project- paperwork has been one of the most consistent sources of stress identified by this work force. For many reasons, there are a great forms that need to be filled out, often requiring much of the same information. Both case workers and clerks report that they are often spending a large percentage of their time processing often repetitive information. The stress committee has launched a pilot program which using microcomputers as well a new training techniques to address this problem. Several applications have already been developed and the agency has made plans to expand the project.

I believe that the stress program represents a significant and sustained effort geared towards improving the work environment of the agency. Both management and labor have made a sincere effort to develop useful programs in this regard. I believe that several of the components, in particular the paperwork/computer project are truly innovative in nature and the committee should be commended for it. In conjunction with Len Feldman of the DYFS Bureau of Research, I have conducted an empirical evaluation of the project. The preliminary results seem to

support the conclusion that the program has helped to support the staff in offices we have been involved in.

However, despite the success of stress program, several other factors are continuing to create serious problems for DYFS workers and the agency. My research has also found that both objective case size and perceived work load remain too high. Case workers and clerks report that they are having difficulty in keeping up with the case loads and the clerical work needed to sustain them. The vacancy rate has been a persistent concern. I am not directly involved in this aspect of the agency, but I believe a serious effort is being made to resolve this problem. It is obvious to all concerned that speedy replacement of staff is essential if the agency is to be able function smoothly.

While the supervisory training offered by the stress program is of use, it is not a substitute for a comprehensive training program for supervisors. In addition to this, case workers are in need of additional training in several areas of basic skills. Finally, the agency would benefit from a slower pace of change. This would allow a more effective absorption of policy changes by the staff.

It should be noted that none of these problems are unique to DYFS. Child protection agencies across the country are facing these types of problems. DYFS management has demonstrated willingness to work with labor in addressing these concerns in an innovative fashion. My own view is that the outstanding problems of the agency would also benefit from such an approach.

As a final comment, I would emphasize again the critical importance of aggressively addressing the concerns of the case workers, supervisors and clerical staff. This is not a factory where productivity

can be physically measured. It is an agency which primary purpose is to protect and serve children in need. I have spent a considerable amount in local district offices, talking with these workers. I am consistently impressed with their genuine concern for their clients. These people want to do a good job. It is in all of our interests to give them the support and resources they need to do just that.

Thank you.

JOSEPH F. SHANAHAN
R.D. 2 - BOX 105
LAMBERTVILLE, N.J. 08839

609-397-3158

22 September 1987

Madame Chairman and Members of State Senate Committee on Childress' Services:

I am Joseph F. Shanahan of Lambertville and have had some experiences with the operations of the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) relative to children over the past few years which I would like to share with the members of the committee for their information and whatever action they may deem necessary.

I have heard individual horror stories concerning the operations of DYFS personnel and the general public but, as a lawyer, I prefer to bring to your attention only facts that I have actual knowledge of; which for the purpose of this hearing, consists of two attached letters (A and B) that describe an incident which took place in 1985. The matter had to do with the innocent victims of an anonymous call and the actions and final answer of DYFS.

I find the practice of keeping such records on file with the agency on a permanent basis, as described by Mr. Blatner in his letter (Att B) as " secure and confidential" more in keeping with a Red government operation trying to maintain control of its subjects rather than one by a free government agency who have nothing to fear from its citizenry.

But I do not have great confidence in the administrative processes of government nor its ability to keep anything "secure and confidential" and suggest to this committee that the better way for the agency to operate in the interest of all, after the innocence of the person under investigation is established, is to destroy the record, since no reason remains to keep it. Otherwise, if that is not done as a matter of course - perhaps the citizen does have reason to fear his government.

Thank you, Joe F. Shanahan

JOSEPH F. SHANAHAN
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW

ATTIA
ALEXAUKEN CREEK ROAD
RD 2, LAMBERTVILLE, N. J. 08530

609-397-3158

25 January 1985

Thomas Blatner, Director
Division of Youth and Family Services
1 South Montgomery Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Dear Mr. Blatner:

I am representing Mr. and Mrs. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] New Jersey [REDACTED] in this complaint which concerns the ill treatment they received in their own home at the hands of two of your employees.

On Saturday, 12 January about 130PM two agents of DYFS identified as [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] of the [REDACTED] office gained entrance to the complainants' apartment by ruse. Mrs. [REDACTED] was home alone and opened the door to some one who said "Is [REDACTED] home" which is her nickname. They then stated that they were from DYFS and had a court order to see the baby (no court order was ever shown) and that there was an allegation against her that there were bruises on her baby's head. Mrs. [REDACTED] became upset and said she was overwhelmed by such a charge and denied that there were any such bruises. She said that the baby (about 6 months) was with his grandparents and would be home later in the afternoon. The agents stayed on for some time questioning Mrs. [REDACTED] at length about her personal affairs asking her how she could "cope" with the situation.

They returned about 4PM after making a phone call and the baby, Mr. [REDACTED] and the grandparents were present. At that time they saw the baby who was clearly without bruises. Again they stayed and turned their questioning on the parents, recommending that they have some kind of counseling and pointedly suggesting the [REDACTED] Day Care School for the baby. Before they left they stated that a social worker would call on them on the following Monday. On 16 January they received a telephone call from an [REDACTED] of DYFS who said that any help that the department had to offer was voluntary.

Needless to say, these official visits by your agents from out of the blue have caused the [REDACTED] great mental anguish; the wife, because of the way she was presented with their entrance, the husband, for the trauma of seeing his wife's agitation and both, over the present threat hanging over them of social workers coming to call - and all in the face of their obvious innocence of the original allegation.

I am sending this to you, Mr. Director, for your information and whatever action you think it merits. Your agency has a great responsibility in carrying out its primary goal of preserving and strengthening the family unit. But it will miss its mark if the tactics shown in the instant case are routine; that is riding rough shod over a family's right to privacy even after it has been established that there is no evidence of abuse or neglect and consequently no jurisdiction.

So, I am hereby requesting assurances that:

1. This matter is officially closed including the possibility of visits from social workers.
2. Any record of this incident that is in your files will be removed and destroyed.
3. A written apology be forthcoming from the local office for its unwarranted intrusion into the privacy of a family unit.

Very truly yours

Joseph F. Shanahan

cc: [REDACTED] co. Prosecutor
[REDACTED]



ATT B

State of New Jersey

THOMAS BLATNER
Director
DYFS Management Team

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

1 South Montgomery Street
CN 717
Trenton, N.J. 08625

March 20, 1985

Joseph F. Shanahan, Esq.
Alexauken Creek Road
RD 2
Lambertville, NJ 08530

Dear Mr. Shanahan:

Thank you for your inquiry on January 25, 1985, concerning your client, [REDACTED], New Jersey.

On January 12, 1985, the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) did receive a protective service referral on behalf of [REDACTED] indicating that the infant had been seen with bruises and that child abuse was suspected. As you are probably aware, N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.11 requires the Division to investigate such referrals. While preserving and strengthening the family unit is a crucial mission in our service to children and their families in New Jersey, child protection is our primary or "bottomline" responsibility. Initial interventions without prior notification to the family are policy which reflects this goal of protection. It is our task to identify child abuse and neglect and "at risk" situations through a thorough investigation and assessment of the situation in order to strengthen the family such that the abuse, neglect, or risk is abated.

We have reviewed this particular situation and have found that proper procedures were followed in that the employees properly identified themselves and their purpose in a professional manner. The interview with [REDACTED] was also appropriate in that our investigations are not limited to a physical inspection of a child. [REDACTED] was very cooperative during this interview and revealed to us that it was difficult for her at times to cope with the demands of an infant, which prompted the discussion about counseling and day care.

72X

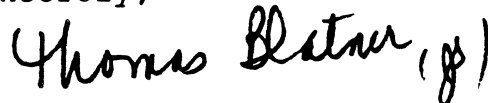
On the other hand, [REDACTED] and the grandparents were less cooperative in the later interview and it was they who questioned our authority to intervene. It was at that time that in response to their inquiry, it was conveyed that the Division could seek legal actions in situations which merit such actions. No such determination had been made with regard to the [REDACTED] family.

To date, we have not substantiated any child abuse occurring in the [REDACTED] family. During our initial investigation our staff was concerned about whether this family had adequate supports and services available to it. This concern stemmed from the knowledge that the [REDACTED] are new parents and have had some personal difficulties. At present, we believe that the family has these supports and will terminate our involvement. Should these supports for any reason prove to be inadequate in the future, we hope that this family will contact the local district office for assistance.

Though records that we establish as a result of referrals which are investigated are not destroyed, such records are kept secure and confidential. Therefore, we regret that we cannot honor your request to destroy the record.

Should you have further concerns or questions with regard to this matter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Thomas Blatner, Director
DYFS Management Team

TB:cb

CERTIFICATION

Senator Catherine Costa's Hearing

Tuesday, September 22, 1987

Verlan J. Kliewer
54 Richard Street
Passaic, New Jersey 07055
(201) 472-1758
Defendants-Appellants-Petitioners

Superior Court of New Jersey
Appellate Division
Docket no. A-5313-85T6
Supreme Court of New Jersey
Docket no. 26,902

New Jersey Division of Youth
and Family Services,
Plaintiff-Respondent,
vs.
Linda Kliewer and Verland
Kliewer,
Defendants-Appellants-Petitioners
IN THE MATTER OF:
Jonathan Kliewer and
Verlinda Kliewer

CIVIL ACTION

Trial court judge:
Carmen A. Ferrante, P.J.F.P.

Appellate Division Judge:
Michael Patrick King, P.J.A.D.

Attorney for the Division of Youth and Family Services:
Modestino Carbone

Law Guardian:
Susan M. Slaff

Status of the case:

The trial was completed. Case is before the Appellate Division. Some issues are before the Supreme Court.

I, Verlan J. Kliewer, hereby certify:

1. I am the attorney for Verlan J. Kliewer, one of the Defendants-Appellants-Petitioners in this case.

2. I am the father of Verlinda Kliewer, age 9, born in December of 1977, and Jonathan David Kliewer, age 8, born in the spring of 1979.

3. Verlinda and David were removed illegally from their rightful home on June 7, 1987. The documents used for the removal of the children were falsely sworn, and directly contradicted testimony of dyfs workers in the trial court. The law requires that the documents used for the removal of the children be explicit and not by way of inference, and the documents were explicit, but the testimony in the trial court revealed that the children never made the accusations attributed to them and that the information was obtained by improper inference from the use of sexually explicit dolls.

4. The trial court testimony was that in connection with the removal of the children, Verlinda was given sexually explicit dolls, she refused to

play with them but was forced to do so, and was given no alternative but to place the dolls all in bed together in a way that would indicate a sexual configuration, and sexual inferences were drawn from there. The court testimony is that Verlinda stated that there was no sexual abuse at the time of her removal.

5. Six different reports of physical examinations by doctors all showed that there was no sexual abuse of the children. On the day of their removal, June 7, 1987, a report from Saint Mary's hospital shows both children healthy with no problems, and no indication of any type of sexual abuse, Verlinda's hymen intact, and no lacerations of the vagina. A second set of two reports, taken a week later and United hospital, shows Verlinda's hymen still intact, but a laceration in the vaginal area at 4:00. DYFS did something to Verlinda to give her the laceration. This report was later doctored by dyfs to show that Verlinda's hymen was ruptured a week after her removal from her rightful home. What caused the first laceration on Verlinda's hymen under DYFS care, and a second sexual incident also took place early under DYFS care to cause the hymen to be ruptured. What was it? (T5.105:10-12, T5.109:7-9, T5.105:2-4, T5.111:7-9, other references will be available once the appellate brief is prepared)

6. The testimony from DYFS witnesses themselves is that there was no indication of any type of abuse when the children were removed (testimony of Pam Slaff, available when appellate brief is completed).

7. The children were not removed as a result of a legitimate concern, but as a result of a conspiracy. A meeting was held prior to the removal of the children, and prior to any sexual allegations, where DYFS had decided to remove the children, although it was freely admitted that there was no evidence of abuse. The sexual charges came as a result of the meeting, not as a result of any sexual evidence.

8. The children are very unusual and very dear children, very valuable not merely because they are my own children. They are very intelligent, affable, very charming, the kind of children you'd really like to take home with you (T5.88, T6.16).

9. The parents faced a criminal trial, in which they were acquitted by the jury in February of 1985.

10. The judge refused to return the children, in clear violation of the New Jersey Constitution which states that once a person has been acquitted, he can not be tried a second time for the same offence. We meet the qualifications for that rule, according to court decisions.

11. Both children have been continually molested while under the care of DYFS. Numerous incidents of sexual activities imposed upon our innocent children are found throughout the transcript. David was molested to the point where his penis was red and raw, and black and blue and bruised -- after about a year under DYFS custody. Kevin Devine, the foster father who certainly is implicated, tried to testify that David, who was four at the time, ejaculated and had done so in the foster father's hand.

12. The parents have cooperated in every way possible, and have seen six different counselors in cooperation with the courts. With the last

counselor, we went at the court's request, but DYFS defied a court order and refused to take the children to the counselor.

13. The judge found in his original opinion of May, 1985 that the parents were relentless in their efforts to regain custody of the children.

14. The judge in the end decided that DYFS did not have to take the children to the counselor as he had ordered, but they could keep the children. The case is under appeal.

15. The children were heavily indoctrinated under DYFS care, so much so that a foster mother objected, that Verlinda had no time for play. Pam Slaff, the therapist (unqualified legally) for Verlinda, was much disliked by Verlinda, according to Pam's own testimony in court. The foster mother's objection is also found in court testimony.

16. During one visit with a psychiatrist, Verlinda stated that Pam Slaff, one of the social workers, told her that her parents wanted her back so they could be bad to her. (T6.4:19-22, T6.6:12-15, ¶6.12:23-25, T6.13:1-12) The judge even found this statement from the psychiatrist to be true.

17. During one of the visits with a psychiatrist, Verlinda's younger brother, David, jumped up and insisted that verlinda was lying (which shows the indoctrination that Verlinda was receiving). T6.28:10-11. A little note about David. David has a strong character, and even if threatened with physical punishment, he would stand up, and because of his young age, the same attempts at indoctrination could not yet be accomplished with David.

18. DYFS freely admitted in court that the children were worse under the care of DYFS than they had been in their rightful home.

19. The judge found that the parents were not even charged with physical sexual abuse, but only some form of non-physical sexual abuse, in his first opinion. Later, the judge specifically eliminated any possibility of any form of non-physical sexual abuse too, but still DYFS was able to get the judge to find the parents guilty of sexual abuse. Obviously, the whole idea is ridiculous. The parents are not even charged with physical sexual abuse, but what is non-physical sexual abuse? There is no such thing!! The judge eliminated any possibility of non-physical sexual abuse anyway.

20. DYFS has waisted much money on this superfluous case, in their malicious prosecution, and because of DYFS, more money was waisted for the state in a malicious criminal prosecution. In addition, DYFS wasted \$4,800 in producing more transcripts than they needed, and now are threatening to throw them away, even though they will need the transcripts if they plan to appeal the decision from the Appellate Division. The threat to destroy the \$4,800 worth of transcripts was found in a letter dated April 26, 1987.

CONCLUSION

There is no form of child abuse worse than destroying the bond between a child and a parent, of forcing a child to believe his or her parents are bad, thus making orphans out of innocent children, and there is nothing more cruel to be conceived to do to children, parents, and families.

DYFS obviously, from our case alone, has much experience in such cruel forms of abuse, and has heightened the abuse of the children by sexually molesting them while they are under DYFS care.

If funds for DYFS were cut off, or greatly reduced, this would serve to reduce the cruelty to citizens, entire families, and tax payers, while an increase in funding would increase this abuse.

A reduction in funds would be in the best interest of the children in this state, as it would reduce the abuse and force a much needed reduction in case loads, allowing DYFS to concentrate on actual abuse instead of fabricating cases.

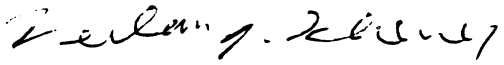
In a letter to the editor, in THE RECORD, for Thursday, August 28, 1986, we have the following statements by C.N. Herget of Hackensack:

"Of the 47,000 cases of abuse reported, 18,038 were confirmed. (My note -- of the confirmed cases, most of them have no foundation anyway). What was the outcome of the rest? I can tell you. Homes destroyed, marriages ended, and, worst of all, children taken from their homes, some never to return.

"A new system of justice has sprung up through DYFS's input into the family: you are guilty until you prove yourself innocent at your own expense. You are fighting a system that is not accountable to anyone. DYFS has an answer for every abuse, but it does not answer for its own mistakes."

I certify that the foregoing statements made by me are true. I am aware that if any of the foregoing statements made by me are willfully false, I am subject to punishment.

September 21, 1987
(date)


Verlan J. Kliever

4/22/87
P.O. Box J
Margate, N.J.
08402

Dear Senator Costa:

AT. 5 198

I am a board certified ~~psych~~ psychiatrist. I have resided in N.J. with my wife and two children for over 10 years.

It has been brought to my attention that you have a great concern for the welfare of children. I also share this concern. It is therefore important that you be made aware of the misconduct of the state organization, the Division of Youth & Family Service (DYFS).

The following is a sampling of common practices of DYFS. I can prove the data to be true
/ (over)

(2)

with written records, actual witness statements, and audio and visual tapes. There are many high officials in the state government who can verify this data.

1. DYFS carries out their investigations in a punitive, callous and vindictive fashion. They cause child abuse.

2. DYFS will frequently remove children from their home with no appropriate basis. Needless to say, this is extremely traumatic for the children as well as the parents.

3. DYFS does not properly run or supervise their foster care homes. Rapes, beatings, and murder has occurred to children in DYF foster care situations.

2

(3)

4. Young girls are forced to have internal examinations, by "DYFS picked doctors" for no good reason. This is equivalent to rape.
5. In general DYFS will open cases that should ~~not~~ obviously ^{not} be opened. In a sense they create cases. Also, they will not close cases that obvious should be closed.
6. DYFS workers falsify their records for court, in order to keep open cases that should be closed.
7. DYFS had 1200 children put into foster care last year, because they did not like the quality of housing that the families had. There was no abuse or neglect.

The above is just a small sample of DYFS's acts of terror.

3

(over)

(4)

The following are some ~~recommendations~~ recommendations to help improve the organization:

1) It should be a priority to maintain the integrity of the family. This can be accomplished by:

a) removing the alleged abuser from the family

b) having a case worker frequently visiting ~~the~~ family of a family with problems. Do if necessary.

c) if it becomes unavoidable to remove children, place with close relatives or friends do not separate siblings

2) DYFS should not be punitive. They should help families having

x

(over)

(5)

problems. This can be accomplished by appropriate referrals to mental health centers (for help with parenting) referrals for food stamps, welfare, public housing, etc.

3) A organized appropriate system of checks + balances for the removal of a child from his family, to insure that no errors or mistakes will be made. I recommend a system similar to the one used in N.J. to commit mentally ill patients into the hospital.

4) Case workers entrusted to make serious decisions involve
5 (over)

(6)

clients, should have at least a masters degree and significant experience.

5) When conducting an investigation the case workers should be sensitive to the fact that the people may be totally innocent.

6) People making false complaints to DYFS should be criminally prosecuted.

7. DYFS should have a sensitivity to the trauma of tests that they freely impose, such as: internal examinations on little girls, psychological testing psychiatric evaluations etc.

8. A national search should be instituted to find a well

6

(7)

credentialed, experienced director who has not been tainted by the N.J. system.

9) A moratorium on all present cases where parental rights are to be severed, until these cases can be appropriately reviewed.

10) A more equitable legal system in family court where "justice for all" prevails.

11) A "true" advocacy system to assist people who are having problems with DYFS or who feel that they are being unjustly accused. The citizens action line does not do this, (over)

(8)

even though they misrepresent
and indicate that they do,

These are just some of
my thoughts and ideas, I am
handicapped and this prevented
me from coming to testify in
person. Please enter this
information into the files.

I will be happy to meet with
you or anyone to discuss the
situation in further detail.

Please do this by calling on the
telephone or coming to my home.
Due to my handicap it would not
be feasible to come to Trenton.

Please note information on
page 9.

Note

(9)
As per ~~news~~ news article in
the Atlantic City Press,
President Reagan signed an
executive order to strengthen
the stability of the family. (Not
separate families).
Gary Bauer, the president's
assistant was most concerned
about the misconduct of D.Y.F.S.
and wants to investigate the
whole situation in much more
detail.

You can contact Gary Bauer
at (202) 456-6515. His address
is: White House, West Wing,
Washington, D.C. # 20500.

Thank you for any help
you can be in this most
serious situation.

Respectfully,

9 Dr. Alan L. Anthony

Dr. Alan L. Anthony
Phone # (609) 822-3570

September 21, 1987

Leslie J. Pallard

On September 17, 1987 I was made aware, by management that two workers in my Intake Unit had more than 80 children on their caseload effective September 4, 1987. I was also told that they must bring their numbers down below 80 by September 22, 1987. My understanding of this request was because of the hearing in Trenton on September 22, 1987 which was going to address the high numbers which workers have to be responsible for.

The two workers in my unit with more than 80 children on their caseloads, were the only two workers in intake rotation, in my unit, for approximately six weeks during the summer. This was a result of lack of staff, vacations, and maternity leave. Also, these workers were unable to have clean-up weeks because of the above.

I feel it was unfair to have my workers work all weekend in order for the Division to appear in these hearings and say no workers have more than 80 children on their caseloads.

Management states that they understand the plight of a DYS worker, however, they continue to make demands which add stress to the worker.

I am unable to attend these hearings because I have a deadline of September 22, 1987 to complete these cases and have them processed in the computer so the workers show having less than 80 children on their caseloads.

Leslie J. Pallard
Shop Stewardess

