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PUBLIC HEARING

before

ASSEMBLY LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

on

CASELOADS IN THE DIVISION OF YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

Held:

October 22 and 23, 1984

Room 346

State House Annex

Trenton, New Jersey

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Assemblyman William E. Flynn, Chairman
Assemblyman Thomas P. Foy, Vice Chairman
Assemblyman Anthony S. Marsella
Assemblyman Richard A. Zimmer
Assemblyman Harold L. Colburn, Jr.
Assemblyman John T. Hendrickson, Jr.

ALSO PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Marlene Lynch Ford

Steven B. Frakt, Senior Research Associate
Office of Legislative Services
Aide, Assembly Legislative Oversight Committee

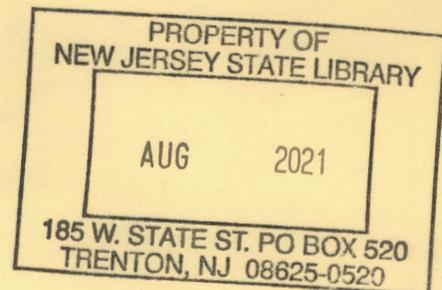


TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
George J. Albanese Commissioner Department of Human Services	2
Thomas Blatner Director Division of Youth and Family Services Management Team	8
Steve Rosenthal National Representative Communication Workers of America	39
Jim Gallagher President Communication Workers of America, Local 1039	39
Betty Wilson President Center for Non-Profit Corporations	42
Catherine A. DeCheser Executive Director Community Planning and Advocacy Council The Human Services Coalition of Camden Council	45
Ciro A. Scalera Executive Director Association for Children of New Jersey	51
Mary Wells Executive Director of Family Service of Burlington County Convener of the Southern Regional Council of Human Services Chair of the N.A.S.W. Task Force on Families and Children	54
 OVERNIGHT RECESS	
Janet Cahill, Ph.D. Department of Psychology Glassboro State College	58
Lauren Anderson Staff Counsel Children's Rights Project American Civil Liberties Union New York, New York	73

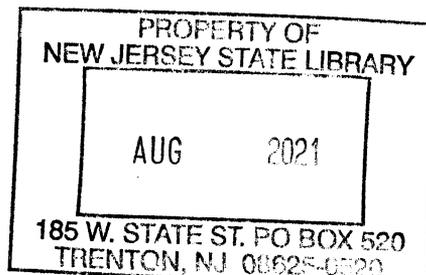


TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Larry J. Lockhart Special Assistant to Commissioner Department of Human Services	90
Ed Sabol Staff Representative of Local 1039 Communication Workers of America	93
Andrea Shorter Employee Division of Youth and Family Services	100
Paul Schiff Employee Division of Youth and Family Services	110
Joseph Walsh Employee Division of Youth and Family Services	120
Delores McDyer Employee Division of Youth and Family Services	127
David J. Harris Administrator Greater New Brunswick Day Care Council	134
Theodore H. Freeman President State Council of Urban Leagues	136
APPENDIX	
Statement submitted by Betty Wilson Center for Non-Profit Corporations	1x
Statement submitted by Ciro A. Scalera Association for Children of New Jersey	3x
Statement submitted by Mary Wells Family Service of Burlington County	8x

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Statement submitted by Lauren Anderson American Civil Liberties Union	11x
Statement submitted by Marina A. Padovani Puerto Rican Congress of New Jersey	18x
Statement submitted by Jose A. Morales Puerto Rican Community Education and Economic Development, Inc.	24x
Statement submitted by Hugh Kilmer Concerned Citizen	27x
Statement submitted by Joan M. Wright Division on Women New Jersey Department of Community Affairs	30x
Statement submitted by Dell Raudelunas State Human Services Advisory Council	33x
Letter and statement submitted by Lydia J. Valencia Hispanic Association of Ocean County	38x
Statement submitted by Mia Anderson New Jersey Congress of Parents and Teachers	42x
Statement submitted by June K. Weaver New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women	45x
Statement submitted by Beverly Gilbert Atlantic County Women's Center	48x
Statement submitted by Association for Advancement of the Mentally Handicapped	50x

* * * * *

my: 1-39
jb: 40-57; 91-119
mjz: 58-90
tm: 120-137

ASSEMBLYMAN WILLIAM E. FLYNN (Chairman): I would like to apologize to the members of the public who are here. The legislative conferences are running late today and a lot of our members are just getting here now. Several of them have other committee meetings so they may have to leave early as well.

The proceedings are going to be recorded. Transcripts will be available at a reasonable cost to those who would like one. Basically, the focus of the meeting is to hear testimony concerning caseworkers' loads in the Division of Youth and Family Services and testimony regarding related management concerns -- how they interface with each other.

We have a number of witnesses who have requested to testify. The time is not nearly going to be sufficient because we have to break at approximately 4:00 p.m. when the Legislature will go back in session. We will be meeting again tomorrow at 10:30 a.m. Tomorrow's session is also well subscribed with people who want to testify, so I don't want to promise anyone who is on the list today that he will be necessarily reached tomorrow. We will have to do as much as we can as time allows. We will request that anyone who has a prepared statement and doesn't get a chance to speak today or tomorrow to give it to our staff so that the full committee can review the statements and it can be made a part of our appendix.

Assemblyman Marsella, Assemblyman Foy, Assemblyman Colburn, and I are here. Assemblyman Zimmer has been in and out; he has another committee that he is trying to keep tabs on.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: I have a bill coming up in the Labor Committee. I am going to run downstairs briefly for it; I'll be back up, hopefully for the bulk of the testimony.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: What you can do is, what testimony you don't hear, you can review the transcript and listen to it.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: All right. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Without too much further ado, I would like to call on, I suppose, the person who is the most knowledgeable

about the concerns the Legislature has, and that would be the Commissioner, George J. Albanese.

Commissioner, I note that you do have prepared remarks, and I don't know if you want to read the whole 18 pages or if you would like to excerpt from them. I will leave that to your own good judgment.

COMMISSIONER GEORGE J. ALBANESE: I think because of the importance, I would like to go through the entire testimony. We touch on many areas and I think they are important enough to give it that attention.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Fine.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Chairman Flynn and members of the Oversight Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

I want to start by citing N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.16 of our New Jersey Statutes on child abuse, cruelty, and neglect:

"The Division of Youth and Family Services shall, upon receipt of such report, take action to insure the safety of the child...and shall investigate the circumstances under which the child was injured and may, after such investigation has been completed, apply for a court order placing the child under its care and supervision."

This is State law. It spells out what a DYFS worker can and cannot do. But how can a DYFS worker act, if they are not told of a suspected case of child abuse?

Let's take the case of "Shawn." Can any of us forget Shawn? His short life was one long episode of brutality, violence, and neglect. His pain ended only when his life ended, at the hands of his parents. He might have been saved. He should be alive today because his bruises were seen by many adults. But, Shawn died because some adults did not act; some acted too late, and the actions of some stopped dead at brick walls.

There is a lot of Monday-morning-quarterbacking when it comes to second guessing a DYFS caseworker. But if no one comes forward, if no one reports the Shawn's of this world, how can a DYFS worker make a difference? And, that is why I am glad I have been asked to testify today.

I think we have one common goal -- you, our legislators; the people in the field, our caseworkers; and the people in the Central

Office, the Department's administrators. We need to create a safer, happier life for our children and families. As Lyndon Johnson once said: "Yesterday is not ours to recover, but tomorrow is ours to win or lose." Our tomorrow is our children, and we start the battle to win our tomorrow today.

I believe it will take a comprehensive effort in three major areas if we are to achieve that goal: 1.) Reorganization; 2.) Worker support; and 3.) Community participation.

We must continue our reorganization of the Division of Youth and Family Services. While the Department has made improvements in the management of DYFS, I realize that the job is not complete. And, I realize that the DYFS caseworkers, the individuals who directly impact on our children, are overworked and overburdened. But, we have been listening to their concerns and taking the kind of action that gradually will lead to a better work environment.

Finally, the equation of moving DYFS in a new direction would not be complete without bringing the community into our planning. We seek out a public/private partnership on all fronts -- in our fight to improve morale, in our effort to reorganize the Division, and most important, in our campaign to prevent child abuse. We have worked with child advocates and abuse experts across the State to develop a new comprehensive policy of caring for our families and children -- the DYFS Mission Statement.

I would like to explain each of these three major areas in a little more detail. I would like to start by explaining what I found at DYFS when I became Human Services Commissioner almost three years ago.

Very early in my administration, I became aware of, and advised the public of, the tragic child abuse death of children under supervision of the Division of Youth and Family Services. We found that these deaths were closely tied to stresses caused by poverty, unemployment, and other social economic factors.

It was increasingly evident to me that DYFS administration was failing in its mission to protect the health, safety, and well-being of our children and to serve the State's families.

When we looked to find coordination in delivering services in each county, we found no mechanism to even determine what type of delivery system existed. What we did find was a State child welfare system which was not responsive to the problems it was organized to deal with. It was operating in isolation from the community and reacting to crises rather than working to prevent them.

Faced with awesome problems, we set out to create solutions by developing a management plan, a plan which has become a blueprint for accountability.

For example, in the area of management, we structured DYFS administration at all levels. Our emphasis, however, was in the Central and Regional Offices to provide direction, accountability, and consistency for the field. We established a consistent method of allocating staff for our district offices. This accomplishment, in an organization of 36 district offices, was seen as progressive by those social workers who had suffered with years of DYFS organizational stagnation.

On the district office level, we were able to examine the Division inside, outside, and to turn it upside down. For instance, we established cost-control methods, to provide for an accurate assessment of where funds were going internally. And, we revamped an antiquated system of reporting unusual incidents, such as child deaths, to ensure timely and accurate data in every instance.

But, most important, in our reorganization, we brought the caseworker into the process. We need to know their ideas and their feedback. They are our front-line workers. So, we set up steering committees at every level of the Division, with strong caseworker representation, to provide a participatory approach to management of DYFS. These committees, which each provided representatives to a statewide steering committee, have provided casework staff a way to discuss and recommend solutions to management on policy questions and to share information on new agency initiatives.

The DYFS reorganization was only the first solution to the problems of DYFS.

Let's look at the caseworker -- the lone State worker faced, on the one hand, with the desire to protect our children, but blocked, on the other hand, by a cumbersome bureaucracy and overburdened caseloads. The result - a morale problem, and it is no wonder.

The number of reported cases of child abuse has increased 42% in one year and are now averaging 123 a day, or one new report of child abuse every 12 minutes. That should total 45,000 reports by the year's end.

The caseload in DYFS keeps growing. The question to be asked becomes: If a caseworker has a load of 46 children, how can that caseworker spend an adequate amount of time on each?

There are other problems -- training deficiencies, lack of transportation, and lack of security.

The Department is moving on the concerns, but the real answer is that we need more caseworkers. I am asking for \$5 million for an additional 507 workers and support staff to meet increased caseloads.

We must have these additional workers because the job they do is so complex. They must balance support with assertiveness; speed with thoroughness; risk-taking with security; and trust with vigilance.

In the last two years, we increased our front-line staff by 300. The increases in child abuse reports have obscured this gain in staffing. And, because of the increase of child abuse reports, our caseloads are not balanced by county. For instance, in one county, the caseload ratio might be one to 60, while in another it might be one to 30. Our request for additional staff addresses this imbalance.

But, I emphasize again our need for staffing. Our original request for over 100 positions was turned down by the Joint Appropriations Committee. Now, the need is even greater.

However, there are measures the Department has taken to better support our caseworkers. We have overhauled protective services training for new social workers and ensured that all workers complete this 20-day program before they go on the job.

We have done some simple things. We have improved work conditions in district offices, automated some work details, and

purchased cars so a caseworker has reliable transportation when working alone, after dark.

We have also tackled some harder concerns. We have increased career opportunities and salaries by adjusting job titles in creating a new career ladder. In fact, retroactive pay checks to caseworkers, affected by career-ladder changes, were issued last week.

Again, I realize the Department has not fully addressed all the concerns raised by caseworkers. For instance, there is more work to be done in the paperwork reduction, and we want to set up a program for worker stress.

I would like to arm our caseworkers with the tools they need -- reduced caseloads, more training, a better work environment, and support. It is not an easy job to take on the world, and it is time we recognize a DYFS worker can't do everything. That's why the cornerstone of my administration has been involving the community. For the first time in DYFS, we have community leaders coming forward and saying, "These are our children, not DYFS's children." In this area, perhaps, we have had our greatest success. The community has assisted us in our goal to be more pro-active instead of reactive.

First, the Department has involved the State's prosecutors in a child abuse awareness campaign. Today, we have a new relationship with prosecutors -- a new role. We aren't fighting each other anymore. We have become a combined force united to bring to justice the predators who prey on our children. We recognize the prosecutors as a resource -- but they are one of many.

Governor Kean's Task Force is a second ally. They are delivering positive, substantial results. The Task Force is moving to include the school community -- teachers, principals, and day-care workers - in the campaign for child abuse prevention. And, they are reaching out to the medical profession, also. The PTA's, the Foster Parent Association, child-care groups, and business leaders all are joining the effort of community education and awareness.

We are forming partnerships with the Association of Children for New Jersey, the Battered Women's Coalition, and other statewide groups.

We need a community effort, right down to the parents and children themselves.

I am requesting \$7.8 million in additional funding to purchase community and residential services for children and their families under DYFS supervision.

All these things -- reorganization, worker support, and community involvement and awareness --- will lead to a more protected, richer life for our children in trouble.

I propose your staff and mine work together to form a legislative package that, in terms of child care and protection, is clearly reform. For, as a noted child abuse expert has said, "We cannot wait to help a child in need. We cannot allow the complexity of the problem to paralyze us."

Finally, I believe the new child welfare policies emphasizing community partnerships can best be described by many of the advocacy groups you have invited to testify today. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I wonder if you could elaborate on that request for \$7.8 million as to what that would go into. The \$5 million I can understand for the additional caseworkers.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: That will be protective services needs in the following areas: residential care, foster care, subsidized adoption, and general social services which has a heavy prevention component. Residential care was \$2.25 million; foster care, \$1.9 million; subsidized adoption, \$1.2 million; and general social services, \$2.5 million.

I might add, as a result of the family court, there is another new thing in the State of New Jersey -- the residential care component of DYFS -- and this is under heavy strain, with the looking for the alternative to incarceration and the home.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Of course, in the last six months we have seen the tremendous exposure that the media has given to the problem, and I suppose that is the biggest impetus for the increase in your caseloads. Does your Division feel that the problem has always existed, and it somehow has been kept under wraps?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: I think that the awareness campaign that we started two years ago is having an effect on the numbers that we are seeing today. I personally believe that the increase is really and primarily a result of the awareness campaign. I think it has been here; I think there has been some increase possibly because of the new family structure in our society — the single-parent family and working parents. But, for the most part I would say that awareness has had the effect of producing what we will see this year, 45,000 incidents reported to DYFS.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Was it increasing on the same scale, prior to the revelations in New York and then later on in New Jersey that hit nationwide television? Was that the big impetus?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: In New Jersey, I think, it was already increasing as a result of the awareness campaign. We saw that, prior to those two media events in New York and California that were on television. I want to point out that if you look at the history of the legislation and the incident reporting, when this law first came out back in the seventies, we saw a tremendous amount of reporting, and then, I guess, there was public apathy and we turned to some other areas of concern in society, and it went down. Then we saw the increase starting, with the awareness campaign put on the Governor and the administration.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: When your department appeared before the Appropriations Committee -- I guess that would have been last March -- at that time, the big numbers of abuse had not hit yet; is that correct?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: No, it was just starting to climb. We were just starting to see the surge about that point in time. Tom Blatner, Director of the DYFS Management Team, can give you the specific numbers.

THOMAS BLATNER: In 1982 the number of reports was 20,000 reports of abuse and neglect a year. That number had been level for the five years previous to that. In the following calendar year it went up to 26,000. So, it went from 20,000 to 26,000.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: In the 1983 calendar year?

MR. BLATNER: Yes. What we are projecting this year is that it will go from 26,000 to 45,000. This increase has been very, very sudden.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Is it basically the awareness rather than society suddenly becoming more abusive? Is that your conclusion?

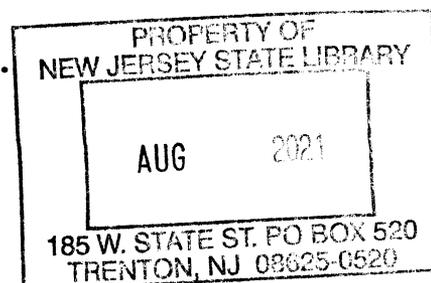
MR. BLATNER: I think that there may be -- as the Commissioner said -- a slight increase in the actual amount of family violence. One of the things that has happened with child abuse, with abuse against women in their homes, and the various kinds of forms that family violence takes, is that it is almost as if the taboo has been broken, and everybody is coming forward. As every television show is on, our emergency line gets more and more calls. People are definitely more willing to talk about the pain that they are suffering.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Did the mission of the Department change at all from 1982, 1983, and 1984 to increase the number of complaints? Did you mission broaden at all, or has the mission stayed the same?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: In terms of the abuse and neglect, really, our emphasis in 1982 and 1983 was to bring this out of the closet, to bring awareness to New Jersey, to get people to talk about it, and to get people to comply with the law in reporting. Most people are not aware that it is a misdemeanor not to report a suspected child abuse or neglect situation. Everyone has a legal obligation. That has been part of our program: To make people aware of reporting and to err on the side of safety, when it is dealing with our very vulnerable children. So, it has been a concentrated effort, in terms of implementing the law.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I noticed in The New York Times yesterday that there was an article in which there were three examples of what, maybe in the past, would not have been considered child abuse, that now you definitely feel should be looked into, such as a child being alone on his front doorstep at 9:00 in the evening and a child in a car without his seat belt on -- things like that which probably the average person would not consider child abuse. But, the Department does consider that those kinds of situations should be at least investigated; is that correct?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: That is correct.



ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Now, has that contributed to the increased number of cases? That has to take the same path, I suppose, as an example of a child being beaten half to death.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: I think it is very hard to set priorities, in terms of when we talk, between possible neglect or abuse. The story that I recall was one regarding a young boy, four years old, at 11:00 at night, wandering around a neighborhood. To me, that child is at risk. To me, that should be reported and should be handled by the Division of Youth and Family Services. I know that it says an 11-year old child at 9:00 p.m., but it really was a four-year old at 11:00 p.m.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: So, in other words, the real facts are a lot more horrible than what I am hearing?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: That is an example I used from personal experience. I think it is incumbent upon on all of us to recognize that a four-year old should not be out on the streets at 11:00 at night, wandering around.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I don't think anybody would disagree with that. You are indicating that at the present time the caseworker is something around 46; is that correct?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: That is correct.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: So that means there are probably some who have less and some who have more? Are they all the same? In other words, if someone has 46 cases, are his 46 the same as mine? Would one of his 46 take, maybe, three times the amount of time that one of my 50 might take?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Tom can answer that.

MR. BLATNER: We supervise a variety of situations involving children. On one hand, you may have a long-term foster care situation where a child has been in foster care for a long time by everybody's agreement, and it is a very stable situation without a lot of risks; in that kind of case, we may go out to the home once every three or four months. That is one kind of case. On the other hand, we may have a high-risk case that we are supervising, where it is a very risky situation; in that situation we would be involved much more

frequently. So, there is no question there is variety in the kinds of cases we handle. Family situations we are involved in do vary tremendously.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Could you take us through the process from the first time that your department becomes involved in a typical case so that we can appreciate exactly what the caseworker has to do.

MR. BLATNER: Well, I think there are really several processes that we go through. First of all, in terms of the previous question regarding what we look into, the law requires that whether someone calls in anonymously or not, we have to go out and look into the situation. Depending upon what the report is will determine how fast we go out. For example, if it is imminent danger, we will go out immediately.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Who is the "we"?

MR. BLATNER: We have 32 district offices around the State.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Thirty-two?

MR. BLATNER: Thirty-two district offices, at least one in each county. We have an Office of Child Abuse Control which has an 800-number and which the law requires people to report to. During the daytime, people can either call the 800-number or call their local office, and that will activate an investigation. After hours, the Office of Child Abuse Control is open 24 hours a day. We have an emergency response system that is based in each county, using on-call workers. So, we have the ability to go out 24 hours a day and look into a situation. When a call comes in, it depends upon the kind of report that we get -- if it is imminent danger, we will go out and investigate immediately, and take appropriate action. If it is a situation of abuse or neglect that does not call for an immediate response, we will go out within 24 hours.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Who makes that decision?

MR. BLATNER: Pardon?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: What type of person makes that decision?

MR. BLATNER: Social workers make that decision.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Are they all the same? In other words, are there different categories of social workers within the district office?

MR. BLATNER: We have had a change in the structure of social workers within their offices. The Commissioner mentioned that we recently introduced a family service series, which provides a career ladder and increased salaries to our workers. So, there are family service specialists at different levels within the work force, as well as supervisors.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Are there any minimum qualifications for these positions?

MR. BLATNER: Yes, there are.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: For example, a college degree in some speciality?

MR. BLATNER: A college degree in some speciality-related area and a minimum of a year's experience.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: In each of these district offices is there one person who is assigned to do the screening or does it depend on who answers the telephone?

MR. BLATNER: No. What we have done-- One of the problems in our initial formula was that it didn't separate investigations from ongoing casework. We do have people in our offices who are just doing intake and investigative work. However, the original formula that we used for assigning cases, which was drawn from the national Child Welfare League of America standards, didn't account for this. We do have people who are just doing investigations and intake and then moving the cases onto ongoing supervision.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: When you figure your caseloads, are those people included as part of the people who have cases?

MR. BLATNER: They were; they are not now.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: They are not now?

MR. BLATNER: One of the things that we tried to do was be very flexible in terms of our planning. When we established that interim formula, we went out to the district offices. There are two additional functions which we identified and which we are planning

for. One is to separate investigations and intake out and have a separate allocation for that. Secondly, we will have an allocation for ongoing supervised cases. And thirdly, there are workers in the offices who are doing litigation specialist work, foster home finding, and community resource development; these workers do not carry a caseload. In our original formula, they had been included as part of the caseload. So, we separated that all out.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I understand that there are some guidelines, I guess national guidelines, as to how many cases a given caseworker should handle. What would be the guidelines for the person in the field having the supervision of the children? What would be a reasonable number, according to the national guidelines?

MR. BLATNER: Well, according to the national guidelines, the Child Welfare League of America guidelines, which we are using, one caseworker would supervise 25 children.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: One to 25?

MR. BLATNER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: So that if we are at one to 46--

MR. BLATNER: (interrupting) Right now, we are at about 70% of the Child Welfare League of America standards. What this request would do is bring us back up to 85%, which was the request that we made two years ago.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: If one to 25 is good, and one to 46 is current, that is almost double.

MR. BLATNER: We are in a bad situation.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: That doesn't sound like 75%; it sounds more like 50%. Or am I figuring wrong? One to 46 versus one to 25.

MR. BLATNER: When we figure, we are looking at ranges.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: If the average is 46, that means there has to be some probably with 60, 70, or 80--

MR. BLATNER: (interrupting) I'm sorry. One to 34 would give you 85%. We have been using a range, so it is 34 to 38.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: So, you would like to get--

MR. BLATNER: (interrupting) We would like to get our caseloads to one to 34.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: But, it would be still considerably higher than what it is.

MR. BLATNER: Yes. What we had found originally was that division-wide and statewide, the Division was at 72% of the minimum standard. We had planned to go to 85% immediately. We have now changed it because of the increase in the reporting in caseloads. So, we are requesting just to go back to 85% with the 507 workers.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I have seen, in some of the news articles that I have read, that some people have as many as 60, 70, or 80 cases. Is that possible?

MR. BLATNER: It is. Again, it would depend on the kind of cases and how you count the cases. For example, I went out, in Monmouth County, with a worker who had 41 cases and was about to go down to 35. They are very active cases. On the other hand, you might have a worker who has long-term foster care in the caseload and that caseload would be higher.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Is there any internal control to determine the number that an individual caseworker has and the type of cases? How do you handle that?

MR. BLATNER: We have guidelines for the size of cases. What has happened is that our primary statutory responsibility is to investigate a call of abuse. So, what has happened in a number of offices is we have had to draw people out of the ongoing caseloads just to cover the investigations. That has thrown our ability to keep these ratios proper.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: But is it the luck of the draw as to what an individual caseworker will have?

MR. BLATNER: No. What we did when we did our allocations was we planned an allocation for each office. First of all, we determined a statewide number based upon the Child Welfare League of America standards and then we allocated workers to each office to achieve a reasonable caseload. Our managers are supposed to be maintaining that caseload.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Do the supervisors take some cases away from an individual caseworker if their load gets too high and shift them to someone who maybe has resolved some cases?

MR. BLATNER: To the extent that they can.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Or isn't that considered a good practice?

MR. BLATNER: That is good practice, definitely good practice.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: How can anybody handle 60, 70, or 80? It is just impossible.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: I would just like to make one point. I believe it might be appropriate for the phenomena we are seeing right now in terms of reporting. That is the question of indexing. Once we establish an agreement with the Legislature on proper caseload size, it should be indexed so that with the rise in incident reporting, there would be an adjustment so you don't get into this frantic scrambling to try to meet caseloads. The indexing would also provide a comfort for taxpayers; when there is a decline in the number of incidents -- and, as we see in government, many things go in cycles -- then, in fact, the indexing would be used to bring down the staff ratios.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Where would you get that additional money, though, when the index rose? I know the easy answer is us, but it is not that simple.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: That is the problem that you are in right now. You are in a position where the difficulty of seeing this increase and getting the additional dollars has not been, you might say, syncoated.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: For example now, I am advised that when the budget for this year was put in and requests were made, you did ask for some additional positions, but that the targets, as set by OMB, were to keep it at a level, not increase it at all. The Governor's Management Improvement Plan also said to stay within the present level at that time -- the present positions. Did they have significant input from your Division that you were really in bad shape then? You weren't in great shape then. You are worse now, but you weren't in great shape even when the GMIP was promulgated.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: At that point, we were approaching the 85% level. Our submission before the Joint Appropriations

Committee was to move to what hopefully we would see to be the 90% level of the Child Welfare League standards. At that point in time, between the time of the submission of the budget to the OMB and the time we went to the Joint Appropriations Committee, we revised our position and stated that case before the Joint Appropriations Committee for the additional people.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: You stated your case, but it is hard, in light of the GMIP, to go against it because that theoretically was based on considerable study.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: The GMIP, as far as I know, and in terms of the study, led to the increase of the workers in our analysis of DYFS. If you recall, DYFS was one of the first agencies to begin a review and reorganization. It was prior to GMIP and they came on and reviewed the findings of the management team. As a result of that restructuring, there was a moving down in our management-fill levels and an increasing in our direct-care workers. In fact, we increased in direct care, which was not really a reduction of any staff. I do not recall GMIP telling me not to increase. In fact, this first report led to an increase and redirection of our resources to direct care.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: How about the OMB targets? Did they, more or less, keep you from asking more than what you got?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: No, by the time I went to the JAC I had asked for additional people.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Did you find yourself in somewhat of an awkward position, being a member of the Cabinet where targets are set, and at the same time knowing you need more money for more workers — trying to tread a delicate balance between being a good soldier and being a good advocate? Is that one problem that you find yourself in?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: To be a good advocate you have to be a good soldier to fight for your cause so I fought for my cause, which was more workers.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: The question was how hard can you fight and be a good soldier at the same time, as part of an overall effort to keep costs down, in terms of the Governor's budget? Is that the problem you had, trying to tread the water on both shoulders?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: I had approval to go before the JAC and ask for that additional money.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: You mentioned in your remarks that you got 300 new positions or just 300 new workers?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Workers.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I understand there is quite a burnout and quite a turnover, so that 300 new workers may or may not necessarily create 300 new positions. How many actual new caseworker positions were put on line this year out of the budget?

MR. BLATNER: When we did the original management review and the management team entered DYFS, in January of 1983, there was a total direct service staff of 1,452, and as of last count, which was September 1, we had 1,849. That includes direct-line workers, front-line supervisors, and clerical people. I can provide you with the backup for that.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: You are counting the Central Office, the regional offices--

MR. BLATNER: (interrupting) This is in the district offices.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Strictly in the district offices?

MR. BLATNER: Strictly in the district offices. When we went in in January of 1983, there were 1,452 direct service staff in those offices, including front-line workers, front-line supervisors, and clerical staff, and as of September there were 1,849. That is an increase of 397 employees in the district offices.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Of those employees, some are not necessarily caseworkers, though?

MR. BLATNER: That's right. There were close to 300 caseworkers. I can give you the exact numbers. There were close to 300 caseworkers. There was an even split between front-line supervisors and clerical people. As I said, I can provide you with all the backup information to that.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Okay. We want to see if we are getting the biggest bang for the dollar that we are putting in. I understand you also contract with private organizations to do some field work? Maybe you can give us a little background on that.

MR. BLATNER: This is one of the most significant changes that has taken place. One of the things that would happen is that we would take clients onto our caseloads, and because of the high caseload and lack of resources, they would stay on our caseloads for long periods of time. So, we changed the policy and said that we wanted to begin to purchase services as quickly as possible from the private sector for our clients. We started what we called "district office initiatives" where we would allocate a certain amount of dollars to each district office and they would go out and purchase services from the private sector. For example, we might put homemaker services in a home, we might provide child care, we might provide transportation services, or we might provide a lot of family counseling and individual counseling. The idea is that these families need services quickly and the private sector is best prepared to provide that for them. And, hopefully, we will get them off the caseload that way.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: How do the Department's caseworkers interface with the private organizations? Is there somebody assigned to work with them and follow those specific cases?

MR. BLATNER: When we did the original plan we had assumed that there would be someone doing that. What has happened with the crush is that we have had to draw away from that. Part of our request would be to assign a community-resource development specialist to each district office to do that work.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I see. Is there a move to have someone like that in each district office?

MR. BLATNER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Someone to know what is available in the community?

MR. BLATNER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I assume you have read Dr. Cahill's report on the workers' stress? Both of you are shaking your heads yes.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Yes.

MR. BLATNER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Do you both agree that there is a significant burnout problem?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: I think it is a very stressful situation that the DYFS workers are encountering and have encountered. I am not sure that it has resulted in any more of a turnover than any other parts of the Department of Human Services.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: What is the estimated percentage?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Three years ago there was a 20% turnover in the Department. I think we are about down to 10% right now. I think DYFS is around that number.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Ten percent? That's annual?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Ten percent. That is an annual figure. So, we have seen our attrition slow down within the Department of Human Services and, pretty much, it is compatible with the institutional workers. That is not to say that is not a stressful situation. I think it is. I think a DYFS worker, in many cases, is out there making life and death decisions, placing a child or taking a child out of a home.

In my own experience, in reviewing the eight deaths -- or ten deaths -- in 1982, the fact was that I, in reviewing the reports, found a complete absence of community in dealing with child abuse in a particular family. I saw a complete absence, in many cases, of law enforcement in the investigations. Subsequent to that, we brought in other people.

I believe that the community is a very viable tool for a DYFS caseworker to use in assisting in investigations and case management. Our emphasis in relieving that stress has really been to bring in other agencies.

The prosecutors are back in the mainstream now in child abuse investigations. Almost all of the counties are starting special units, working in tandem with our DYFS workers, and I see that as a tool -- to train people in investigation work.

I see the community as a tool. Additional resources will be very helpful in providing more tools to the DYFS caseworker. So, I would say it is a stressful situation, and we all have to provide those kind of tools.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Of course, I assume that the caseload itself, in and of itself, creates a stress.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: That is correct.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Not being able to do exactly what you want to do without the resources to do it. Has DYFS taken any steps toward stress training or anything along those lines to get to the heart of the matter?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: No, we have not. We have looked at and are pursuing a stress management program for DYFS as well as for other parts of the Department.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: It is under consideration?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: It is under consideration.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: How about the paperwork? You read a lot about paperwork; somebody can't spend time in the field because they have to be back in the office doing paperwork. What efforts are you making to reduce the paperwork problem -- if there is a problem?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: That was a concern of ours when we did the management review. I personally looked at some of the forms and we put together a group of people, a task force, to look at paperwork. It is mandated in many areas, whether it is the courts or the State or Federal government. Tom Blatner can expand on it, where they are at this point. But, it is a very, very difficult problem; I think some of it will be resolved by automation.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Tom, maybe you want to expand on that.

MR. BLATNER: Yes. The first thing that we did was we put together what we call the paperwork committee, which is chaired by a person who used to be a district office manager, and it is attended by workers themselves. That paperwork committee was charged with reviewing all the paperwork requirements from the Central Office and seeing how much we could eliminate. They did, in fact, reduce a number of forms from a statewide point of view.

The second thing that we have done is as a result of a number of caseworkers filling out the same form, with the same information on it, but for different purposes. On January 1, we are putting in a whole new case recording system which gathers the information once. So, the caseworker doesn't have to keep filling that out.

I met with this paperwork committee just last week, and one of the things that they said was that there were so many legitimate requirements for paperwork, in terms of documentation for court, that rather than reducing what we have to do, we have to find different ways to do it. We agreed to two things. One is that we are pulling in a consultant who deals just with automated systems to see how much information can be dealt with from one of the systems. And secondly, we are looking at whether we can have specialized clerical training for people so that they can fill out some of these forms and reduce the paperwork.

The other thing that was a real eyeopener for me was looking at the quality-assurance program and seeing what kind of work the offices were doing. There has been a tremendous increase in paperwork because a lot of the forms which were supposed to have been filled out, were not filled out. So, at the same time that we were reducing forms, we were asking for compliance in our offices. For example, if caseworkers are only filling out 40% of their initial response forms, which are required for court, and then all of sudden we are asking them to do 100%, they have more paperwork. It is a very, very difficult area. I think what we are leaning more toward is-- I think we have gotten close to how much we can actually reduce, but we have to find different ways to free up our social work time so the caseworkers can do their primary task.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I have heard it said, and correct me if this is incorrect, that half of a caseworker's time is spent on paperwork. Is that an accurate statement?

MR. BLATNER: I don't think it is quite that high, but--

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: (interrupting) How high would you say it is?

MR. BLATNER: I would say, maybe, 35% or 40%.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: They work 35 or 37 1/2 hours?

MR. BLATNER: Thirty-five hours.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: So, they are spending 10, 12, or 13 hours a week doing paperwork?

MR. BLATNER: We have had our paperwork committee go back out to our offices and ask office people: "What can we reduce?" I think the consensus is there is a lot of paperwork, but there is not much to reduce. That is why I think that the answer now lies in finding different people and systems to do it.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: I think you have to try and capture certain pieces of information that could be used for a variety of reports, sort of a format. But, you can't tell the prosecutor of the county that you are not going to submit reports to them -- which we found happened several years ago. In fact, there wasn't a reporting relationship in many areas in the State of New Jersey. That is an area where additional paperwork might have been created that wasn't there before. But, it is in the law -- "shall be reported." I think the real answer is a format that will generate information that could, in itself, generate additional reports through automation.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Are you working with the courts and the prosecutors' offices in trying to come up with such a format?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: As a result of the prosecutors working group that reported to me two years ago, the prosecutors have already come up with uniform reporting for the prosecutors and DYFS. So, we addressed that particular issue with law enforcement.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: If we could just make a dent, say a 20% or 30% dent, in that paperwork, we would all of a sudden have more caseworker hours, and the caseworker load would be just that more reduced. Do you get the input from the caseworkers themselves as to what they think? You said something about committees, that you have ongoing committees. You said something about the supervisors being on these committees. Are the people out on the line, the firing line, on these committees also?

MR. BLATNER: The paperwork committee is chaired by a manager, but the members of the committee are people who work in the offices as workers. We have also asked each office to send us recommendations on how we can reduce the paperwork. We spend a lot of time on it. There are an awful lot of requirements.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: You generate a lot of paper.

MR. BLATNER: Yes, that's right, trying to figure out how much paper we can reduce.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: To this point, you haven't been able to do too much from what you are saying?

MR. BLATNER: I think that what we have reduced has been increased by legitimate demands that weren't fulfilled. On January 1, we have our new case recording system going in place, which was designed with the courts so that instead of filling out two separate forms with the same information on it there is one. In the spring we are having a whole automated system go into place. I am hopeful that will do it. But, I think we also have to look at having clerical people trained to take some of the information so that we can free up the social worker time.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Assemblyman Colburn.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: How many vacant positions do you normally have in the social worker group?

MR. BLATNER: Right now, I would say, in the Division, we probably have, out of the total number of positions — 27,800 (sic) — we have division-wide probably 20 vacant Division positions.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: About 20?

MR. BLATNER: One of the problems is that because we don't have vacant positions we can't create a pool that would allow us to backfill, so that is one of the things we are looking at.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: Of the 507 proposed new people, what categories will they come in? You may have said that; I don't remember.

MR. BLATNER: There are 354 direct-line workers.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: What does that mean?

MR. BLATNER: That means social workers who are front-line workers. There are—

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: (interrupting) I have the numbers right here: 354 caseworkers, 69 supervisors, and 84 clerical.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: Where would you house all these new people? Where will these 507 new people be placed?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Geographically?

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: No. Do you have enough desks?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: We are going to have to get additional space.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: You are going to need a new building.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Part of that proposal is additional space.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: Is that part of the extra--

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: (interrupting) That is part of the \$5 million.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: That is part of the \$5 million?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Five million dollars includes things such as rental of vehicles, space, furniture, telephones, etc.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: During the little break I had a chance to take a look at a comparison of the staffing from figures supplied to me by the Office of Budget Management. Now according to this, it says that in 1981, in the categories of SW-1 and SW-2 -- social workers 1 and 2 -- and social worker aides and trainees, there was a total of 1102 positions.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: What date do you have -- 8/10/81? District Office social workers, 1102.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Okay, right. Then it seems to be relatively level. In 1982, it is the same figure, give or take 50. In 1983, relatively the same figure. And, July 18, 1984, we are only at about 1200. So, really in the three-year period, according to this, from 1981 to 1984, we have really only increased 100, and I assume those are the people who are out in the field. How does that square with the thought that we have actually 300 more out in the field?

Do you have the same figures that I am looking at?

MR. BLATNER: Using the figures we have for direct-service workers, on 7/1/82, there were about a thousand -- 1023. Then in 1/1/83, which is the base line that we are using for adding workers in the field-- Before that there had been a freeze on, and there was attrition, so we were down to 953 positions. As of today, we are up to 1206. Those are our figures.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: So really you have only increased by about 100 in three years. If these figures that I am looking at, are correct -- and these are from OMB--

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: (interrupting) You are talking 953 to 1206.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: What is that?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: You are talking 953 to 1206.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: No, I am looking at SW-1 and SW-2 plus--

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: (interrupting) I am looking at 1/1/83. There was an attrition program on when I first came on board. During the DYFS management review, we realized that we were "attriting" in areas that we couldn't afford to "attrite," so the base that we started with was 953 moving to 1206. If you recall, there was a controversy about this attrition program. I couldn't figure out why we were "attriting." As a matter of fact, the budget that I was given would have called for an additional layoff or attrition of 200 more workers.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: The figures, as of June 24th, which would be the end of the fiscal year of 1983, have a total of 1111.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: September 1, 1984-- We have another chart here; I don't know if they have given it to you.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: You must be looking at different dates. I am looking at the end--

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: (interrupting) These are the dates we are using -- 1/1/83, 953; 9/1/84, 1206.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: When did the figures increase from your 1983 figure, that you used, of 956 to approximately 1111 at the end of June, 1983?

MR. BLATNER: In 1/1/83, it was about as low as we went.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: That was your low point?

MR. BLATNER: That was our low point. And from then until, I would say, about six months ago, we were undergoing a hiring program, so that from 1/1/83 we went from 953 to 7/1/83, 1121; 7/1/84, 1178; and as of 9/1/84, we are at 1206.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: So we were catching up basically from the attrition program. In reality, my initial statement -- that we only actually increased by 100 in three years -- is correct apparently.

MR. BLATNER: It depends on the base line.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: The base line, when we started our program to move, was 1/1/83 -- after we did the analysis and reorganization of DYFS. The base was 1/1/83.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: But the point I am trying to make is that back in 1981 you had 20,000 cases--

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: (interrupting) I think it is a matter of the date you are using. What I explained to you is that--

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: (interrupting) I understand.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: (continuing) --the budget that we were given had an attrition program in it. If I followed that budget we would have had to lay off an additional 200 people in DYFS. We took another approach and did a reorganization of DYFS and a fiscal review of DYFS, which allowed us to reorganize and move on 1/1/83 from 953 because there was an imposed attrition program in the Division of Youth and Family Services.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: So you shifted certain titles? Is that what you did?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: We moved from management positions to direct care; is that correct?

MR. BLATNER: We also filled the vacant positions that we didn't have money for because we had asked for a carry forward, and the Legislature gave us a carry forward. So, we were able to fill those positions.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: By and large, we are trying to deal with double-the-caseload now, with about 100 more people than we had in 1981. Is that fair to say?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: That's fair.

MR. BLATNER: That is fair to say.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: So, there in and of itself lies one of the great difficulties. We need many more-- How many do you think you

can train and put on line in a given six-month period? I assume that you just don't put someone out in the field. There is training and other things that have to be done. Assuming, the Legislature gave you the whole \$5 million, would you be able to put those people on-line in a relatively short time?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: That is a prorated amount. With all cooperation that is necessary, by the end of the fiscal year we hopefully would have those people on board. Efforts have already been made to coordinate such things as additional space, etc.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Before I go on to a question, I have a couple of requests from people who want to know whether they are going to testify today. As I said in the beginning, we have a lot of important things to learn from the Commissioner and Mr. Blatner, and I don't know if we are going to get to some of the organizations that want to testify or some of the other people who have requested to testify. We are going to have another session tomorrow, and we may even have a third session if we find that the testimony adds new material and new information basically on a positive and constructive note. If it gets repetitious, we don't have to go into repetition. As we get new information, we will continue these hearings for as many days as are necessary to get all the information so the Legislature can give the proper tools to the Department.

We have just been joined by Assemblywoman Marlene Lynch Ford. Let the record note that.

Now, another thing which has troubled me somewhat is the actual mission of DYFS. I have heard people say it is to protect the children. I have heard people say it is to preserve the family. Both are certainly laudable causes. Is there one set mission?

MR. BLATNER: I can answer that. The law says that we are supposed to protect children and preserve families. What we were doing was primarily set up as a reactive action around protective services. It was primarily that the State government dealt with the protective services and the community dealt with the nonprotective services. One of the first things that the Commissioner said is that we had to get out of this reactive situation. And, we called together a number of

community people and we did set about writing a new DYFS mission statement which is organized around the idea of prevention, providing community services to families when they do have problems so that they can stay out of the system or get out of the system, and then have protection as the backbone of the system.

The other thing is that there was a conception on the part of DYFS and the public that child abuse was a State problem, and yet child abuse was occurring in homes and in families. Our feeling was that we had to have a complete mobilization of State and private agencies and community people to try to deal with these problems. So, we did have a long process with community people. We did draw up a new mission statement, which was based upon prevention, community support, and protection. We have put it in place. One of the things we have raised in our impact statement is that, with the increased reporting and the increased caseload, some of the prevention and community-support activities that we were planning to do are obviously strained. We may have to retrench if we don't get the resources.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: You don't have time for those things at the present time because of your load, just on the firing line, for the reactive material you have to do.

MR. BLATNER: Right. Exactly.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: In the new mission now, what is the DYFS's workers first and primary goal vis-a-vis family preservation or child protection?

MR. BLATNER: In terms of the dual mandate, what we have asked is-- There was a concept of least intrusive in the former DYFS policy. What we have asked, when we do investigations -- and we have added this training to workers -- is when the workers go out to be aggressive in either direction. So in other words, if there is a burnout in the home and they are going to go into foster care, we have given them emergency assistance money so that they can put that family in a motel so they don't have to go into a caseload. If there is risk in the family, then the Commissioner's direction is to err on the side of safety. So, if there is a potential for family preservation, do that more aggressively; if there is risk of harm, do that more aggressively.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I'm thinking in terms of where you have conflicts. For example, when a parent is abusing a child, is your first goal to try to get that parent interfacing with the child to preserve the family, or is your first goal to get the family away from that parent and, in effect, cut out the cancer?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: It might be to get the parent to get some type of treatment if necessary; that could be one step. The bottom line is to protect the child.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: That is the primary goal.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: The bottom line is to protect the child and then to try and keep the family together if at all possible.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: If possible, but the child is the key.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: That is correct.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Going back to the steering committee. is it operative now? Am I correct?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Which steering committee?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: The one to get the workers' and the Department's input on line. Is that an ongoing thing now?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Yes, it is.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Is that one steering committee statewide, or does each district office have a steering committee? How does that work?

MR. BLATNER: We started out with a statewide steering committee. One of the issues that came up -- our management team spent a lot of time in the district offices -- was that district office managers and workers were sitting down and talking a lot of problems through themselves. We did move to a system where there will be a steering committee in each district office. There is a steering committee at the regional level, and there is a statewide steering committee to deal with statewide issues.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Are the people who are on this from labor, so to speak, volunteers? How are they selected?

MR. BLATNER: They are selected by their peers.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Their peers?

MR. BLATNER: We have clerical people; we have front-line workers; we have supervisors; and we have managers.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: How do the peers pick them? Do they have elections?

MR. BLATNER: That varies from office to office. They don't have elections.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: So there is no set method?

MR. BLATNER: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Now, one of the things that I read somewhere is that at times when audits are being done of various district offices, the social workers have to come in out of the field and spend twice the amount of time on their paperwork, so that the audit will look good. Is your experience along those lines?

MR. BLATNER: It depends on what kind of job they have been doing on an ongoing basis. As a matter of fact, I just went out to two district offices where the quality assurance review was excellent, and their response time was 99%. They didn't have to spend a lot of time upgrading their paperwork. It was done when it should have been done, on the job. There are also offices which have not been doing their paperwork, and they probably do have to go back into the office and review their documentation and bring it up to snuff. So, I would say that all the quality assurance review does is ask what is going on within the office. If people are doing their job, in terms of documenting their critical activities, it doesn't take a lot of time. It may, if they are not.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: It happens in hospitals too when you go through accreditation.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: They put the push on. It is not really a healthy situation, but what you are saying is, it is human nature.

Now, I have also heard a lot of complaints that the people on the firing line don't feel they get the support from management when they are charged, whether correctly or incorrectly, by people, clients, or whatnot. Maybe that may be a perception that is incorrect. I wonder if you could address that, as to where you stand and what you do when someone is charged within the Division?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: What kind of charge?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Let's say a client says that the social worker didn't do "X, Y, or Z," and they, more or less, report them to their superior. What is the process then? Is there a grievance proceeding?

MR. BLATNER: We have set up a citizen action line so people -- either clients or citizens -- can call in, and if they have issue regarding how we are doing our job, we will look into it. Depending upon the complaint, our citizen action line staff will go out and look into it and report back to us, in terms of what the procedure is. We have also asked managers to hold our workers accountable; we have asked our management team to hold our supervisors accountable. Depending on the situation, we will look into it and take appropriate action.

We have also set up a case review process. We have revamped our unusual incident system so if there are cases that are problematic, we have a way to look into it. We review it, and a decision will be made as to what kind of action will be taken. And, we will take that action.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: I would just like to comment on how that started because that was my idea. I take credit for that. It is somewhat controversial, but I do take credit.

I know a Lieutenant Danko from the Clark Police Department, who is a foster parent and who had some difficulty late in the evening with a foster child. What concerned me was that he wound up at my house at a very late hour. He had a very difficult time getting his problem resolved between the courts, the police, and DYFS. As a result of that experience and the sharing of his frustrations, I thought that people should have an ability to get to the top, in terms of resolving many issues. In this particular case, it was a combination of the courts, law enforcement, and DYFS, and I felt strongly that a foster parent or other people involved in the care of children should have some kind of mechanism to communicate. It wasn't meant to get anybody or as a squealing mechanism. It was really meant to provide some kind of relief for some community person who needed assistance or who had a particular concern with the handling of an individual case. That is exactly how that line started. I felt that person had a legitimate

problem. If it took some kind of mechanism -- a telephone call -- which would eventually get to me to resolve the issue between courts, DYFS, and law enforcement, I thought a person should have that ability. He happened to know me and came to my house. But what about the other people who do not know me and can't get access to my office?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Once such a charge is lodged against a worker, what happens to the worker? Does he get suspended? What is the procedure?

MR. BLATNER: I would like to point out that there are also civil service procedures governing how we deal with our employees. There is also an administrative hearing process if clients have a grievance. What this is intended to do is to deal with problems before they reach that stage. But, if there is a finding on the part of the supervisor that an employee has not followed his or her job description then we usually establish procedures of civil service to take disciplinary action.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Have some workers charged that they have been basically found guilty in the press before they ever got such a hearing? Have you heard charges like that from some of the people?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: I haven't heard that charge.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I have received some complaints like that.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Is there a particular case?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I don't have specific examples. Perhaps when we have the testimony from the workers themselves, we may get some specifics on that. I just wanted to get your reaction to it because I heard that they felt they were being tried and convicted in the press.

MR. BLATNER: I have heard that on occasion, and I know exactly what happened. What we said-- I think it is an appropriate stance that we take. If there is a complaint coming from wherever, our first stance is to remain neutral, until we look into it. What we have said, on occasion -- if there is some big blowup or something -- is that we will look into it and we will take appropriate action if necessary. That is what we said, and I think we stand by it.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: That is kind of what the background is? While we are on the subject of the press, do you have any objections to caseworkers talking to the press or talking to legislators about either positive suggestions, or even negative suggestions?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: I have no concern with that. What we do have a concern with is discussing any particular case.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Confidentiality has to remain at all times, the anonymity of people. In terms of where they see problems, you don't have any problem with them talking to the press or the legislators?

MR. BLATNER: I don't think we have any problem in terms of problems. I think what we do have a concern with is representing Division policy because you have to remember that you are dealing with probably the most sensitive area there is in life -- child abuse and sexual abuse in families and that kind of thing. I think we want to be very careful when we represent policy about how we are going to handle a particular situation -- that it is cleared through Central Office. This is one area about which we have concern.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Isn't that a little dangerous? If someone has a suggestion and you have to clear it through Central Office and Central Office says, "We don't like that suggestion," is the policy then that is the end of the suggestion?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: I think Tom is talking about policy statements: This is the policy of DYFS.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Well, I'm not talking about policy statements.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: You aren't talking about suggestions, are you?

MR. BLATNER: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Well, say somebody has an idea. We have talked a lot now today. Somebody may come up with an idea such as "why don't you do this or so legislatively?"

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Obviously the question you have asked me I have heard before from others -- workers and CWA. I have no problem with them asking you those questions. Really, I have no

problem. What Tom is saying is that it is one big concern I have with the Department of Human Services in its entirety. It is 22,000 people and seven divisions. Within the divisions, there are bureaus and central offices.

My big concern during the first couple of years was what was the policy of the Department of Human Services. If you wanted the policy of Human Services, I would like to be able to state that, although I was hearing in the field -- not only in DYFS -- that there were different positions, different policy statements. I think it is very clear that if you want to know the policy of the Department or the Division, we would like to have the opportunity to state that policy.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: There is no question. No one else can speak for you on policy. But I am talking about suggestions.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: But a lot of people do.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Who was Bernice Manshel?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: A former Director of DYFS.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: That was your predecessor? Are you familiar with her policies in terms of stifling input from people on the firing line? I have a memo that she sent out which kind of disturbed me. The memo was directed to the various people in the Division and it said that the Division's policy will be that any suggestions for legislative change are to be submitted to the Office of Regulatory and Legislative Affairs. This was directed to everybody.

Certainly as a legislator, I feel somewhat at a loss to understand why people can't communicate with me as a legislator -- their individual ideas -- rather than having to go through a chain of command because, quite often, the chain of command is the problem in the first place.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: The only problem I have, within the Department of Human Services-- If you are representing the Department of Human Services then I would like to clear legislation that comes out of the Department of Human Services. Do not represent the Department of Human Services when in fact you are not.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: So that you-- In fact, I'll give you a copy of this memo if you don't have it. Perhaps you might want to

amend it so the people will feel free to talk to their legislators because I certainly would like to feel I could talk to caseworkers and say, "What can I do to help with your job and to help the kids in New Jersey?"

MR. BLATNER: Let me give you an example of a policy that I think I would want clear. When we talk about this partnership model with the community, there has been a lot of concern about what information can be shared and what can't be shared. We have said, from our level, that if it is a foster parent who has a child, we would like them to share relevant medical information if the kid is going someplace else. And then I will get a call from a foster parent saying, "Well, this caseworker said we can't have that information." Then it gets to the press and that kind of thing. We want to make sure that when our caseworkers present that kind of information to consumers, it is consistent with our policy.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: I would just like to make a point. You brought up a piece of material that is not my policy or part of the Department of Human Services. That was the first time I even knew there was a letter or memorandum in existence. That is what we try to stifle in terms of the entire Department; we speak as a department, not as seven separate divisions.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: The letter is dated August 19, 1982, and it is from Bernice Manshel, Director of the Division of Youth and Family Services. It reads as I indicated. I will give you a copy of it, and perhaps, as I said, you might want to rescind this because, I suppose, this is still the outstanding directive to the people.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: If we put out policy on behalf of the Department of Human Services it will be sent by me to all divisions for compliance, so I would say that is somewhat obsolete.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Hopefully, it is obsolete, but I think an affirmative memo-- Anybody working under that department would be somewhat reluctant to say, "Commissioner Albanese didn't say it, but she pretty high up, so I better not go afoul of that."

In The Trenton Times, yesterday, apparently some reporters did some investigative work, and I read the article. Michael Shields,

staff writer for The Trenton Times apparently interviewed caseworkers. It says "caseworkers interviewed declined to be identified by their real names because they have been instructed by their superiors not to speak to reporters." Again, is that Department policy, that caseworkers shouldn't talk to reporters except where names are not to be mentioned? I can understand that, but is that a Department policy?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: It is definitely not a Department policy.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I also have a directive that specifically says "contacts with any segment of the news media, State or local politicians, seeking information concerning a case or our operations, is to only go through a supervisor." So this directive apparently confirms--

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: (interrupting) Is that a specific case that you are referring to? Are you referring to a reporter asking about a specific case?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: The reporter, Michael Shields -- I don't know if he is here -- says, "caseworkers," plural, "interviewed declined to be identified." He is not necessarily talking about one case. He said, "In interviews last week caseworkers from the Mercer County District Office said their dedication to their families was being severely tested by mounting pressure and increasing caseloads." He has apparently interviewed them as to the problems they see--

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: (interrupting) I see no reason why they wouldn't give their names if that is the way they feel. We are stressing that today in this testimony.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Except that, here, we have a departmental memorandum that says that contacts with any segment of the news media or state or local politicians is not practiced unless it goes through a supervisor. So, maybe that should be rescinded, as well, in order that caseworkers can speak freely because, let's face it, the only way we ever get change is when we hear from the people on the firing line as to what the problems are. Sometimes people at the top level are insulated from this; they are afraid to talk to you, perhaps. I don't

know. They may feel that if they complain to you that will hurt their chances for promotion or advancement because they will sound like a complainer.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: I don't think that is true. I made an effort and went out to an Essex office and a Union County office and asked that management not be present. In fact, I sat down and talked for a lengthy period of time with DYFS workers on specific issues. And I tell you, they didn't hold back in any area. As a matter of fact, most recently, I sat with some of the CWA people and discussed issues. I think it is healthy to go down and talk to the line workers. I have made a concentrated effort to talk to workers about specific problems because it is helpful for me in coming up with overall policy to address the issues. So, that is on the record.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: And, there is no question about-- I do like the fact that you are saying it is on the record. Apparently maybe this was before you got that closely involved with DYFS itself.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: For 22,000 people--

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: (interrupting) I know you can't be on top of everything--

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: (interrupting) It is almost ridiculous to believe that someone would go out and say that you can't talk to reporters. What people are talking about--

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: (interrupting) But, it says it right here in black and white.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: (continuing) Let me finish. We are concerned with the handling of a case, specifically. The public information officer usually deals with the press to make sure that the facts are correct; we have all the information before something goes out. If it is a case, then I am concerned that we abide by the law and abide by the Department's procedure. But as far as caseworkers telling the Legislature about a need for improvement or how stressful they feel, I have no particular problem with that.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Do any members of the Committee want to ask any questions?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORD: Yes. Could you elaborate upon your plans to hire the additional 500 caseworkers, where they would be allocated?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Okay. Let me just give you the numbers -- 354 would be caseworkers, 69 would be supervisors, and 84 would be clerical. Out of the \$5 million, \$1.6 million would be used for rentals, vehicles, furniture, etc.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORD: That is going to be in your budget request for next year?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: We are asking for that right now.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORD: I also reviewed the testimony and there was a reference made to a request for 100 additional workers that was denied by the Joint Appropriations Committee. I honestly don't recall that. I assume it happened. Can you elaborate, perhaps, on that? How was it presented to the Committee?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: We made about five or six different requests for additional money, and one of those requests was a \$3.6 million appropriation for DYFS.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORD: It wasn't struck from your budget then? Is that correct?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: No, it wasn't struck, but we did not get the additional funds.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORD: It was a resolution that was submitted? It just wasn't voted on at the--

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Resolution 286.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORD: Why didn't you just include it within your original budget request?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: At the time we were putting together the budget, we didn't see that kind of increase. Budgets start-- Right now we are working on the 1986 budget. As we moved through the DYFS reorganization, we saw the need and wanted to reach for higher levels. We then contacted the Governor's Office indicating that we would need those additional funds. We had several areas where we requested additional money, from the time the budget was submitted to the time we actually went before the Joint Appropriations Committee.

May I respectfully request-- I know there are a lot of people here representing community agencies and I think it would be very beneficial for this body to provide some time for these people who have come -- at some later date or for the rest of the day -- to actually provide testimony and answer questions. I believe that a good part of the answer to our troubled families and to our troubled children in this State lies with community agencies and community support. They are out there, they are dealing with the problem. We are trying to develop a relationship of public/private partnership which I think is the only effective way of dealing with this problem. So, I respectfully request that this Committee give some time to ask questions of those people and hear their testimony. They are part and parcel now of our effort to fight this problem in the State of New Jersey.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: We definitely will, and for those who we can't accommodate today and tomorrow, I think there is enough fruitful information to be learned to warrant an additional session or sessions.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Thank you. I appreciate that.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Next we have a representative from the Communication Workers of America. For the record, will you state your name?

STEVE ROSENTHAL: Yes, Steve Rosenthal. I am a national representative of the Communication Workers of America.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: And, who is with you?

JIM GALLAGHER: I am Jim Gallagher, President of the CWA, Local 1039.

MR. ROSENTHAL: We'll be very brief today, Mr. Chairman. First, I just want to thank you, the members of the Committee, and Assemblywoman Ford for requesting these hearings.

I think we heard something of a picture-painted DYFS through possibly rose-colored glasses today. Tomorrow the union will testify, along with the psychologist who did the stress study. We will produce a number of caseworkers who are on the front line day in and day out, and who have experienced serious, what we would call "harassment," for lack of a better term, on the part of DYFS management.

We heard about the memos you produced concerning not speaking to legislators and the press — a very basic First Amendment right. We heard about steering committees established in the district offices throughout the State. We heard about a whole series of changes that are forthcoming at the Division of Youth and Family Services.

Our concerns are twofold: number one, clearly to protect the workers whom we represent there to ensure that they are not confronted with this type of stressful job; and number two, that there be an adequate number of workers to do the job. I think that in the testimony tomorrow, you will hear from workers who are totally committed and dedicated to protecting the rights of the children of this State. A number of our members have met with legislators, and they have talked to the press, despite the memos that have come out of DYFS. What we have heard time and time again is, these people are totally committed. They want to do their jobs. We have had people stand up at meetings and say things like, "I would gladly skip the three-percent increase that was just given to State workers if I knew that money was going to be used to hire more workers to alleviate the problems, so that I could sleep at night and not have to worry about the kids."

The caseload size throughout the State varies, but, for example, in Monmouth and Ocean Counties, the caseload is 58 or 59. We have caseworkers with as many as 100 to 120 cases. The Child Welfare League of America suggests a caseload size of 20 to 25 as being acceptable. There are a number of Federal court decisions that have come down which indicate that 20 to 25 is an acceptable level.

Number one, we are concerned about our workers, and we want to be sure that the types of conditions they are exposed to day in and day out are healthy and safe.

On equal basis, we are concerned about the kids of this State, and we want to ensure that the Division of Youth and Family Services is providing the type of service necessary to ensure that these kids are adequately protected. We don't see that happening now. We don't feel that the workers or the union have the type of input at DYFS to try to correct some of the problems. As you indicated today,

Assemblyman Flynn, the workers on the front line probably know more about what is going on day in and day out than anybody. There is a total lack of communication between those workers, other than the steering committees, and I think we'll address that in a little more length tomorrow.

For lack of time, as I said, I'll cut my statement short and hope that you'll have the time tomorrow to hear our witnesses. We support the Commissioner's request for more jobs, and we hope this Committee will recommend that. We hope that the Assembly and Senate Revenue, Finance, and Appropriation Committees will support that, but also where those resources are going to go -- not just say, "Yes, we need more workers," but, "where are they going to go? What types of support are they going to have? Will there be more clerical workers to help them do their work? Will there be adequate numbers of supervisors? Will the whole system run properly?"

The answer alone is not just to add more workers. I think we can demonstrate that tomorrow.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Hopefully, what we will hear tomorrow will not only be the problems, but the possible solutions.

MR. ROSENTHAL: I hope so.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Jim, do you want to add anything, or did Steve succinctly state what you wanted to say?

MR. GALLAGHER: He has summed it up pretty well, but on behalf of being a DYFS worker and on behalf of the DYFS workers whom we represent, I would just like to thank the Committee for giving us an opportunity to speak to you and to the public. Unfortunately, in the past, whether it be through misinformation or whatever, there has been an atmosphere in DYFS where the workers have felt that not only couldn't they speak to the press, but they also couldn't speak to their elected officials.

I want to thank you, Assemblyman, for clarifying that. I would also like to thank Commissioner Albanese for explaining his position, and I hope he will put that position out to the people in DYFS.

I think what you will hear tomorrow will be that besides having a group of dedicated people who are being emotionally and physically ground into the dirt for the jobs they are doing, you are going to hear of fear — fear in the DYFS offices. The workers who are coming here tomorrow are coming forth to testify, even though most of them are fearful that they might have repercussions against them. I think the Committee should know that.

Again, I thank you for allowing us the opportunity to address you today and again tomorrow.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Thank you. The next witness we have is Betty Wilson, President of the Center for Non-Profit Corporations, who was formerly a member of this house and an esteemed colleague. How are you today, Betty?

BETTY WILSON: Fine. Assemblyman, I have some copies of my testimony if you would like to have them. I won't read it word for word; you can read it yourselves. You have a lot of testimony to hear, so I will summarize what I have put in my statement.

The Center for Non-Profit Corporations is a statewide advocacy organization for nonprofit groups in New Jersey. We appreciate this opportunity to speak today from the community perspective on the needs of DFYS.

You've heard a great deal from the Commissioner about the demand for services having gone up and the increased public awareness of child abuse. I don't think that is anything new, but I think it bears repeating. That has contributed to the caseworker overload and their sense of burnout.

All of the reports that come in have to be investigated. I think the reporting goes back, Assemblyman, to the early days when you and I were both freshmen legislators and when Pat Dodd introduced legislation. The reporting is not new, but the public awareness is certainly new, and the growing sense that there is something that can be done about it is also relatively new.

We appreciate the increased support for caseworkers from the Joint Appropriations Committee over the years. Unfortunately, DYFS has not been able to keep up. We don't say this as a criticism; it is

quite the contrary. Who could have ever predicted that the number of reported abuses would go up from 200,000 to 400,000 per year in just a couple of years?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: That is nationwide?

MS. WILSON: That is here in New Jersey. It is incredible; it is just incredible.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: In New Jersey?

MS. WILSON: They are reported abuse cases.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Oh, reported, all right. Not active cases.

MS. WILSON: Of course, the Department people are better at documenting this than I am, but from what I understand, at least half of them are substantiated; therefore, there is casework follow-up that has to be taken.

This is an unprecedented situation, and that is what is called for here -- some unprecedented action on your part. In pursuing a solution, we urge you to keep at the forefront the historic partnership between the community and DYFS. This has been a symbiotic relationship that has developed over many, many years. The community nonprofit groups are the ones the DYFS workers turn to, because without the community groups, there would be no resources. There would be no place to turn for child care, after-school care, abuse prevention, homemaker services, or whatever is needed for that particular child and that particular family.

In closing, I want to say that in the 12 or so years that I've been either working directly with DFYS, as a local elected official, as Vice Chairperson of the Institutions, Health and Welfare Committee in the Assembly, and as the person who formed the first day-care task force -- or, in my current position as an advocate for the Non-Profit Corporations -- I've never before seen such a rich blend of community services and groups serving as equal partners with the State. We are encouraged and heartened by that.

I was particularly pleased to note that in the Commissioner's testimony, in seeking additional support to meet this problem, he asks for support of the partnership -- the community, as well as the

caseworkers. We welcome your reliance on the community, and we appreciate the trust and respect you have shown us. We also ask that our other partner -- in this case, DYFS -- receive some help now too. Out of a strong partnership, the children and the families in New Jersey will be the winners.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I have one question. I'm confused about the numbers. In the Commissioner's report, he said that we are running now at a rate of 45,000 reports per year. You used a figure of 400,000.

MS. WILSON: I may be wrong. I hope I'm wrong, Assemblyman.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Maybe that is nationwide. Could that be nationwide?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORD: Assemblyman, no, I think the 45,000, as I understand it, are the open cases that are under investigation and where referrals have been made to the prosecutor. That is the number I understand as being the accurate number.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: No, it says, "The number of reported cases of child abuse has increased 42% in one year. We are now averaging 123 per day, or one new report of child abuse every 12 minutes. That should total 45,000 reports by the year's end." I don't want the Committee leaving here with wrong numbers. If we are dealing with 45,000, then we need "x" number of caseworkers. If we are dealing with 400,000, then--

(Audience indicates that correct figure is 45,000)

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: All right, let's accept--

MS. WILSON: (interrupting) I am prepared to say that I am wrong.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Okay, somebody probably just typed an extra "0" in there. There is no problem.

The problem has doubled in the last year. That is the key, and you are looking for the community, DYFS, and the Legislature to work in harmony.

MS. WILSON: That is correct.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Thank you, Betty. Our next witness is Catherine DeCheser, Executive Director of the Community Planning &

Advocacy Council, Human Services Coalition of Camden County. If I mispronounced your name, please correct me.

CATHERINE A. DeCHESER: My name is Catherine DeCheser. I am the Executive Director of the Community Planning and Advocacy Council/The Human Services Coalition of Camden County (CPAC/HSC). Our agency represents over 250 public and private nonprofit agencies which provide services to thousands of Camden County citizens. We are recognized by the Board of Chosen Freeholders and the Camden County United Way as their official planning and advisory body for human services.

I am also a member of the Governor's Task Force on Child Abuse -- The Sub-Committee on Prevention. Of my 24 years in social work, beginning as a DYFS caseworker in 1960 -- parenthetically, may I add, my caseload was 150 families -- half has been spent in the public government sector and half in the private nonprofit sector. I also participated as a community member in the development of the DYFS Mission Statement.

I am here today representing our community's concern that this Committee's work result in the recognition that for the first time in more than two decades, the bureaucratic system called DYFS is undergoing a massive institutional change which we welcome as long overdue and vitally necessary. We support these institutional changes, not just as a revitalization of our State's bureaucratic social service delivery system, but as a rebirth of the origins of social work in this country. The Mission Statement embodies the philosophy from those origins which date back to the old neighborhood settlement concept when we witnessed neighbors and communities caring about each other and each other's children. It is a philosophy which is rooted in our Judeo-Christian ethic that we are our brother's keeper, and that we have a moral, as well as spiritual, responsibility to share in the problems of our neighbors, their families, the environment, and the social conditions in each of our respective communities.

As times changed, government became more involved, and we turned less to each other and our neighbors, and more toward government for the supports and solutions to our social problems. The balance of caring and sharing on a personal level tipped in the direction of more

dependence on an impersonal government to provide the solution as the panacea for solving these problems.

As legislators besieged by your constituents about social concerns, you are in the unenviable position of having to tell your constituents that all of these concerns cannot be addressed by government. Some, such as child abuse, must be addressed by government, but even here, government cannot solve the problem alone. What is required -- and I quote now from the new DYFS Mission Statement -- "is a shared responsibility to work together in meeting the needs of individuals and families, placing client and community concerns above those of organizational and bureaucratic practices."

We are deeply concerned about implementing the philosophy, the goals, and the objectives outlined in the DYFS Mission Statement, which is a document representing a departure from the institutionalized mind-set that government, through DYFS alone, is responsible for the problems of families and children in our communities. While this document recognizes the legal DYFS mandates to protect children, it is revolutionary, visionary, and challenging in its precept that the private community must join with DYFS to create social change. If we are to attack the causes of child abuse, neglect, and family violence, we must give new meaning, not lip service, to public/private partnership, with each of our local communities joining our DYFS colleagues in the superhuman responsibilities they encounter in their work with families. These are not DYFS kids or DYFS families. These are our kids and our families in our communities. They belong to us collectively, as do their dreams, their agonies, and their defeats. We, in the private sector, have a moral responsibility to share the burdens of government workers in addressing these problems.

This, in effect, is what the DYFS Mission Statement challenges us to do. It calls for an increase in casework positions in accordance with the Child Welfare League of America standards, while simultaneously calling for the rebirth of each of our community's commitment to the sharing, caring, and involvement we once had. The Mission Statement is a test of our spirit and our willingness as citizens to join hands with our DYFS colleagues to close ranks as team

players in ridding our communities of social problems which create the stressful environment in which children are abused and families fall apart. It begins with a commitment to the strengthening of communities. In strengthening communities, there must be an expansion of community services, as well as a recommitment of existing resources to work with our most troubled families. The churches must become more involved; so must our schools, our synagogues, our police, our local governments, and our neighbors. We must promote the development of more prevention through pro-active policies and programs, not just reactive policies, as we are now doing in response to the crisis of widespread child abuse.

Much has been written about the failure of the "great society" programs, and government has been criticized for throwing moneys away in an attempt to eliminate poverty and social problems. However, we, as a social work profession, must look critically to ourselves for the answer to why many of these programs failed. The "great society" turned us into the "great competitors" for the almighty government dollar. We learned how to build bigger empires out of our agencies in the private sector, and larger bureaucracies in the government sector. We failed because we each thought we could do it alone. We failed because we became so consumed with competing with each other over territoriality, over who could get the most bucks, that we lost sight of the need to sit down, plan, and reason with each other for the common good.

We cannot afford to allow ourselves the selfish luxury of continuing to be the "great competitors." Therefore, we, in the private sector, support the need for additional funds for our colleagues in DYFS to increase their ranks to enable them to perform the job they are legally mandated to do in the area of child abuse and neglect. However, we submit that DYFS cannot do the job alone; they cannot bring about the changes in the community which will help them strengthen families. They can only manage case problems. We, in the community, can bring about those changes by sharing responsibilities with our DYFS colleagues. They can successfully assist a mother who has abused her children, only to see that family fall apart again

because there isn't adequate housing, employment, or day care to support the progress they helped that mother make.

This administration and the DYFS Management Teams call for a balance and sharing between government and the private sector to ameliorate the problems of child abuse, family dysfunction, and family violence. They have welcomed the participation of the community challenging us to be creative and pro-active, but have held us accountable in how we are using public funds in servicing families and children.

We respectfully urge the members of this Committee to ensure the continuation of that balance, the expansion of community services, the support of existing resources, and the philosophy that a public/private partnership is a vital component for bringing about healthy institutional change.

We urge you to consider funding DYFS at a level that enables the State to hire additional caseworkers, but also provides funding to support and expand existing and additional community services which will enable us to provide our DYFS colleagues with the resources within our respective communities to facilitate the strengthening of families and children.

We recognize that, as elected State officials, you have a difficult decision to make about the State surplus which exists today. We are cognizant of the fact that if you decide to recommend giving more funds to social services, you are accountable to all of us who are tax-paying constituents.

In closing, while what I am about to say does not specifically relate to the questions this Committee has been convened to investigate, it is germane to the physical and mental well-being of the citizens of this State. We pray that in deliberating your decision to recommend more funding for DYFS as the agency charged with strengthening family life, you consider what the Reverend Jesse Jackson said in a recent speech, which must be taken out of the realm of partisan politics. Rather it should be taken as a moral and spiritual test of this nation: "We are called to a perfect mission...to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to house the homeless, to teach the

illiterate, to provide jobs for the jobless, and to choose the human race over the nuclear race."

Thank you -- end of statement.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: What you have said, I don't think anybody could disagree with. Certainly, the ideal sounds almost like something that Plato's New Republic would have. As legislators, what can we do to implement your suggestions? If that took you by surprise--

MS. DeCHESER: No, it didn't. I have reread the Mission Statement a couple of times; I've reread the Impact Statement. I was a DYFS caseworker. I may not look the age, but 25 years ago, (laughter) my first job was at DYFS.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I won't touch that one. (laughter)

MS. DeCHESER: I had 150 families. I started at 1100 Raymond Boulevard in Newark, and it was frustrating -- extremely frustrating. The most frustrating thing that I experienced in 1960 -- and I'm hearing this from some of my caseworker colleagues today -- was the lack of resources in the community. They cannot do the job by themselves. They can bearing manage the cases, even if the paperwork load is reduced. Therefore, there needs to be continuing community services to which the DYFS workers can refer.

The children and the families have to be seen in the context of a network, a system, a sharing, not with government over here, bureaucracy over here, and community agencies over there. The bottom line of what I am saying to you is, yes, give us more caseworkers, but also give us the additional funds the Commissioner asked for to provide, expand, and support those existing services in the community to which our DYFS colleagues can refer.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Of course, money alone--

MS. DeCHESER: (interrupting) -- will not solve the problem.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: As you pointed out, the "great society" threw big lumps of money out, but apparently you are not satisfied with the results of the "great society."

MS. DeCHESER: Because--

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: (interrupting) So, money alone doesn't do it.

MS. DeCHESER: Assemblyman Flynn, money alone doesn't do it. The difference between then and now, as we have learned from the new federalism, is that we have been forced to sit down and begin to plan together and share resources. That did not happen back in the 1960's. We were all greedy; we all grabbed the bucks for ourselves.

Let me give you an illustration of what happened.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Is it happening now?

MS. DeCHESER: What is happening now in our own community-- For example, we had government funds become available, as well as foundation funds, to feed the hungry and house the poor and homeless. We had about 20 different agencies that all wanted to compete and go after those bucks. Our Human Services Coalition said, "We will support none of you who acts as an individual. If all 20 of you will come to the table, and bring DYFS and the Welfare Board in, we can sit down and figure out how we are going to take those bucks, and how there will be one lead agency in that coalition." Let's call it a feed consortium or a housing consortium. "Each of you -- one becomes the lead agency and shares the funds with the rest of the agencies." In this way, we are going to maximize the services to the people within the community. We are going to feed more people, and we are going to house more people.

That is the thing that is going on right now between ourselves and DYFS in the planning process in the community. That didn't happen before; this is revolutionary.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Do you see that happening in other counties besides Camden?

MS. DeCHESER: Yes, I see it beginning to happen. Camden, if you've read-- Of course, you have seen 60 Minutes, which is something we are trying to live down. I'm originally from Newark in Essex County. I was born and raised there. You've seen the latest headlines which say that Camden is the poorest City in the State of New Jersey. It needs a lot of resources.

I think we had a very unique mechanism in place in which DYFS chose us as the demonstration to be able to implement this -- grass roots community support, input from our local freeholders from our United Way. DYFS is in a partnership with us at the local level.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: And, you do see it working?

MS. DeCHESER: We see it working, not without problems, but it is working.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Very good, thank you for coming.

MS. DeCHESER: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: We are going to go about another 10 minutes today. I would ask that those who have prepared statements, when we're finished, if you will not be able to come back again, please leave those prepared statements with us and we will incorporate them in the transcript.

The next person on the list, if he is still here, is Father Edward Walsh. (not present) Okay, we'll pass him up. **Ciro Scalera?** Mr. Scalera is the Executive Director of the Association for Children of New Jersey.

CIRO SCALERA: Assemblyman, this is Cecilia Zalkind of our staff. We have a statement that we would like to submit tomorrow. I do not plan to read it.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: All right, don't read it, so that we will have time for as many people as we can today.

MR. SCALERA: I am commenting as a representative of the Association for Children. We are a statewide child advocacy group. We trace our roots back almost 100 years in terms of children's issues in this State. We were actively involved in the original drafting of the Dodd Law -- the child abuse and neglect law -- and, we have been active in the legislative arena on a number of bills and issues related to child abuse and neglect.

Our purpose here today is really twofold: On the one hand, we want to support the Division's need for more resources due to the increased demand upon the already overburdened staff and services. We must, however, balance this support with the need for DYFS accountability. We cannot advocate for new Division resources without some accountability both to the new systems and to the systems that they already have in place.

There are various dimensions as to how this accountability must be implemented, and one certainly concerns the DYFS central office

staff in their follow-through on some of the new policy directives. We, too, participated in the process that lead to the development of the Mission Statement, and to the commitment to change the document. We support those policies that are embodied there, as you, I'm sure, will hear from many other people.

On the other hand, support for that doesn't necessarily mean that per se the system which is needed to make that work is automatically going to occur, and that it is going to become a reality. There is going to be a need for a lot of hard work, and some planning and coordination to ensure that this new approach, which the community and DYFS have agreed to embark on, does result in some positive kinds of changes for children and families. So, we are concerned. Yes, we support it, but we are concerned in terms of how it will be implemented.

One thing we hope will happen, Assemblyman, as you hold your hearings, is that there will not be posturing in terms of fault attribution between either the management of DYFS or the caseworkers. I know that tomorrow you will hear presentations. We hope that as people come before you, as you mentioned earlier, you will ask them for positive suggestions as to ways they can move this problem and this agenda forward, and that we not get bogged down in attributing fault, because we don't believe that will ultimately result in any benefits to children. We're concerned that if that is what happens, then, in fact, potential harm could result.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Well, certainly, that is the focus of our Committee. First, you have to identify problems, and then if we do identify them, focus on positive solutions to them. We are not going to try to say who 10 years ago, five years ago, or two years ago— It is what is going to happen from now on.

MR. SCALERA: I'm pleased to hear that. The kinds of changes we would like to see implemented in terms of the new resources involve looking at the question of, "How will the new workers be allocated?" Obviously, there are areas of greater need in terms of both where the abuse and neglect reports are coming from and the active caseload sizes. Some accountability, some decision-making regarding how these new resources will be utilized needs to be addressed.

Additionally, there is the question of the community services' specialist. When we submit our statement to you, you will see that as Kathy has mentioned, the lack of resources in the local community has been a nagging and ongoing problem in our State for years. We believe that the policy document sets the kind of direction towards getting these resources on board, but it is going to take a little more than just a contract here or a contract there. There is going to have to be a comprehensive look at this community-contracting process, making sure that the workers and the contracting process are integrated.

Additionally, we support and, we hope that a community services' specialist position will be designed in every district office so that this kind of effort in terms of providing assistance to the line worker can be provided. In the end, we feel this will do more to help alleviate the burden of tremendous caseloads.

There are other broader ongoing accountability mechanisms that, again, we touch on in our testimony. I just quickly want to review three of them.

One is that when the new management team came into place, they established a quality assurance program. Those reports -- the quality assurance reports -- have not been released to the public, but we know that they haven't been glowing reports. They haven't found great things happening. There have been problems, real problems. We believe that the commitment, both in terms of pursuing the quality assurance program and implementing things like the Citizen Action Line, are accountability mechanisms that are important and need to be perceived. Even though, right now, the State is trying to respond to a very important crisis, you cannot ignore some of these established ongoing accountability mechanisms.

A second ongoing accountability mechanism is the child placement review system, a system that our organization, as advocates and others around the State, felt was needed to protect children from the drift of foster care. It is important that as we begin to look at some of these questions that attention and cooperation between the Division and the review boards be dealt with.

Finally, the last kind of accountability mechanism deals with a trend that had taken place in the early 1970's and continues to this day, which is the concept of permanency planning for our children. Permanency planning means that the State, the caseworkers, the management system, and all the people who are going to be involved in this process from an early point in the child's life, begin to make some decisions around, "What are the kinds of permanent needs that child will have?" If it is in the home, then they should apply, as diligently as they can, the services that the child needs to maintain in a natural family. If that is not going to be feasible, then in an aggressive way, they should take the other types of alternatives which will be designed to put that child in a permanent-type of home setting.

Again, the temptation when a system is faced with a crisis is to respond to that as they should, and perhaps not to continue its commitment in some of these ongoing accountability areas. We feel there must be some balance both in terms of what the agency will do and in terms of what legislative scrutiny will do. This balance should be maintained in the interest of protecting our children.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Thank you.

MR. SCALERA: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Does any member of the Committee want to ask any questions? (negative response) All right, if not, then we will be looking forward to your full report. We thank you for taking the time to come here.

MR. SCALERA: Thank you, Assemblyman.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Our next scheduled witness is Mary Wells. If you can, since we are short on time, please try to touch on new information.

MARY WELLS: All right. I have written testimony.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: All right. We'll reproduce it and make it part of our appendix.

MS. WELLS: Mr. Chairman, Dr. Colburn, Assemblyman Foy, and other Assembly people, I'll run through this quickly.

First, the DYFS mandate is perhaps the most critical, most demanding, and most elusive in the State of New Jersey. We must

protect our children. That is as basic, as fundamental, and as compelling as any other priority there could possibly be under the stars. Yet, how difficult it is to do so, and how painful it is when we fail. Each time we read in the paper about a child who has been abused in any way, I am sure we all touched and all moved to try harder, to look further, to be ever vigilant, and to prevent such hurt.

I am here today to speak in three capacities: first, as the Executive Director of Family Services of Burlington County; second, as the Convener of the Southern Regional Council of Human Services; and, third, as Chair of the National Association of Social Work Task Force on Families and Children.

The responsibility for our children lies with each of us in all of our communities. It certainly cannot be conveniently assigned, and then forgotten, to a State bureaucracy.

Perhaps the best-written document we have had spelling out this philosophy comes from the Mission Statement put out by DYFS this past summer. In it we have a clear understanding of the importance of shared responsibilities with the State, the community, families, and the individual, with no partner playing any heavier role than the other. This is a truly radical approach.

We need to develop this sense of partnership and this sense of power, for ironically, out of this kind of power, we find one of the most abiding answers to child abuse.

Our Agency has provided intensive services to families with child abuse for the past 10 years, first funded under Title 20 and then through the State of New Jersey. We have come to be very familiar with the dynamics of child abuse. Perhaps the single largest common denominator ingredient is the sense of powerlessness the parent feels in a mass-media society -- powerless at work, powerless from being unemployed, and even powerless in making their own child behave. From this frustration, we have seen some of the most tragic cases of broken families and child abuse.

Now, today, the issue that you must address as our legislators is to oversee how we are doing. Very frankly, the jury is out. On the one hand, we have a document that represents the best of

all thinking; on the other hand, we have burned-out, overworked DYFS workers. And yet, on another hand -- if there is such a thing as three hands -- we have just touched the beginning of a full partnership of community services to undergird and help families at risk, and even to speak in terms of prevention.

We are at a crossroads. We must be careful that we do not establish rivalry among the various sectors involved in the solution to the problem. We must nurture community involvement at the same time that we support the overworked DYFS caseworker. We must be sure that the workers we are sending out on the most difficult, frustrating cases have solid training in human services -- for example, that they have a bachelor's in social work, or are supervised by a person with a master's in social work -- people who have background and insight into the helping process.

Finally, we must support each other financially. I hope you don't say, "Well, let's pick up the \$5 million." I hope you look at the entire package that has been put in front of you, because I think that kind of partnership is the key.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: That is the \$7.8 million?

MS. WELLS: Yes, the additional part that was for residential, as well as community back-up services.

We must support each other morale-wise. Morale doesn't only come from money; it comes from a sense of power, commitment, and purpose, as well as from a working relationship. Sometimes there is a gap between our words and our actions. Any of us who are parents can relate to that. We must work cooperatively, and we must support each other. Each time a child is hurt, we are diminished, and because we have committed ourselves to prevent child abuse, we face that possibility on a daily basis. You must understand how serious an issue that is.

In order to get beyond the risk, the dangers, and the disappointments, we must help families to break long-standing patterns of abuse -- literally a life-and-death struggle. The stakes are high, and it is our children who hang in the balance. We must support DYFS, the community sector, and families at risk. We must protect our children.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Thank you. We are going to conclude at this point for today. We are going to start in this room again tomorrow at 10:30. Tomorrow we have witnesses already scheduled, including Dr. Cahill, who has written a report on stress among DYFS workers. We have a number of DYFS workers who are coming in to give us the benefit of their thinking.

When we have concluded with those witnesses, we will then pick up on the list we have today for those people who would like to come back and testify tomorrow. For those who can't come back tomorrow, or who prefer not to come back, please leave your remarks, if you have them, with Mr. Frakt. If you prefer, you can mail your remarks to the Oversight Committee to the attention of Steven Frakt, and we will make those part of the record and part of our ultimate report.

I want to thank everyone for being here today. I'm sorry we couldn't reach you all, but, as you can see, it is a voluminous topic. A lot of multifaceted questions have been raised today. We are not going to get all of the answers, but if we get just a few of the answers, the children of the State will be benefited. Thank you.

OVERNIGHT RECESS

AFTER RECESS: (October 23, 1984)

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: We are the Assembly Oversight Committee. This is hearing number two on problems related to caseworkers at DYFS.

The first witness today is Dr. Janet Cahill from the Department of Psychology at Glassboro State College. Good morning, Doctor.

JANET CAHILL, Ph.D.: Good morning. Am I to use both of these mikes?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Yes. For the benefit of those in the audience, there is a recording being made of the proceedings and a transcript will be available, I guess, at a reasonable cost to those who need it, in about two weeks.

Dr. Cahill, you have done some extensive research on the problems of caseworkers and the stress concerning caseworkers. I wonder if you would give us the benefit of some of this research.

DR. CAHILL: Yes. Let me summarize the project I did. Just briefly by way of introduction, I am an Associate Professor of Psychology at Glassboro State College. I have a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. For the past five years, I have maintained a research program examining the relationship between economic trends and mental health. I have presented this research in several scientific publications, as well as forums such as the American Psychological Association. So, I just wish to inform the Committee that I do bring some expertise in this area to my testimony.

Specifically, I would like to describe my most recent research project which addressed stress levels of DYFS social workers. I became interested in this topic because my prior research had suggested that the last deep economic recession would increase the amount of people who would be asking for services from areas such as DYFS. Since there was a likelihood that resources and funding would decrease in these agencies, I was concerned that there would be an increase in demand and a decrease in resources at about the same time. I was interested in now this would affect the health and ability of DYFS workers to function.

Let me emphasize that this research was done independently. It was financed by the College. I initiated this project myself. I approached CWA, the Communication Workers Union, in order to gain access to the DYFS employees. But, I would like to emphasize that the CWA did not influence or finance this project. This was a study done by the College.

Now, let me briefly tell you what I did. I developed a survey of about 187 questions, which I administered to 143 DYFS social workers. The study was designed basically to measure their stress levels, how well they were functioning and, if I could, to examine what working conditions might be contributing to high levels of stress if, in fact, I found that. Buried in the survey were two distinct scales which were designed to measure burnout and psychological health.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Could you define "burnout" for us?

DR. CAHILL: Yes. My major finding basically was that DYFS social workers in New Jersey are experiencing levels of burnout that were higher than national norms, that is to say that when we compared them to other human service workers, they were having higher burnout levels than national statistics.

The other interesting thing about that particular scale was, despite very high burnout levels, DYFS workers seemed to be able to maintain a high level of personal commitment. So, they seemed to be concerned about their workplace and were working very hard but, also, they were having high levels of burnout.

The second major finding I found was that they were under considerable psychological strain. They scored significantly lower on a psychological scale than the population as a whole. This is not to say that this population is in any way crazy or deviant. It just means they are under a lot of psychological strain.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Before you go on, when you say "burnout," so we all know what you mean, what is burnout?

DR. CAHILL: Okay. Burnout means they are emotionally exhausted. They are having trouble sleeping. They feel very demoralized by their work. They are having some problems with their families because of emotional exhaustion and fatigue. They have a

sense of being overwhelmed. The reason that is important is, those kinds of experiences are highly related to later illnesses. In other words, first you get burned out, and then you get seriously sick.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: So, it is not just quitting then. Many of them can stay on the job and be burned out?

DR. CAHILL: Yes, and that is what is remarkable about these people. I was surprised to see this. They are very burned out, yet somehow they are trying to do a good job. I think they are paying a high price for that in terms of their own health.

A particular concern, I thought, was that in addition to their own personal health, this seems to be spilling over into their families. Eighty-three percent reported more family arguments when they were stressed at their jobs. In terms of physical health, I found similar results, very high levels of stress symptoms, such as stomach problems, headaches, and sleep disturbances. Again, let me emphasize that the literature is very clear that these kinds of early symptoms are related to more serious illnesses down the road, such as heart disease, ulcers, and hypertension. The finding of high physical problems is striking because this is a young sample. Of the people I surveyed, 6% of them were under the age of 45, and 41% were under the age of 35. So, they are showing physical signs of strain at a young age. This does not bode well for their later health. It is not, as I said, related to chronic disease.

Also, I think these findings are somewhat conservative, because I did not survey the worst -- I should say what were reported to me as some of the worst -- offices, such as Newark. So, I think this is probably a conservative estimate of the symptoms.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Excuse me for a second.

DR. CAHILL: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Geographically, if I recall, this was done in Central Jersey and South Jersey.

DR. CAHILL: Central and South, yes. I can't say this because I didn't do it, but my assumption is that if we went into some of the North Jersey offices, this would even be worse and more striking.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Were these anonymous questionnaires?

DR. CAHILL: Yes. No one saw the results except myself, and I do not have the names of the individuals. So, they were totally anonymous.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Did the individuals know the purpose of the questionnaire?

DR. CAHILL: They knew it was a general questionnaire about stress, but they didn't know what I was particularly looking for.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Okay.

DR. CAHILL: I then tried to figure out what in the workplace might be contributing. Let me just summarize again. There were high levels of burnout; surprisingly, however, they were able to maintain some personal commitment to their jobs. There were high physical stress symptoms and high psychological stress symptoms. I then tried to see what were reported as the most significant aspects of the workplace which could be contributing to these results. The single most important aspect, obviously, was that they reported extremely high caseloads. Less than 3% reported having a caseload they could handle. Clearly, they are substantially above the Federal guidelines of 20 to 25 children per worker.

The second biggest problem they reported, in addition to caseload, was not having enough managerial backup. They are feeling -- from what I can gather from the study -- that they have to make substantial decisions without good managerial backup. If they make a mistake, they feel as if they will be held accountable, even though they do not have enough resources to handle the job appropriately. If they are right, they do not get any positive feedback; if they are wrong, they are concerned about being harassed or perhaps scapegoated by management.

The third biggest problem was paperwork. Two-thirds of this sample informed me that they are spending 40% of their time on paperwork. This is of large concern. That means they are not seeing clients or providing services.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Forty percent?

DR. CAHILL: Forty percent of their time.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: May I ask you a question at this point?

DR. CAHILL: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Did they complain, or did your responses indicate that there was insufficient support in terms of secretarial staff, and things like that?

DR. CAHILL: Yes. They reported a backlog of paperwork. In fact, they don't seem to be able to close the cases they need to close, because they just literally do not have the time to get to the paperwork. They spend that much time on paperwork partly because they are afraid of making a mistake, of having a child being injured, and then not having the documentation there. I think that is a concern for the amount of services that are being provided, since they seem to be spending that much time on repetitive paperwork.

I have just a couple of more points on this. There were major concerns about training. Seventy-seven percent of the sample felt that they had been inadequately trained to handle the demands of the job. Certainly, from a clinical perspective they are handling an extremely difficult population. There has been an increase of sexual abuse referrals to this agency, and many of these workers feel they need additional training to handle the job.

There are two last points, I would say, just based on the survey. There are concerns about security. It seems as if they are concerned not just about security in their workplace, but they report incidents of being robbed, being threatened by clients, needing to go into areas where they do not feel safe and do not have adequate backup, and then, generally a poor working environment, basic things like needing to talk to clients about very private affairs and not having a private place to do it. You know, there is too much phone-ringing in the office, too many things to respond to, and they do not have time to sit and adequately discuss things with a client in privacy.

Now, my conclusions from this study in terms of the consequences— I must say, it seems to me that these workers are at risk in terms of their own personal health. There is a tremendous low level of morale, low job satisfaction, which is also correlated with health problems down the road. For example, only 7% of the sample said they would recommend this job to a friend. Seventy-nine percent said they would not take this job over again if they had the choice. I am

not clear about turnover rates. I sense that there would be a much higher turnover rate if they believed they had other options. Let me support that. Eighty-one percent believed they could not find comparable work, with similar salary and fringe benefits. My sense is, then, that many more people would leave this job if they found comparable work. They stay, demoralized and feeling burned out, because they do not feel they have other options.

I would say then, particularly since the State may have to pay for the health benefits of these individuals, that if they do get sick, they are at a high risk for later problems.

The second conclusion I would say, in addition to cost to the workers— I think this is affecting the service to clients. In the sample, 75% reported that they did not believe the clients were receiving adequate services from DYFS, despite their best efforts. Again, I think this is a sample which is committed. I was again surprised at the level of commitment, because many people when they are burned out just quit. These folks seem to be concerned about services, but they did not believe that clients were receiving adequate services from DYFS.

In terms of recommendations, I would say very quickly that there seems to me to be a need for an immediate reduction in caseload, certainly preferably to the Federal guidelines of 20 to 25 children. This sample is in need of training, both to perform their jobs adequately and, also, to help them reduce stress levels on themselves. I think stress reduction training would be useful for this sample.

Finally, I think there needs to be ongoing efforts by both labor and management to reduce the occupational sources of stress in this job. I think that in addition to caseload, there are other sources which are going, over the long haul, to affect both the health of the workers and the services to clients.

That, very briefly, is what I found. I would be very happy to answer any questions.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I have one question. Did you find any differences in the workers' attitudes depending on the years of service? Were the younger ones different than the older ones?

DR. CAHILL: That is a very good question; I am analyzing that now. I'm afraid I can't answer that at this point. I suspect yes, but I just can't answer that right now.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: If you have the analyzation of that, say, within the next month or so, we would like to have it.

DR. CAHILL: I can certainly get that to you.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: If we are going to embark upon a crash program to increase the number of caseworkers, and it turns out that the younger people are going to have greater levels of stress and frustration, we have to know it early so we can accommodate them and perhaps get stress management in early.

DR. CAHILL: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: So, that will be a very important finding.

DR. CAHILL: That is a good question. I sense that many of them do not last very long, that some of them just don't last more than a year because they burn out very quickly. But, in all honesty, I can't answer that at this point.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: You indicated that you are not so sure that people quit because of the stress factor, but because of other considerations, such as finances.

DR. CAHILL: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: We heard yesterday that there is a relatively high burnout rate among this category of worker as opposed to other areas, so perhaps it does translate to quitting the job ultimately.

DR. CAHILL: Yes. It is bad enough that they are reporting feeling emotionally exhausted, but that is not actually the biggest concern, I would say, from a psychological point of view. It is very clear in the literature that they are starting to feel exhausted, they are getting headaches, they are having stomach problems, they are having backaches, and then they start to develop a more serious illness. It may be at that point when they are hypertensive, when they have high blood pressure, when they are hyperventilating -- it may be at that point that they say, "I'm getting out of this job. It is not worth it to my health."

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Is there literature in other fields of endeavor whereby you can compare and quantify some of your findings?

DR. CAHILL: Yes. Again, at least on one scale that has been normed, nationally that is. This scale compares DYFS workers to other social service workers across the country. They scored higher. In other words, they are more burned out than other people like policemen, teachers, fire fighters, and other social service workers across the United States. So, it is not even as though we are comparing them to the population as a whole. I compared them to what is called a "high risk population for stress," and they still came out higher.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Do you have any figures of comparison available?

DR. CAHILL: Yes, they are in the report I wrote.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: They are in the overall report?

DR. CAHILL: Yes. That is called the Maslach Burnout Inventory. That is the scale. That has been nationally normed. That is the scale in which they came out higher than--

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: (interrupting) I am looking at Table 3. Perhaps we can turn to that. It says, "Results of Maslach Burnout Inventory."

DR. CAHILL: There you go, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Depersonalization frequency, 11.3. Now, tell us what that means.

DR. CAHILL: Okay. What this means is that on two of these sub-scales, depersonalization and emotional exhaustion, which measure burnout-- Don't worry about what the numbers mean; they just mean how would they turn out in relation to other people. On those two scales, depersonalization and emotional exhaustion, the DYFS workers scored higher than what you would expect other people across the country to do. This was statistically significant. In other words, the results were not due to chance alone. Those two scales measure things like the sense of exhaustion, not feeling yourself, not being motivated to work, being detached from your workplace -- those kinds of things.

The personal accomplishment scale is also of interest. They scored higher than you would expect. They did well on that. In other

words, they have still maintained some level of personal accomplishment.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Is that the nature of the job?

DR. CAHILL: I would say it is the nature of the work force, because I would have expected, to be honest, that they would have scored low on that too. That is often what happens. People just give up on the job and say, "I am not going to try." These people seem to still be trying, and I was surprised at that.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Take another stress field, like police work. What would be a statewide average or a nationwide average for police work?

DR. CAHILL: I do not have the norms with me; I can get them to you.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Could you get that, because it would be very relevant to us to be able to compare to see, you know, where we stand on a scale of one to ten, so to speak?

DR. CAHILL: Okay. That is a good point. What I can tell you, again, is that they are statistically higher -- I hate to use a fancy term, but that is what it is -- than other police, let's say, police across the country.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: If we are going to attempt to cure these problems, we have to be able to report to the Legislature that we have a problem that is significantly greater than other professions.

DR. CAHILL: Okay. I can get that material to you.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Do you have a question, Assemblyman Hendrickson?

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: No, I would just like to add that if we are going to take the police as a criteria, we will need more than the cities, because throughout the State of New Jersey we are made up more of small municipalities than we are of large municipalities. Therefore, in the City of Newark, a policeman would be under a lot more stress, we'll say, than he would be in Hammonton, or someplace like that.

DR. CAHILL: Yes, but I don't think I can break it down for you that specifically.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: No, I don't expect that.

DR. CAHILL: I can give you some general comparisons with other occupations.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I like teachers. You hear a lot about teacher burnout being very heavy and very high. I would like to see how that compares to social workers. Do you have a question, Assemblyman Foy?

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: I have several. First, Dr. Cahill, I would like to offer my compliments to you on this report. In my viewpoint, it is thorough, it is objective, it is very enlightening, and also, very frightening. As I understand your report, there are really two factors at work with respect to this stress. One is a substantive stress issue in terms of the subject matter the people have to deal with. They are dealing with some awful things in life in terms of child abuse, sexual abuse, and things like that, and substantively their jobs -- at the start -- are very difficult, as opposed to other occupations. Is that a fair characterization?

DR. CAHILL: Yes, I would say that is very accurate.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Okay. Then, compounding the built-in stress that exists from an occupation of this nature, there is an institution-type stress as a result of some structural factors that perhaps we may be able to address. I don't know that we will ever be able to substantively address the one problem. We can certainly try in a lot of ways to do that. But, where your conclusions come from-- We really cannot change the nature of the job, in a sense, as legislators, but we can make their ability to do the job somewhat better in terms of altering some of the structural and institutional issues they have to deal with.

I am curious. In terms of your questionnaire, did you offer a response area on the questionnaire where the respondents could be free-flowing in terms of things they think would improve their lot?

DR. CAHILL: Yes. I asked them to write the three things they thought were the worst about the job and three areas of change. Again, I am tabulating that now. I can tell you certainly that what came out-- We are not finished with it, but the thing that they said most frequently that they wanted changed was caseload.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Money was not really the biggest complaint?

DR. CAHILL: No. I can only say this anecdotally, but several of the people I spoke with before I designed the survey, to try to get a sense of what questions would be relevant, said -- and this certainly surprised me -- that they would be willing to take a cut in pay. Now, I am not recommending this, mind you, far from it. I may not get out of this room alive if I recommend that, and you would be foolish to even think that, but there is a sense that they are just so overwhelmed and frustrated, that they want more workers. It is not that they are-- I think they should be paid more, but it is more a sense of caseload. They are just overwhelmed.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: In terms of caseload, I want to kind of hone in on this factor of support. I see, from my perspective in terms of what I read in your report, that support really needs to come from two directions. It needs to come from the top in terms of the managerial direction and support they get. Is that kind of what emerged from this study, that they need some guidance and perhaps some kind of alteration of attitudes on the part of their superiors?

DR. CAHILL: Yes. They need more training supervision and, as you say, they need more support. Here is the basic problem. They are being asked to make very delicate decisions. Do you remove a child? Do you leave him in the home? We are not very good at predicting behavior. Unfortunately, any mental health professional is not very good at predicting behavior, but that is what they are asked to do. They are asked to predict which family is going to hurt their child. Sometimes in their best judgments they make a decision, and sometimes something happens. Their perception is that when something goes wrong, they are out there alone slowly swaying in the breeze, and they are asked to bear the brunt of the responsibility if something goes wrong. That is where I think they feel they need more support.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: That is from the managerial level. Now, from a clerical level, another thing I understood is that this seems to involve the paperwork. It's like the constant battle I have in my office. I want to be a lawyer and do my lawyering, but it seems like 90% of the time I am an administrator and am administering. Is a focus of one of their complaints the fact that the job for which they were

trained, which is social work-- Are the hours involved in that diminished by virtue of the fact that they have a large number of clerical duties to perform which inhibits their ability to adequately perform their social work function?

DR. CAHILL: I would say that that is very true. Also, again, the stress of paperwork, because that is what is looked at when something goes wrong.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: I'm curious about-- I wasn't here, unfortunately, for Commissioner Albanese's report yesterday. I wonder, did you receive any comments about additional computerization or anything like that as either assisting or inhibiting their efforts?

DR. CAHILL: Yes. I put a question in about the new computers. I don't know how new they are, so I should say about the computer system. The overwhelming response was that the computer system made things worse.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Made things worse?

DR. CAHILL: Yes. I understand there are some people here who work with the computer system, but they are not happy with it. It seems to make things worse.

The other thing about resources -- let me just say a word -- is, DYFS workers also reported that there are not resources in the community, that is, they are supposed to network people to community resources. They feel there is not enough out there. So, if you are supposed to get housing for a family and there is no housing, that is another area where they feel there is not sufficient support for them, which I understand is a broader issue.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Was there any response in terms of the survey about their need to interact, or their ability to properly interact with other agencies of State government?

DR. CAHILL: I don't think I specifically asked that, so I don't think I can comment on it.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: All right. Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: I have just one more question.

DR. CAHILL: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: On their daily hours and weekly hours, the performance of work, is it 35 hours, 40 hours, 50 hours? What is the actual amount of time spent on the job?

DR. CAHILL: How many hours are they actually working? I'm not sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: You're not sure. What I am trying to say is, if they are working an eight-hour day, perhaps a recommendation could be to a six-and-a-half-hour day. Because of the stress time, it would be a good mental release, we'll say, if nothing else.

DR. CAHILL: You know, that is an interesting point. My assumption is that they work a standard workweek; however, here is what happens, and I can comment on this. They are stretching the workday. They tend to work through breaks; they tend to work through lunch. They come in a little early, and stay a little late. Even if they are not working, they worry about stuff on weekends. So, they are stretching the workday. I think that is a very good point. They are not giving themselves time to recuperate and that is partly why we see high stress levels.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: Could you add something along those lines into your report, if they are doing things like that?

DR. CAHILL: Yes. Certainly, there are other good models to suggest that one way to help these stress limits is by working less.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: Absolutely, absolutely. It is all part of labor. Now, you mentioned supervision. Did you get into any of that at all? Is there a need for closer supervision? Are there two caseworkers to one supervisor? Do I take that right? Or five? Is that the ratio?

DR. CAHILL: I did not ask them if they thought they needed more supervisors physically. That may be the case, but I didn't ask them that. What I was getting at was more a sense of when things went wrong — as I said earlier — they did not have enough support. They felt almost as if they were the scapegoats. They were the ones who were pointed to when something went wrong. Perhaps they could answer that. I don't know if they would actually like more supervisors. It

seems that they need more supervision or more managerial support when they are working on a tough case and don't know what to do.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: Just one more question. In some stress jobs, there is a feeling within a person that there is no daylight at the end of the tunnel, there is no way for him to advance himself, he is kind of locked into this for the rest of his life, and what can he do. Have you gone into any part of just how people feel, for instance, "what's up there five years from now?" or anything along those lines?

DR. CAHILL: Yes. I asked two questions on career ladders. Well over 90% of the sample said they felt that the career ladder was inadequate and, therefore, there was no built-in incentive to get more training because there was no place to go. They felt they had ceilinged out. That was of great concern to them. In terms of the career ladder, it was a major concern.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: Thank you. Doctor, and Mr. Chairman, I would like to apologize to you. What little I have been able to participate in has been very interesting, but I do apologize to you for being late, for not physically being able to be here.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Doctor, have you had any input since the report has been made available from anyone in the Division in management or at the higher levels?

DR. CAHILL: No, I have not been contacted by them, nor, I must say, have I initiated any contact with them.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Do you know if they have seen your report?

DR. CAHILL: Yes, I believe they have, but I have not had any direct contact with them.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Do you know what length of time that report has been available to them?

DR. CAHILL: Well, I first put this out in June. I would suspect they have had it at least for a few weeks.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Was a copy sent directly to them, or do you think maybe they just got it through the grapevine?

DR. CAHILL: I think they probably got it through the grapevine. I am not sure, to be honest.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I would be curious as to whether there is any input back and forth. Certainly, you have now made yourself somewhat of an expert in this area, and perhaps follow-up work should be done, or perhaps even commissioned. I am curious about what your motivation was in actually doing this particular topic.

DR. CAHILL: As I said in the beginning part of my statement, I have been interested in the general area of how economics affect mental health. I predicted about two years ago, or at least I apotheosized about two years ago that I thought Human Services was going to have a particular problem because of the recession. The recession hit and I predicted there would be an increase in the demand for services because people were out of work, there was more of an economic strain, and more abuse. I thought that would hit about last year -- that the effects of that would hit about last year. That is why I initiated this project last year, to see, in fact, if that was going on. It arose out of a theoretical interest I have had for some time. For example, prior to this I did research on the effects of unemployment on mental health. This, to me, was the next logical step in that research program.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Have you ever done any research regarding the diminution of Federal funding in the mental health field?

DR. CAHILL: Basically, that is part of this. See, I thought--

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: (interrupting) It is a combination of bad economic times and the diminution of the Federal flow of dollars.

DR. CAHILL: Yes, that is exactly what I thought would happen. That is why I was interested in it. Last year was when I thought it would come together, that the cutbacks would hit, and increased demand would hit because of the recession. I can just say for background that the prior research I did would suggest that, because I did research on unemployment, and there was some lag time. Unemployment goes up, then with some lag time the amount of people who need human services goes up because they run out of unemployment insurance, they start drinking too much, etc.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Do you have any recommendations in terms of the problems you find between labor and management relations? Do you have any tangible recommendations that perhaps we should look into?

DR. CAHILL: That was not the focus of the study, so I can only make a very general statement that it is important to recognize that these are built-in structural problems to the job. It is not a passing phenomenon. Caseload will help; it will not solve the whole problem. I think there has to be really active, genuine input from the DYFS workers, with management, around restructuring a number of things in these jobs, not just caseload. I understand there are some committees in there. To be honest, I don't know if the input is real. These labor/management committees do not work unless the workers actually have some real influence. If it is pretend influence, it is not going to work. In a very general sense, that to me is something that needs to be done.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Are there any other questions from the Committee? (negative response) I certainly want to thank you for coming and offering a very comprehensive review of this problem.

DR. CAHILL: Thank you for your time. I will make that other information available to you as soon as I have it tabulated.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: We appreciate that. Thank you.

Our next witness will be Jim Gallagher, President of Local 1039, Communications Workers of America.

MR. GALLAGHER: Assemblymen, with your permission, we would like to first have Lauren Anderson from the ACLU Children's Rights Project testify. She came over from New York City to testify, and she will have to leave shortly. So, with your permission, we would like to have her testify first.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Okay. Lauren Anderson, will you please step forward and give us the spelling of your first name?

LAUREN ANDERSON: My first name is Lauren, L-a-u-r-e-n, and my last name is Anderson.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Okay. Would you give us your title again, please?

MS. ANDERSON: I am a staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union Children's Rights Project.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Okay.

MS. ANDERSON: I have prepared remarks, which I will make available to the Committee and your reporter. In the interest of time, I will just highlight some of my concerns.

I am very grateful and extremely encouraged that this Committee is holding these hearings. I speak not only as a staff attorney of the Children's Rights Project, but as a resident of New Jersey. I live in Jersey City. It is heartening to see this attention being focused on a problem which has faced not only New Jersey, but almost every public social service agency in the country.

I will not attempt to address this morning the specific problems that are facing DYFS or the social service workers in New Jersey. The perspective I would like to share with the Committee is a national perspective, in a sense to let you know that you are not alone in this problem, and to give you a sense as to how the courts have reacted to some of these issues, and the fact that the process that you are engaged in is one that responsible elected officials and administrators are trying to come to grips with all over the country.

The ACLU has a project in children's rights because we are concerned that there are many significant constitutional issues that are affected whenever the State is involved in the lives of children and families. We are concerned that the State, when it decides to intervene in the lives of a family, does so responsibly, does so only when necessary, and for as limited a time as is necessary.

Interestingly, in the last several years, the courts, both state, and even more significantly Federal courts, have come to share many of these concerns and for the first time in a long time, the Federal courts have begun to recognize that there are significant constitutional rights that are implicated when a state intervenes in the lives of children, specifically in the provision of foster care services and preventive services. The Federal courts have taken the perspective that when a state intervenes it must do so in a responsible manner and, to the extent that a state is negligent in that regard, the Federal courts have become increasingly willing to hold that state liable for its failure to act in a responsible manner. I will give you a few examples.

In New Mexico, a Federal judge held that the state was liable for violating a child's statutory and constitutional rights by its failure to adopt and implement permanency plans for children, and for allowing children to just languish needlessly in the foster care system for years. This case was ultimately resolved by a consent decree between our office and the State Department of Human Services in New Mexico, a very detailed consent decree that specified specific policies and practices that the state has agreed to implement to reduce the amount of time children remain in foster care to ensure that the children are either returned home in an expeditious fashion, or are freed for adoption and are, in fact, adopted.

In Kentucky, the family court, responding to a petition that was filed by guardians for children, found the Department of Social Services to be a negligent guardian for its failure, again, to ensure that children exit foster care in a timely fashion. Again, that case resulted in a consent decree with very specific procedures to ensure that children did not remain in care any longer than necessary.

In Kansas City, Missouri, a Federal judge refused to dismiss a complaint against the Division of Family Services in Jackson County, Missouri, which alleged that children were, in fact, harmed by their tenure in foster care and that children were, in fact, abused and neglected once they came into foster care at rates which almost equaled the abuse and neglect that was alleged against their parents. Again, this case resulted in a consent decree that mandated very clear and precise policies that the state agreed to adopt to ensure that children, once they came into care, were protected from harm or were not harmed further by the state acting as guardian.

In Minnesota, a Federal judge refused to dismiss a complaint against parents who alleged that the state negligently intervened and failed to follow the guidelines that were set up to determine when children should actually be removed from a natural family.

In addition to these cases that have had basically injunctive relief or systemic reform, there have been many cases around the country in both state and Federal courts where courts have awarded damages to children who have been harmed as a result of their

experiences in foster care. One of the most striking of these cases is one that was affirmed by the Second Circuit Court in New York City, which awarded \$225,000 in damages to a former foster child who was repeatedly abused by her foster parents.

There are many causes for the problems that resulted in this litigation. One of the fundamental problems that I have seen in litigating these cases and in working with others in other jurisdictions in these types of cases, is caseload size. A lawyer called me the other day in the process of attempting to negotiate a case in another state, and said, "We have lived with your consent decree in Missouri for about a year and a half. What advice would you give to us in negotiating a decree?" I said, "Resources are the bottom line." Caseload sizes that are adequate to allow the provision of services that you have put into the decree are essential. We have a decree that mandates many very good positive steps to protect children, but they can't be accomplished if social service workers have caseloads that are unmanageable.

The significance of caseload size, while it has been recognized by many of the professional organizations, such as the Child Welfare League of America and the American Public Welfare Association, has never been binding on states and too often has been neglected. But, given the essential nature of adequate caseload sizes, many of these Federal decrees which I have mentioned have incorporated minimum caseload sizes as a part of the injunctive relief. In our case in Kansas City, Missouri, it was agreed that caseload sizes could never exceed 20 to 25 cases per worker, but in any event, might have to be lower than that if that was necessary to deliver the services that the state agreed were necessary to protect children.

A Federal district court in Massachusetts, in a case by the name of Lynch vs. King, made the following finding in issuing an injunction against the Massachusetts Department of Social Services: "A clear theme emerged from the testimony of these department employees. Because of pressures created by heavy caseloads, they are relegated to responding to crises in their cases. They do not have time to engage in appropriate planning and review, nor to furnish the ongoing

supervision and services they feel are necessary to assure appropriate care for foster children and to improve conditions in the homes from which they were removed.

"Most of these social workers testified, on the basis of their experience, that their failure to plan for and deliver appropriate services was causing harm to the children, including children in foster care under their supervision. Some provided examples of cases in which harm befell foster children as a result of inappropriate attention or provision of appropriate services. Moreover, files of actual cases revealed several instances in which children in foster care suffered serious emotional and physical injury, and even death, that could have been prevented. Only less serious injury or none would have been sustained had the department taken reasonable steps to ensure the safety and welfare of these children."

On the basis of his findings, the Federal judge ordered that the Massachusetts Department of Social Services keep its caseload size down to a size that was manageable and would allow them to meet the Federal mandates, and he set a caseload size of 20 to 25 with a presumptive bias, saying, "Anything above that, and I will consider that you are not living up to your mandates. You may again have to go well below that to provide the necessary services." As a sanction, in the event that they fail to abide by his order, he said that although he hated to have to do it, he would cut off further funding through the Social Security Act for the delivery of foster care service. As I am sure you are aware, a fairly large proportion of any state's funding for its foster care programs is derived from the Social Security Act. This case was upheld by the First Circuit Court on appeal.

As I said, in our case in Kansas City, minimum caseload sizes were adopted, as was done in our case in New Mexico, which dealt with ensuring that the children did not remain in foster care for extended periods of time. Well, there can never be a precise number of cases. The decree set, as a standard, 20 to 25 cases, but said there had to be systemic review of the nature of the cases that workers were handling, and a formula developed dependent upon the differing nature of cases. If you are an adoption worker and you are mainly finding prospective

adoptive homes, you may be able to have a higher caseload than a worker who is doing preventive services, who has to go out to investigate and make difficult decisions as to whether a child should be removed or not.

Caseload sizes are not a panacea for any agency's problems. I think, as the previous witness testified, that the nature of the work is inherently difficult, is inherently stressful. There are many other components that are necessary to allow the agency to provide essential services in a meaningful fashion. But, caseload sizes are an essential component in that regard.

I think training is another area which is essential. I am not sure what the situation is in New Jersey, but in the social service departments we have seen around the country, most social service workers are not necessarily trained in social work in college. They come out of college with B.A.'s in art, history, or music and, while they are concerned and committed, they do not have the training necessary to adequately perform these jobs. The implications of caseloads that are too high are dramatic. I could give you horror stories of cases I have seen where children have been either severely physically or emotionally abused, or died as a result of inadequate protection by social service workers. I am sure you will get stories or instances such as those coming from other witnesses showing the real impact on children in the State of New Jersey. But, the broad impact, when you have social workers who are overworked, is that decision-making does not happen in the rational way that it needs to happen in this area. If the social worker is overworked and receives a complaint of abuse or neglect, the reaction may be to pull that child from the home and place him or her in foster care, rather than spending the time working with the parents to prevent that. That is a disaster, and has legal implications for both the child and the family.

Another implication is that once the child is in foster care, if you do not have social service worker supervision, the child ends up being warehoused. We have seen cases in some of the work we have done around the country where you have a child in foster care with foster parents for over a year or more, who is never visited by the social

worker, or no attempts are made to work with the family. There is no visitation between the child and the family for over a year. The child just stays in foster care year after year, never has a permanent and stable home, and ends up damaged de facto, just by being allowed to continue in this state of limbo for an excessive period of time.

I have just one other comment, and that is on paperwork. The concern about paperwork that has been expressed to the Committee is also a universal concern. I would recommend to the Committee and to DYFS that a study be done to ensure that there is not duplicative paperwork, which is often the case. However, given the nature of children's lives and foster care, adequate record keeping is, in fact, essential, because if you have a child who ends up -- as is very often the case -- in several foster homes over a period of a few years, with several different social service workers, the only continuity in that child's life is contained in the child's file. So, if you have a change in social service workers and a change in foster families and no adequate records, the new foster family or the new worker won't know whether or not the child has had something as simple as his inoculations the year before, or how the child has done in school. So, paperwork is a necessary evil, but should not be exacerbated through duplicative efforts.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Are there any questions from the Committee? Assemblywoman Ford?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORD: You talked about the training of social workers. I am curious as to the relationship of that to the request from the Division for \$5 million, much of which will go toward hiring an estimated 500 workers. Apparently you indicated they are hiring people who have less than the training necessary to deal with the important issues and problems they have to deal with. Are there people out there-- Is this a universal problem, also, with regard to attracting the best talent from the schools and colleges, to go into social work? Is there a way that other states perhaps are dealing with working with colleges and developing curriculums to encourage people to seek this out as a career?

MS. ANDERSON: Let me begin by saying that the comments I made with regard to workers frequently not having specific training in social work were not directed toward the State of New Jersey. I think the witnesses from the union can probably tell you what kinds of credentials workers have when they come into the jobs. But, universally, it is frequently a problem in many jurisdictions that workers are hired who are not from social work schools. Therefore, when they start and get that first caseload, if they do not have specific training, you know, it would be like someone putting you in the middle of a field and saying, "Go investigate these cases and make these very difficult decisions." There are many significant aspects to the social service worker's work which require very specific training with regard to making decisions as to whether or not to remove a child, with regard to working with the natural family, and with regard to ensuring that the children exit foster care in an expeditious fashion. There are curriculums which have been developed nationally that can provide that type of training. Also, it is very important that foster parents receive training. A person's initial reaction is, "Well, I have been a parent for 20 years and I have decided to become a foster parent. Why do I need special training to do this?" But, foster children do bring a very unique set of problems to any parent, and it has been proven to be very helpful and successful in other jurisdictions for foster parents to receive specific training in coping with the kinds of problems that foster children bring, as well as working with the natural parents and working with the agency. Frequently, the foster parents, with training, can significantly enhance the work the agency is doing by working with the child and with the family.

I can't speak specifically with regard to DYFS recruitment efforts with schools of social work. I think that given the realities of working for a public agency, and given what you have heard from the previous witness about the stress factors, it may be much more difficult to attract workers to a public agency, as compared to some of the private agencies where you have more resources brought to bear.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: I have a question. Does the ACLU contemplate taking any litigious action against the State of New Jersey?

MS. ANDERSON: No, it does not.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: I don't think we are quite in the position some of those other states are in yet, and I think one of the reasons we're here, the union is here, and the Commissioner and his staff are here, is that we want to make sure that we don't ever get to that point.

MS. ANDERSON: I had intended to preface my remarks by saying that the union asked that we come to speak. I am really heartened by the fact that this Committee has taken this initiative on its own. In that respect, New Jersey is really very much, as you said, a vanguard in recognizing that this is a very serious problem. You know, even a good lawyer will say it is far better to resolve these kinds of issues short of litigation through the cooperative efforts of the Legislature and the Executive Branch.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Three of us are lawyers here, and I can tell you the last thing I want to see is some judge telling us how to run the human services aspect of our State government. They tell us enough already.

MS. ANDERSON: But, I thought it would be helpful to the Committee to realize that the Federal courts, especially, have taken a very particular interest in this area in the last few years. This area, to a certain extent, may be likened to the areas of mental retardation and mentally ill prisoners, where the courts are saying, "Yes, we must hold the agencies accountable."

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Apparently your project is a nationwide project.

MS. ANDERSON: Yes, it is.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Has your project contemplated any action in New Jersey?

MS. ANDERSON: No, it has not. We do not have the resources, number one, and we have-- As I said, I am not even conversant on the specific problems facing workers in New Jersey.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: There has been some thought that we need a child advocate in New Jersey, someone to look out for the children, similar to what we have for our senior citizens, an ombudsman, so to speak. Do you have any comments on that? Are any other states involved in having things like child advocates?

MS. ANDERSON: I think that could be an extremely helpful posture. One of the things that is unique about foster children as a constituency, is that they are voiceless. Once a child comes into foster care by virtue of the fact that he or she is a minor, they do not have a voice that can really be heard before the Legislature. Inherent in the problems that result in a child being in foster care is the fact that too often the parents are not in a position to advocate for them. So, there have been few people to voice and raise the concerns of the impact of the system on foster children, as there have been for prisoners, for the mentally retarded, etc. I believe there is considerable impact on the quality of life in the State. If you have children who are being damaged in the foster care system, they end up being less productive as adults. To me, it is an irony for the State to spend the amount of money that is spent, and then have it work at cross purposes. It is not good for the State, and it is not good for the child to remain in foster care for more than a couple of years, but the average in many jurisdictions is four or five years. That can be prevented.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: I have another question. Are you aware of any states that have statutorily mandated caseload levels? You have done it by concept in a number of places. Is it done by statute anywhere?

MS. ANDERSON: I am not aware of any states where it has been done legislatively.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Clearly, in order to statutorily mandate the caseload level, you would also have to statutorily mandate some minimum level of funding in order to meet that. You couldn't ask them to keep a certain level unless you provided the funding. But, I was just curious to see if that approach had ever been taken, or if anyone had any data on that. Perhaps the Department could provide us with that.

Also, is there a problem -- from your experience nationwide -- in terms of the relationship between foster care and the biological family situation where there are just not enough foster homes to go around and, as a result, there is kind of a pressure to keep the child in the family right on up to the breaking point? Sometimes, you know, one of those slips through the crack, in a sense, and a child is left in a home, where he or she should have been taken out, but there was no place else to put the child and, as a consequence, there is an abuse situation. I have read about incidents like that, and I am curious as to what the nationwide situation is.

MS. ANDERSON: That is frequently a problem. It has the impact that you mentioned, and it also has the impact, very frequently, of overloading foster homes. Imagine a foster family that has four natural children, and then you add eight foster children. You are asking a set of parents to deal with twelve children, many of whom, because they are foster children, have very significant problems. We did a statistical survey of the foster care population in Kansas City, Missouri, as part of a trial preparation. We found some very startling results.

One of the positive correlations we found was with foster families which had too many children in them being positively correlated to the risk of abuse and neglect of the foster children in the home. I heard about an instance somewhere else in the country just a few days ago of an abuse and neglect complaint being filed against a parent, and the agency not following up on the complaint because they found out that the family was also a foster family. To investigate the abuse and neglect, they would have also had to remove the foster children. So, there are very serious consequences when you don't have foster families as a resource. There have not been, as far as I can tell, and we have spent a lot of time looking for expertise in this area, tried and true ways of recruiting foster families. But, what is known is, if you utilize the foster parents you presently have, and use them to develop word-of-mouth contacts, you help the foster parents develop a strong foster parent association, and if you provide the training that I mentioned, then you can significantly increase your pool of foster parents.

Equally important is increasing your pool of adoptive parents. New Jersey, as well as most states, is beginning to reexamine the kinds of people who should be foster parents and the kinds of children who would be adoptable. The children who are "special needs" kids -- a long time ago, most agencies felt that these children could not be adopted. These children are being successfully adopted these days. That is equally important as having foster parents.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Do you have at your command today some methodology by which you determine caseload size -- optimum caseload size?

MS. ANDERSON: We are attempting to address that problem in some of the cases we have around the country. I think you need to do a management study of what is happening in each of your offices, look at the division of cases, you know, look at preventive services cases, protective services cases, and adoptive cases, and rationally apportion those cases. There is a mixed professional opinion as to whether it is good to have a worker responsible from the beginning of the system to the end of the system, or to have workers specifically responsible for all preventive services, or licensing of foster homes, or protective services. I don't think there is any quick fix to the problem. I think you really need to do a management study of the agency and, with the input of the workers, assess the amount of time it takes to work on a case and the kind of mix of cases that works for one particular worker.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: In the courts which have made rulings -- Missouri, I believe, and several states where they came up with the figure of 25 -- did they have management studies in those states to make this determination?

MS. ANDERSON: Well, as I indicated in my testimony, those were presumptive figures. They are saying that on the basis of the testimony. In my prepared remarks, I have given you the citations to the published opinions. On the basis of testimony and the evidence that was available, it appeared that these would be the maximum caseload sizes that would be permissible in order for workers to carry out their functions. However, in the Massachusetts case, where there

was a court ordered maximum, it was stated very explicitly, "This is presumptive. If the workers cannot perform pursuant to the Federal mandates for the provision of services with a caseload size of 20, it has to be lower." You are looking at an area where people have just begun, in many respects, to look at these issues in a systemic fashion, so there is not a large body of knowledge in terms of formulas, as there might be in other areas.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Assemblyman Hendrickson?

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: You stated that perhaps two to three years is the maximum that a child should be in foster care. What is the reasoning behind that? Is the child so unstable that the child has nothing to look forward to? Is it in that area where the child feels he or she is not wanted?

MS. ANDERSON: There are a lot of reasons for that, and there have been a lot of studies on that. Foster care, by its nature, is not intended to be a permanent solution to a problem. Children know that if they are with a foster parent that this is not a parenting figure who will keep them forever. They also know, and it is an unfortunate reality, that anytime there is a problem in that foster home, the foster parent can call up the agency and say, "Take Johnny home. I don't want this kid any more."

So, kids live with a real sense of insecurity. There are also certain realities there, too. In the initial study we did in Kansas City, we only looked at children who had been in foster care for a period of five years, but the majority of those children had been in more than four homes in the past five years. These are children under the age of 10 or 12. You can imagine the impact on a child's psychological development to have that type of lack of continuity in their lives. At the same time, because of the kinds of pressures that social service workers face, you have a very high turnover of workers, so the child has no set of stable figures in his or her life over a period of time. Too often, when the system is breaking down in that way, you also do not have the workers working with the natural parents to ensure that the natural parents are visiting and maintaining contact with a child. So, the child is literally in limbo for the period of

time that he or she is in foster care. I have seen children who have been irrevocably psychologically harmed by that lack of permanence in their lives.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: Would you say that more of the problem should be put on the parents for not contacting the child, and should that perhaps be part of this — that is, that training should be on the parental side, to see that the parent stays psychologically with the child. Or, on the other side, is there perhaps an alternative to the foster home, i.e., adoption after "X" number of years?

MS. ANDERSON: It is a mutual responsibility. However, once the State has made the initial step of intervening, there is a higher responsibility, I believe, on the State to make certain efforts. What should happen, ideally, if you have natural parents who are present, who haven't just abandoned a child and are missing— If the natural parent is present at the point at which the child comes into foster care, a contract should be entered into between the agency and the parent. Goals need to be set; for instance, "These are the problems which necessitated your child coming into foster care." It may be a drinking problem, or it may be marital problems. You should specify the problems. "These are the ways in which we, the agency, will work with you to rectify these problems. This is what we will do. Now, here is what you have to do."

So, there is a bilateral contract that is binding on both parties. The natural parent, obviously, cannot do it alone. It is the agency's responsibility to work with the parent, and to work for the child, to make determinations and to put forth their best effort to hopefully rectify the situation, or to determine after a sufficient period of time that the situation is irreparable, and then say, "Okay, for whatever reasons, this family cannot be brought back together. Let's recognize this fact and now let's take expeditious steps to free the child for adoption," and have the child adopted before it becomes even more difficult for the child to become adopted because of his or her age.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: Would you recommend -- because the longer I sit, the more frightening this becomes, actually -- a better

or more in-depth screening for foster parents? Isn't it more important to try to save the child, rather than just to try to get that child out there someplace?

MS. ANDERSON: The screening of foster parents is really essential. It was amazing to us -- and I think one of the most depressing experiences I have ever had in my professional career -- to see from actual case records, you know, recordings by social service workers, the types of abuse and neglect that were inflicted on foster children by foster parents. There must be screening of foster parents, and foster parents need a considerable amount of support from social service workers and the agency to cope with the problems that foster children bring to bear, and to cope with the natural parents. You know, there is a very natural tendency on the part of the foster parent to be very hostile to a natural parent. I mean, "The natural parent has been alleged to have abused this child that I am now taking care of." Foster parents need guidance in working through these problems, so that they can be part of a team effort in resolving the problems that necessitated the child coming into care.

In this area, there are some curricula and training programs that have been developed which are very effective, and actually increase your pool of foster parents, because foster parents, as with social service workers, do burn out and decide that they do not want to be foster parents anymore because it is too much of a hassle. Foster parents do not get rich from this. They really do it out of a lot of love and commitment to the children.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: I have just one more question. In your experience in the State of New Jersey, do we have more foster parents now, or are we staying at the same level? Is there any attraction for a couple to become foster parents?

MS. ANDERSON: I really regret that I can't answer that specifically for New Jersey because, as I said, I have not looked at exactly what is happening in this State. I think that as the whole area becomes more professionalized and standards and support systems are built in, the agency should be able to recruit and retain larger numbers of foster parents and adoptive parents, as well as workers.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: Has there been any thought given -- and I cringe to even say this -- to the old style orphanage concept, or commune concept, if we cannot get enough foster parents, versus perhaps the abuse out there? Perhaps the abuse could be more closely monitored?

MS. ANDERSON: As in other areas such as mental health, it is far more preferable to keep the child, to use the legal term, "in the least restricted environment." But, in human terms in a family-like setting, I think there is a quality of life that is gained and a benefit that is gained by living in a family setting. Short of a family setting, group homes can be very effective with children who have behavioral problems or other kinds of problems which make it too difficult for them to live within a nuclear family structure.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: What you are saying is that there might be a three-tiered system, adoption, foster care, and perhaps someplace out there--

MS. ANDERSON: (interrupting) Yes, but again, foster care should never be looked at as a permanent goal for any child.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I have one last question. Talking about caseload size again, which basically is one of our biggest focuses -- we seem to have great difficulty in assessing relative values to the types of cases the workers are handling. Let's say we did a case management study and we assessed values that foster care follow-up is worth so many points, and the other various categories are worth so many points. Do you think we could then put this on a computer to arrive at a net caseload per worker and then be able to shift new cases to those workers not having the higher rates, so we could better manage the system, because apparently it seems to be out of kilter? Although we have heard an average of 46, I have heard that some people have 90, some people have 100, and other people have 30. We have to find some better way of managing that. Is it susceptible to computerization based on some of the readings of some of the cases you have been involved with?

MS. ANDERSON: I think that as compared to almost all other aspects of our lives, computers can and do play a very important role

in the management of social service agencies. I think that one of the ways to get a handle on an appropriate caseload size is to do a survey of a sampling of workers. For example, workers in one jurisdiction said, "Well, if you want to do family visits, it takes at least two hours to effectuate a family visit when you compute travel time, time spent during the visit, etc." You can't quantify some of those components of the delivery of services. You need to look at the differentiation between your urban and your rural offices, where you have to factor in, in some of the more rural counties, considerably more travel time than you would, say, in possibly Essex County or Hudson County.

I believe you can assign some time values to functions. You can assign a time value to the licensing of a foster home, which is a very essential component of the delivery of services. You have to know for licensing workers about how much time it should take to properly investigate the home, to talk to involved individuals, and to make reference checks, and then say, "Okay, it takes this much time to do this, so a worker can handle this many foster family homes." I think it is probably most difficult to assess time in the investigative area where you are making the determinations about the need for services, because there are many more intangibles in that area. If you look at -- and I can provide the Committee copies of our consent decrees in New Mexico and Kansas City-- We are very detailed in talking about what a social service worker must accomplish in the provision of services. We say that a social service worker must visit every child in a foster family home every other week. You have a sense as to how long it is going to take to effectuate that visit. The social service worker must ensure that the child have a visit with the biological parents once a week. You can get a very clear sense when you start defining tasks how long it will take to effectuate those tasks.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: So, it can be done, given the modern techniques we have. We would appreciate receiving those cases.

MS. ANDERSON: Yes, they are cited in here, but I can also send copies to the Committee.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Thank you very much for a most enlightening presentation.

MS. ANDERSON: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORD: I just have one last question. In Missouri, Massachusetts, and New Mexico you have successfully lowered the caseload limits by consent decrees, is that correct?

MS. ANDERSON: Well, in Massachusetts, it was court imposed. In New Mexico and Kansas City, it was consent decree.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORD: Is it too early to assess what the effect the lowering of those caseloads has been, either upon the caseworkers or upon the children they are servicing?

MS. ANDERSON: Each of those consent decrees is just about a year old. We are very actively in the process right now of monitoring the implementation of those decrees. We have some indications, not surprisingly, that caseload sizes have not reached the level that we agreed they would yet because, again, those states are dealing through the kind of legislative process that you are here. So, right now we are monitoring each of those decrees. We will have a much better sense within the next several months as to the extent to which each of the provisions of those decrees is being fully implemented.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Thank you very much.

MS. ANDERSON: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Before we call our next witness, I have one quick question that seems appropriate, and I don't want to wait until the next session to find out the answer. Mr. Lockhart is still here. Mr. Lockhart, yesterday a request was suggested by the Commissioner of some \$12.8 million for both additional caseworkers and additional community resources. Do you know whether that is at the stage of a supplemental appropriation being actually put into the Legislature, or is it just a thought at this point?

LARRY J. LOCKHART (from audience): The issue, as it stands right now-- Approximately a month or so ago, the Commissioner drafted a letter and sent it over to the Governor indicating what the situation was. He also had meetings with various members of the Legislature. As a result of that, in the course of community development, a number of individuals in the Legislature indicated that they were interested in supporting a supplemental appropriation for this particular problem.

At this point in time, as you know, there are a number of supplemental requests for the State surplus. We have not gotten final verification of where we stand in that particular process. (Remainder of Mr. Lockhart's response inaudible, since he was not standing near a microphone.)

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: All right. So, we really don't have the Governor's counsel's approval for that supplemental yet. Is that correct?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, the Governor is reviewing a number of requests for supplemental appropriations at this time.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Right, right.

MR. LOCKHART: So, we are waiting for the Governor to finalize his position on these requests.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Then, this Committee might want to come out with an interim report even before our final report, if we feel it is necessary to urge the Governor to make his position known as expeditiously as possible, because you know the legislative process. If we decide to do it this week, it might take three months before it is actually in place. Thank you.

Our next witness will be Mr. Jim Gallagher.

MR. GALLAGHER: I am Jim Gallagher, President of the CWA, Local 1039. I will try to serve as the coordinator for the union position. In order to give you the breadth of the crisis in DYFS, as we see it, we have gathered together today a number of union staff people and a number of DYFS workers from throughout the State. I know we have a time limit, so we will try to be as brief as possible.

I would just like to make a few points before we get into our presentation.

We have heard from Lauren Anderson that New Jersey is regarded as a vanguard state when it comes to child welfare. I think there are two reasons for this: one, has been the actions taken by the Legislature in passing some of the best child welfare laws in the country, and in addition to that, actions such as you are taking here today by keeping on top of those laws and making sure they are properly carried out.

The second issue we would like to bring forth in our testimony is the reason why New Jersey is looked at as a vanguard state. I think Dr. Cahill pointed it out this morning. Here in New Jersey, we have a group of dedicated workers. Many of these people have worked for the State five or ten years, and as you have heard, they are working under conditions that are emotionally and physically wearing them down and opening the door for future serious illnesses. In spite of that, in spite of all the problems these people face, they are performing at a high level of commitment and service to the children of New Jersey. I think that is something that you, as the Legislature, should try to preserve.

From our experience as a union representing these workers, we feel that the existing management style in DYFS has been to treat its workers as dixie cups -- that is, to use them and then throw them away, discard them. We can look at the problems in DYFS and the crisis that exists. Yesterday we heard about caseload size. We will talk a little bit about that in just a minute. We don't think the problem in DYFS is strictly one of caseload size. We think it is also one of how the DYFS workers are treated. To be specific about that, we feel there is a lack of managerial support of the workers, and there is a lack of real worker input into the DYFS process. As Dr. Cahill pointed out this morning, I think this is also a major cause of job stress and burnout.

So, we have no disagreement that caseload size is a problem. In fact, we are the ones who brought it to the attention of the Legislature and the public. This brings me to the next point I would like to make.

The issues you are hearing today have been brought to DYFS and the departmental management for the past year, both through the union and through individual workers working through the steering committees. As a union, I can say that I feel totally frustrated in my dealings with the Department and the Division about these problems. In June, I presented to DYFS management that there was a problem with caseload size; there was a serious problem with morale in the offices. The response to me was, "Why are you being so negative? Why don't you look at the good things we've done? Why don't you look at the 300 new

workers" -- now we find that it is 100 new workers -- "that have been added?" This is the attitude that the union is faced with.

To get our point across, we went to the press, and we came to you, the Legislature.

I can also say that individual workers have tried, through the steering committees, to bring these issues up. We will hear the response in a little bit. Yesterday we heard that the steering committees were great vehicles for worker input. We, as a union, look at them as sham committees. As one person on that committee said, "We meet, and we meet, and we meet, until we come up with the decision that DYFS management wants us to come up with."

This is the reason why we, as a union, have taken this to the media and to you, the Legislature, and as I said yesterday, I would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to come to present our side of the story.

The issue of caseload size: I was very heartened yesterday to hear the discussion that caseload size has risen. Again, this was something that was not agreed to by management six months ago. We, as a union, have had real difficulty in finding out exactly what caseload size is. I think we have even heard statements from management that they, themselves, feel that some of their averages were based on incorrect factors. In determining caseload size, it appears that at one point, they were just adding up all of the workers whether or not they were handling caseloads, and then dividing that figure into all of the cases. That is how we got caseloads that were much lower than they really were in the district offices.

In order to get a handle on what is going on out there, we have done actual body counts by talking to our shop stewards. We were trying to determine exactly many cases workers are handling in the offices. Ed Sabol, who is a staff representative from our local, has done some coordinating work on this, and he would like to talk a little bit about his findings.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Spell your last name, Ed.

ED SABOL: It is S-A-B-O-L.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: What is your title, Ed?

MR. SABOL: I am a staff representative of Local 1039 of the CWA.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Before you get to that, I want to touch on one thing which the last witness, who really didn't know New Jersey, mentioned. Perhaps you know, Jim. What is the level of education for the vast majority of the social workers working for DYFS?

MR. GALLAGHER: Do you mean the degrees?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Yes. Like she said, some may have music degrees, some may have art degrees. Are they basically social work degrees or are they liberal arts degrees?

MR. GALLAGHER: In the beginning, there was a tendency for people coming into the agency and saying, "I am a social worker with a history B.A." I think there have been more people coming to the agency with a background in social work. Yes, I would say that with regard to the training aspect that was addressed earlier, there have been improvements in that area -- more focusing -- although, again, as a union, we feel there needs to be much greater improvements. There has been a general trend to get more people into DYFS with social work backgrounds and to promote internal training.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I noticed that on the survey Dr. Cahill did, she breaks it down to some degree. She found that 14% had a master's in social work; another 12% had master's degrees; and, another 63% were college graduates. So, the vast majority are four-year college graduates, with maybe one-fourth having master's or better degrees.

MR. GALLAGHER: We have people in DYFS who have related degrees that are also useful to their experience, such as a master's in guidance and counseling, and a master's in psychology. Unfortunately, in the past, for career-ladder development, DYFS has not recognized those degrees. That was another area of contention. But, we do have people other than M.S.W.'s who have a background.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Yes, my point being that we are dealing with well-qualified, true professional people. Sometimes we talk about social workers, and you know, I don't know what the image is. But, I want to make sure that everyone realizes that this is a true

professional-type of person who has spent a lot of time getting to where he is.

MR. GALLAGHER: If I could just add to that, we do have a sizeable group of people who have been with the agency for quite awhile, and they have actual practical experience in dealing with child abuse. That, again, is also another very important factor.

MR. SABOL: I will give you-- It is difficult for us to get the averages on the caseloads. I think I would be doing a disservice to the Committee if I gave you partial figures for offices.

For county figures, on averages, I will only give those for counties where we were able to get an actual count of every single worker in the offices, and the number of children and cases they had. What we found was that in Ocean County, it averaged out to 58.89 cases per worker. The only adjustments we made were, we removed from the figures those workers who carried no caseloads. We have a foster home developer and an administrative assistant, I believe, in that office. We removed the principal aid -- there is a principal aid in that office -- and her cases, because under legal regulations, she should not be carrying a regular caseload. We made adjustments to the hours of part-time workers. In other words, if a person was working two and a half days a week, we figured that his caseload should be adjusted to reflect the fact that he is only there one-half the time.

In the Middletown office in Monmouth County, with a similar methodology-- This is also removing, let me add, the intake workers and the cases that intake workers have; intake workers should not be carrying caseloads. These are the people who get the initial call; they are the screening response unit. They are the people who get the calls and go out and do the initial investigations. In the Middletown office, we came up with an average of 57.8 cases. In Asbury Park, we came up with an average of 44.7 cases. In Middlesex, New Brunswick, we came up with an average of 45 cases, but in that office, there is not a separate screening and intake unit. So, that artificially deflates those figures.

Every worker carries a regular workload, in addition to, on a rotating basis, serving time when they get the initial calls, have to

sit in the office, receive the calls, write up the complaints, and serve a rotational time when they go out to do the investigation.

In Middlesex-South County, which shares the same office as New Brunswick, a month ago, it was 41.8 cases. But, since that time, two workers have left, so their cases are now faulted over into the other, so it brings it up to a higher level/

I think if you look at the figures that management gave yesterday-- If you look at the figure that has been bandied around for awhile now -- 45 cases per worker -- and, if you look at the total number of cases that DYFS claims it has under its supervision, which is about 45,000--some, and the total number of DYFS workers, which is about 1,100, I believe, you come up with a figure of 45 cases. But, there are numerous workers who are carrying no cases, and rightfully so. We need foster home developers; we need resources developers. Their intake workers should not be included in that. So, I think that would change their figures.

I also found it interesting-- I'm perhaps not as quick at numbers as you were yesterday; I had to go back to my calculator. They stated yesterday that in 1982, and for some time prior to that, there was an average of 20,000 cases on the DYFS records over a yearly period. In 1984, they said that figure had risen to some 45,000. That shows a 125% increase over the period of those three years. At the same time, the figures were given in terms of an increase in workers -- anywhere from the figure you used of 100 more workers from 1981 to today -- the figure DYFS management used-- If you use the total number of figures -- I don't know if it went down at some point and then it was brought back up again -- and you look over the total amount of time, you come up with a figure of 164 new people. That reflects in either a 10% increase or a 15% increase in staff from 1981 to 1984. At one time, you had a 125% increase in caseload, but at the same time, you had a 10% increase or a 15% increase in staff.

The other thing I found interesting that was presented yesterday was that now the figure of 46/47 cases per worker is being used. What does that mean when you look at the standards of Missouri or Massachusetts where the Federal courts are involved, or an even

later Massachusetts stay court decision, which talks about 20 to 25 cases per worker? DYFS management is saying, "Our goal is 25 per worker." It means that, as you stated yesterday, it is nearly double. It works out to about 184% of what the national minimum is.

I think we, as a State, that consider ourselves to be in a vanguard and concerned about children and avoiding litigation, etc., should not be looking at a minimum standard when a year from now, if cases don't change and we hire these 500 new people, we may attain 85%. I think we have to look at a minimum standard as being the bottom-line figure and something where we should be at all times, not a year away from.

In terms of the variation in cases, I would just like to give some examples of caseloads that workers reported to us. In New Brunswick -- 63, 60, 84, 57. In Ocean County -- 76, 88, 92, 96. In Asbury Park -- 90, 64, 63. In Middletown -- this is a part of Monmouth County; there are several offices in Monmouth County -- 84, 102, 97. This is to show you that it is a statewide problem. In Gloucester County -- 72, 56, 63. One worker carries 60 sexually abused children on her caseload. In Long Branch -- 54, 64. Some of the northern urban areas: Paterson DO - 78, 77, 76, 80, 80. Intake workers in Paterson -- these are the workers who go out on the initial response; the case is supposed to be seen within 24 hours or 48 hours and then turned over to a worker -- 62, 52, 41. In Newark DO -- 116, 83, 70, 68, 89, 78. In suburban Essex -- 93, 89, 93, 95. These are actual cases that workers are carrying right now. I think some of these workers, or some workers from these offices, will be coming up here and can further share what it means to carry a caseload of that size.

In the Massachusetts decision, the judge stated that in instances where caseloads were too high, children literally got lost in the system. They were just forgotten; they were wandering about in the system with no one taking any responsibility for them.

I think that when you are dealing with caseloads of this size, you just realistically look at someone who has 35 hours a week to do a job. Maybe for only three days a week they are able to have a car to do that job. Maybe 40% of the time that week, they are doing

paperwork. So, if you are left with two or three days a week to visit 102 kids as recommended by the attorney who was here before us— On a weekly basis, you should take the children to meet with their biological parents? Bi-weekly you should be meeting with them in the foster home? It is obviously physically impossible, let alone taking into consideration things like travel time, if you happen to be sick, vacation, mandatory training, mandatory attendance at steering committees, and things like that.

They are just some of the things I wanted to bring out.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Could you put together your findings — maybe type it up or write it out -- so we can make that part of our appendix?

MR. SABOL: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Thank you. Are there any questions? (negative response) Who is going to address the issue of the steering committees? Do you have another witness who is going to address that issue?

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Let me ask one question. I would like either you, or one of your caseworkers who is going to testify, just to give us an example of what a typical day is like. (laughter) I would like to know what you do from start to finish.

MR. GALLAGHER: Okay. Well, with the permission of the Committee, we have, I believe, seven workers -- at last count -- who are prepared to testify. I was wondering if it would be possible to have them come up as a group. Each worker is prepared to give short testimony on a specific issue, but I think if the Committee has some questions, it might be good to have all of the workers up here. They do represent the entire State.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Okay, that is a good idea. Bring them up.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Is there anybody here who is not a DYFS worker? (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Jim, do you have an order that you are going to follow?

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I want to give the audience the benefit of the schedule. We are going to go until about 1:30, and then we are going to break for the day. We are going to continue to hold hearings on another day that will be announced, probably not before the election, because it is difficult to get the Committee together before the election. We have seven witnesses here, who will probably take the better part of the next hour. So, if anyone has any other engagements or appointments to keep, you can leave now. We may have time for one or two people, but we have an awful lot of questions to ask these people, because they have their own presentations. I don't even think we will finish with these seven people.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Mr. Chairman, I have a couple of comments I would like to offer. One, maybe we ought to set another date or dates, because each time we say another day, we recognize that we may not get to everybody. Occasionally, I know that is a problem.

The other thing is, I don't want anyone to think -- either the Department, the union, or any other interested parties -- that because we are not able to get to you with respect to testimony that we are not going to take some action.

It is my opinion to offer some recommendations to the chair about some interim action, as you suggested, we should take to involve ourselves immediately in the funding process. There is a \$500 million-plus surplus, but there is a billion dollars worth of claims on it. I am not so certain that I have any higher priority than to address the needs of these children, the needs of these workers, and the needs of the departments and the managers. I think it has to be turned around into a cooperative effort before we finish with our job here.

Larry is back there. We're not going to let the Governor make any mistakes by shifting the funds that are needed here to someplace else. We are on your side as far as that goes, at least as far as this member of the Committee is concerned.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Well, I would certainly concur. I think we have already heard enough. The \$12 million recommendation probably

isn't even enough, but at least it is a start and a step in the right direction. I would certainly want an interim report from the Committee on that.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Once we get George the money, with the help of the union, we are going to show him how to spend it, Larry. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: The Committee is also considering some hearings around the State. Perhaps we can go down to South Jersey and perhaps to North Jersey to get some input from those areas that can't come to the Trenton hearings. We are going to explore this thoroughly.

For those of you who have prepared remarks and don't get reached today, if you want to leave your prepared remarks with us, we will be happy to take them and correlate them into the record.

Okay, Jim?

MR. GALLAGHER: Our first witness is Andrea Shorter. She is a family service specialist from the suburban Essex office.

ANDREA SHORTER: Hello. I am Andrea Shorter -- S-H-O-R-T-E-R. I am from suburban Essex, and I have been working in that particular office since 1979. To reiterate the problem in the suburban Essex office, we do have extremely high caseloads. I have some statistics here which show that the number of children who each worker is caring for ranges from 40 up to 128.

Because of the high caseloads, we are unable to monitor the cases as adequately and sufficiently as we should. Some families, because of their severe problems, and under court order, we are just unable to do it. That is because of the number of cases we have to handle, and also because of the overwhelming paperwork that we are required to do. It takes a long time to get reports together. There are 10 pages to some reports; there is duplication of paperwork. The computers don't make the paperwork any less; they make it worse. We constantly have to fill out turnarounds and SIS forms. It takes a lot of time. You find yourself overwhelmed and not getting anywhere. You are not helping your clients, and you are not helping yourself. It is just a total mess.

There is some fear in our office. There is a lot of stress and burnout. People don't want to come to work, but they have to come because of survival and also because of their dedication. There is low morale because of the general lack of support from management and also a fear of being written up in disciplinary action for something you may not have done because you were unable to do, or something you forgot to do. You stand alone somewhat as a worker.

There is no pat on the back for some of the good things you may do, but there is always a pat for what you do wrong. In other words, there is no team work.

As far as I can see, since I've been with DYFS since 1979, the turnover has been high. I've seen a lot of people come and a lot of people go. We have some workers who have been there for years, but the majority of the new workers who come in are young, and they say, "No way." They leave. It takes a long time to fill the slots

We have units that disappear, and then when that happens, those workers who remain on staff have to take over the caseloads. At one point, we tried having specialized caseloads -- for instance, people who dealt specifically with sex abuse cases or with residential services, etc. What happened was, when these workers who worked in this particular unit resigned, they gave the cases to the other workers who had no proper training to handle them. You go out and you are in a world of trouble, because you are trying your best, but you really don't know what you are doing.

To wrap it up, I would just like to share a bit of personal history. I have personally experienced both sides of the coin. At one time, I was a client myself. I was a foster child for seven years. Someone spoke a little earlier and said how the children could very easily get lost in the cracks. I remember one time when I hadn't seen a social worker for two years. It was an unfortunate situation, because the foster parent was an alcoholic. During that two-year period, I didn't even get to have visits with my natural family.

My present situation -- the fact that I am older -- is that I have alienated a member of my family. There is just no way we can get back together. It is all because the social workers weren't available,

for whatever the reasons were. But now, I am a social worker. I am an M.S.W. I am a social worker, and I find myself in a position where I am unable to respond to some of my clients. I have a gut feeling that I should be there, but I am unable to respond because of all the problems -- the caseload size and the paperwork.

As a representative from my office, I think that the workers are asking for additional workers, less paperwork, and community resources. We don't have the resources; we don't have the foster parents; we don't have housing; we don't have enough food. We need the community resources, and something should be done soon.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: How many people are there in your specific office?

MS. SHORTER: How many people?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Yes, workers -- caseload workers -- approximately -- 10, 20?

MS. SHORTER: No, about 50.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Is the lack of morale in the management area based on management at the local level, the central regional level, or the State level?

MS. SHORTER: All.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Can you be more specific in terms of this management problem that you see.

MS. SHORTER: For instance, if there is a problem with a case, you turn to the office. Everybody is "hyper" because-- I think it starts from the top administration. My immediate supervisor may be fearful of her supervisor because of what went wrong. You are going to be reprimanded for accountability, responsibility. Something went wrong. The child was hurt, or you made a wrong decision. You put a kid in foster care who should not have been put there; he should have gone to a relative, and so forth. Then, when it trickles on down, my immediate supervisor may request certain things of me as the worker. I am the direct-line worker. I go out, and I come back and tell her what is going on.

The depression is all put on the worker; the worker feels left alone. We are standing alone. There is no one to back us up.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Do you have to make decisions as to whether to place a child with a family member rather than in a foster home? Is that your decision to make as a worker?

MS. SHORTER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: And, you can't pass the buck to someone else then?

MS. SHORTER: No. Usually what happens is -- depending upon the case -- original cases come through the intake section, but then they are passed on to the direct-line workers. We carry the case until the time of termination. While you are carrying a case, something may happen. The family may have a problem. It doesn't go back to intake. You are the one who is responsible for going out, investigating the situation, and making an assessment -- whether or not to keep the child at home, to take him out to foster care, or to a relative.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Do you have any ideas as to what could improve this relationship between the person on the firing line and management?

MS. SHORTER: Less caseloads. You are under a lot of stress. Nobody wants to be accountable. Do you know what I'm saying? Lower the caseloads, have training available to new workers, as well as to ongoing staff, and have stress-management groups within the offices themselves.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Do you have any local steering committees at the local offices?

MS. SHORTER: I believe so.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Is somebody else going to talk about the steering committees?

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Okay. Does anyone else have questions of this witness?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORD: You spoke about disciplinary action being taken against workers. Can you elaborate on that?

MS. SHORTER: Okay. My personal experience is, for example, I had a family who moved from one area to another, which was out of our catchment area. The woman had moved a month before a scheduled court

date. It wasn't until maybe 13 days prior to the actual date that I found out what her new address was. But, due to the fact that I only had-- It was 13 days -- calendar days -- but, I only had five field days between the actual time I got the information and the court date. The five field days went like this: one day was foster care placement, which takes an entire day a lot of times. You are sitting in a hospital, you are sitting in a doctor's office, you have to get the child, and so forth. The first day was foster care. The second day I had to go to court; that is another day that takes a lot of time. Maybe the third day was foster care. The fourth day I had to go to a mandatory meeting, and the next thing I knew, it was time for court.

What happened when I was trying to explain my situation was, first of all, it wasn't a crisis situation. The woman just moved. When I explained that to one of the court people, she became very sarcastic and demeaning. That wasn't enough. The next thing I knew, a few days later, I got a memo written up on me, questioning my competency as a worker. Then I became very angry and frustrated, and I responded back. At the same time, you become so angry at minor things that you say to yourself, "Well, maybe I should quit this job." You don't need antagonism. You are supposed to work together as a unit. I say what could have happened instead was, she should have taken the information I gave her and also considered the fact of the pressure I was under. If it was a crisis situation, I would have readily worked until late at night or something to have gone in and investigated the woman's new address. She didn't understand that, and she wrote me up.

It has happened to other workers. I am not going to name any particular people, but we have workers who are dreadfully afraid of their immediate supervisors. We have supervisors who are afraid of their supervisors because they are afraid they are going to write them up. After awhile, you get so many things written up on you that the DO management has to look at it and say, "Well, maybe you are not the right person for the job. Maybe you should resign."

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Are the immediate supervisors former caseworkers in most instances?

MS. SHORTER: In most cases, I would say yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Would they be more or less sympathetic towards your situation if they were in that same situation maybe a year ago, two years ago, or three years ago?

MS. SHORTER: That is on an individual basis. I personally, right now, have a very supportive immediate supervisor, but that is not the case for all of my coworkers in the office.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Some people forget they were field people.

MS. SHORTER: They forget, or maybe--

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: (interrupting) It is like some judges who forget they were lawyers. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Isn't that the truth. (laughter) I have a question. How long have you been with DYFS as an employee?

MS. SHORTER: I've been with DYFS since 1979. I resigned in 1980 to get my master's, and then I returned to DYFS. As I said, I was with DYFS when it was BCS as a foster child all the way up.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: So, you experienced similar problems even back then.

MS. SHORTER: Back--

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: (interrupting) Back when you were a foster child.

MS. SHORTER: Since I was just a kid, I really didn't know what was going on, but I do know for a fact that I didn't see a social worker very much, I didn't get to have home visits, and what has happened to me as a person because of it.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Since you've been there most recently as an employee, have you felt the effect basically of the diminution of the funding -- the fact that the caseloads increase and you don't have enough workers? You have a larger caseload now, right?

MS. SHORTER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: And, it is pretty characteristic that most of the caseworkers have a load that far exceeds what the national norm is. Hasn't it been that way for awhile now though?

MS. SHORTER: Yes, I guess for the past six or nine months.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: All right. Have you noticed, since the CWA has come in, that you have a more aggressive union in terms of pursuing your activities?

MS. SHORTER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Were you in the old State employees union? Do you remember the old SCA? Maybe it would have been the CSA if you were in the county group.

MS. SHORTER: Maybe at the tail end; I'm really not sure. I think we have a very assertive--

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: (interrupting) This union is more vigorous. Did you serve in the Department under Governor Byrne's administration? Do you recall? I guess it would have been 1979.

MS. SHORTER: At the tail end, I believe.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Let's see. When did he leave office? I forget; 1981, I guess. You were in there. Do you perceive a difference in the managerial style in terms of directives, or do you really think that is a result also of the fact that there is an enormous caseload, and it is so burdensome to deal with that it has a negative impact on your managers too? Or, do you think it is a combination of both? That there is a new style of management -- a businesslike approach -- or, do you feel that it really is a result of the fact that there are limited resources and just so much of a job to do in such a difficult area?

MS. SHORTER: I think both. It's not really clear. For one thing, I burned out a little bit myself. It is difficult for me to remember what happened yesterday. (laughter) I am being honest with you. So, for me to compare the two management teams, I think, would be unfair.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: You see, my perception is, it may be a combination of a lot of things coming together at the same time -- limited resources, large caseloads, a more aggressive union that is trying to do their job perhaps when in the past -- and, I don't want to criticize past leadership of the State Employees Union, but in the past, maybe they weren't as aggressive as this union is, plus a different managerial style where you have, in a sense, an approach. We

have had the Governor's Management Improvement Plan involved in trying to make government more businesslike. This is an area where it is awfully difficult to make government more businesslike because it is not a manufacturing facility. There is not a product that you can turn out in a certain amount of time. Your goal is not to make a profit; it is to serve people. I think there has to be a coming together of understanding about all of those issues, both on the union's part and on management's part. I think that is what you are asking for.

The first way to start is to reduce that caseload. I think that is the initial building block of it all.

MR. GALLAGHER: Assemblyman Foy, our next witness is going to more specifically address management style.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Good, okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: Can I ask a question? From your professional background, what is your opinion on the actual training that you have seen in the past? In other words, when the individual is first hired, under the job description that they are hired for, what type of training has there been for each worker up until now? Is there in-house training, or does somebody just more or less come in off the street to apply for a job as a caseworker with Youth and Family Services? Is there a job description? After they are there, what training do they get?

MS. SHORTER: Okay, there is a job description. We are Civil Service employees, and we do have in-house training. But, as an earlier witness stated, DYFS was, at one time, recruiting people who had B.A.'s in math and history, etc. Now, the trend is more to getting the social worker students -- the B.A. level and the M.S.W. level. Since I am an M.S.W. myself-- The year I graduated from Columbia, I saw that people were not applying for social work school because, first of all, of the salaries, and maybe even because of administration -- their legislators. It wasn't human oriented.

What is happening now is that I am under the impression that people still are not going into social work. It bothers me because I'm saying to myself, "With the figure of 507, I know that 300 and some are supposed to be social workers." I am very concerned about who

the social workers are. Can we ensure that, along with the training they get when they come into DYFS, they had some social work background? Social work is a skill, and it is a profession.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: When you say "now," how long ago did it start being, what I would call, professionalized by choosing people, or at least applicants who have had some background in social work? I believe that is what you've just told me? You said "now." It is different. Is now in the last year and a half? Do you believe it is more professional now in the last year and a half than it was in prior years?

MR. GALLAGHER: I would say that that trend has been for the last three years or so. DYFS has instituted a new training program for new workers, which is fairly comprehensive. As a union, the complaints we get from ongoing workers is that there isn't enough of a training period, and that there isn't enough training directed towards their needs. Those are the main complaints we are hearing from the field.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: I sympathize with the union because I have an honorary withdrawal card from the International Association of Macnists, Local 434, so I am kind of familiar with what you are talking about. At the same time, the most important thing I would say is, I would like to see as much as I can of your approach to the training, even though you admit it is better now. I think there is a lot more that can be done for children between management and training. I don't think we should have that ongoing problem if we are going to take care of the product we are talking about, which are the kids of the State of New Jersey.

What are your recommendations? I know there is always going to be a problem between labor management and supervisors, but what recommendations are you making? I know money is going to be the-- We're talking about \$12.5 million, and I know the Governor is supportive of that. I believe you will see as much of that as possible out of all the demands on the State of New Jersey.

MR. GALLAGHER: One of the things that we feel has to improve is worker input. This not only deals with training, but it deals with all aspects of the agency.

The existing structure of the steering committees, and we will have a witness talk about this, we feel, has failed. It has not provided worker input. In fact, it has led to an increase of demoralization of the staff. A number of people went to these committees with suggestions, but they saw nothing happen. That just furthered their demoralization.

We feel that in training there needs to be more worker input, and that would better direct the training as to what the real needs are in the field. Our main proposal is for more worker input.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Do you want to bring up your next witness, Jim?

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes. Thank you, Andrea. Our next witness-- A point was just brought up to me that I think the Committee should think about. In talking about high caseloads, there is also a legitimate feeling of workers that training time takes away from their time to service their clients. We see that training people is being pitted against servicing people, which should not exist in a healthy social service agency. Again, caseloads do have an impact on people taking training.

Our next witness is Paul Schiff. Paul is from the Middlesex office; he is also a Family Service Specialist. He is going to talk about two areas: one, the managerial style as it is perceived by the workers in the office; and two, paperwork. We have heard a lot about paperwork. We have a little something to illustrate the plight of the workers. What we have done is, we have stapled together all the forms that it takes to put a child through the system. It comes out to 23 feet of paper.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Jim, explain what you mean by "through the system." Is it from the minute of the first phone call?

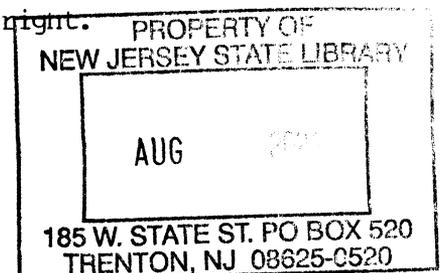
MR. GALLAGHER: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Until when?

MR. GALLAGHER: Getting all the services needed until the end. That is just for one child. Now, if you have a family--

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: (interrupting) The end being adoption or placement into foster care, whatever that end result is?

MR. GALLAGHER: Whatever the result is, right.



(Caseworkers illustrate paperwork involved (23 feet) in putting a child through the system.)

MR. GALLAGHER: That kind of dramatizes the plight of these workers. When you have a caseload of 50 or 60 children, you can see what kind of paperwork we are talking about. There are a lot of "forests" going into DYFS.

This is Paul Schiff.

PAUL SCHIFF: My name is Paul Schiff -- S-C-H-I-F-F. I am a Family Service Specialist in the Middlesex office. I have been working for DYFS for approximately eight years in that capacity.

In looking at the physical evidence, those of us who wade through all or most of the forms-- I don't know exactly what there is right now, but I can tell you that hours and hours and hours are required to fill those out, some of which involve looking up codes in code books, and filling out forms for our computer system. Our computer system is a very time-consuming system for the worker. Other things require qualitative assessment, extensive writing, and some peace and quiet to be able to sit down and do these things, which is not the condition in our office. We have very, very crowded conditions where people are virtually trying to work on top of each other.

Recently a number of workers in Middlesex, who I am familiar with, during the last six months or more, have had to resort to working beyond five o'clock on a very routine basis in order to try to cope with the paperwork. Many workers are staying in the office now until 5:30, 6:00, or 7:00 at night, or are taking this paperwork home with them in order to cope with the demands.

Other workers are falling further and further behind because of personal and family reasons, and also because of a feeling that they are paid to do one job, not one and a half or two jobs.

There is no escape. You are either sacrificing your personal life in order to try to do your job, or you are getting more and more burned out in the process. A lot of this involves paperwork. It also involves field work, and if you are not doing it, you may be more subject to having this held over your head.

The question of managerial style, I think, has to be put in perspective with the fact that one, we are getting a dramatic increase increase in the number of cases reported. That is primary. Two, administration has told us to reach out more than was the case formerly. Not only are we dealing strictly with children who are reported to be abused and neglected, but basically we are being told, at least at the local level, that if anyone calls up and says, "I want you to investigate this situation because I don't think someone is taking care of his children too well," -- without being very specific -- we might respond to this. This generates a tremendous amount of driving time, field time, telephone calls, collateral calls to investigate within the community, and then the whole range of paperwork on cases where we don't even really have specific allegations that children are at risk. For example, sometimes these calls come from estranged parents who are not living with the children and who are sometimes utilizing our agency for motives other than legitimate child protection. Anyhow, this is an aspect that is also increasing our workload.

Another aspect of it is, from all appearances -- from everything I have seen over the last at least six to eight months -- there is a tremendous amount of pressure coming from the top down through middle-level management, and then eventually coming down to the worker, which is essentially a "cover your ass philosophy," to put it most bluntly. This is resulting in a lot of fearful decisions being made by people. There is the fear of closing cases because if, God forbid, a child should get hurt, it is not the parents' fault or the fault of the person who has committed the crime, but rather, the DYFS worker for closing the case, or the DYFS supervisor, or the DO manager who has approved the closing of this case.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: When do you close a case?

MR. SCHIFF: That is a good question. Very often, I count my cases, and I put down a number. It is with the supposition that I've closed the case, but three, four, or five weeks later, I may get that case back and find that it hasn't actually been closed because somebody feels that maybe I should write a letter here or make a phone call

there. This is increasingly common. I used to close most of my cases, and they would stay closed. Today, many of them are coming back, and I am finding workers having a problem closing many cases -- when they get time to even do them -- because they are fearful. I think the fear of repercussions from above at the level that I see in my office are then passed on down to the workers, and the result is that instead of workers being directed mainly towards protecting children as their priority, and using their professional skills, knowledge, and experience in making priorities in consultation wherever possible with management, we are being given directives, which are often misdirecting our focus. This can happen, with all due respect to the Committee members, the Assembly, and other political bodies, when we get requests from political persons, like yourselves, who may become involved in a situation and may call Mr. Blatner or somebody else on high. We may then get an absolute panic situation of workers being told, "You must do this; you must do that. Work Saturdays, whatever it takes. We must do this." The case is not a priority; it is not the kind of situation where-- If we were saying what we should be doing at any time, given all these conflicting demands that we have right now, we shouldn't be operating that way. That is just an example; it is not the primary problem. That is an isolated-type thing. But, this kind of situation is going on from upper management and on down through lower management, where a many of the directives that are being given to workers are not that the priority is child protection. This is interfering with our ability to do our jobs properly.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: What is the priority now as opposed to child protection?

MR. SCHIFF: That is a good question. We had an audit recently. In June, our office, along with many other offices, directed a letter to Mr. Blatner, explaining that the caseloads had gone up so much that workers really did not feel they could do their jobs. They were becoming increasingly concerned about protecting the children who were under their supervision, and properly investigating the new cases that were coming to their attention. We did not receive a formal reply to that letter for about three months. Really, as far as any remedy is concerned, nothing was done.

During that period of time, a worker in the New Brunswick office was suspended for five days. He was a relatively new worker with little and inconsistent supervision for the year he had been in the office, and he also had the highest caseload, from what I could see, of the entire office. He had over 60 families and over 90 children as his responsibility. He was charged with being inefficient, among other things. He went out on a case, the child was not seriously injured, he was unable to get back to that case because of all the other demands on his time, and that child subsequently became more seriously injured and required placement. At the time, there was no indication that was true, and no placement of the child was called for, except after the second incident. Since the worker was unable to follow-up, he was subsequently disciplined and suspended for five days without pay.

This kind of situation creates an atmosphere in our office of fear and a feeling that management is not giving us support. They should certainly understand that nobody can possibly do a job-- I'm not talking about 90 children; it is very hard to do a job with half that amount and really be responsible.

In our office, we have a rotating system of intake. We are constantly on screening and response, meaning we must respond to the new cases that come in, as well as service the cases that we have already opened. In that kind of situation, with that added burden, the number of cases we can care for is much, much lower.

I would estimate that the suspended worker was operating on a minimum of four times the amount of cases he could possibly handle in any kind of reasonable way. Yet, he was suspended for five days.

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Mr. Chairman, if I may excuse myself and interrupt, those judges we were talking about have required me to leave here. I have to be somewhere at one o'clock regarding a settlement conference. I want to apologize to the group and indicate that I will certainly read the transcript to familiarize myself with the rest of today's testimony, as well as what I missed yesterday. I hope to be in attendance at the future meetings that are going to be held around the State.

I don't, however, want to lose the opportunity to get started with addressing the issues about which you and the Department are concerned. That clearly should involve our response as quickly as possible. I would like to ask the chair if he would entertain motions: one, to direct staff to prepare an interim report as a result of these two days of hearings, so we don't have to wait for subsequent hearings; and two, to make, as part of that report -- with the indulgence and approval of my colleagues on the Committee -- a request to Legislative Services to draft a supplemental appropriation bill for the \$12.8 million, and have you be the sponsor of it, with the Committee as co-sponsors.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Is that a formal motion?

ASSEMBLYMAN FOY: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Is there a second?

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: I'll second it.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: All in favor? (affirmative response from Committee members present)

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: I would just like to add that, with the interim report -- and, I agree with my colleague that we need it as soon as possible -- I believe we ought to hear from the other side of the coin so we can make some kind of differential.

If I may ask a question. With your union contract, when there is a five-day suspension, you can appeal. Did you go through the appeal process?

MR. SCHIFF: Yes. In the case of this particular individual, it is still in the--

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: (interrupting) In other words, there may still be time to--

MR. SCHIFF: (continuing) It was upheld by management on the first level.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: I'm not saying management. I am saying that your union represents you. You have the opportunity to have the union come in and represent the side of the worker. Where does that stand now?

MR. SCHIFF: But, the first-level hearing is before management, and that was upheld.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: I understand that, but you still have the opportunity to have the union come in and really finalize and protect the worker because that is the contractual--

MR. GALLAGHER: (interrupting) We have Civil Service procedures. We have some ability to deal with discipline that is imposed, but there are some gaps in Civil Service law, especially on written reprimands where people have very little protection. We are dealing with that as a union in trying to reform Civil Service. That is a whole other issue.

I think the point we would like to bring out here-- We don't want to get caught in specific cases because we have people here who have been disciplined. I'm sure that each person here could give you a list of 10 or 15 people in the office over the last couple of years who have suffered some form of discipline.

The result of that has been, we think, a demoralization, and in part and parcel with high caseloads, the cause of the morale problem in DYFS. Every time one person is disciplined, it sends out a level of fear through the office. Now, in a lot of these offices, as Paul has indicated, decisions are not made as to what is best for the child. Decisions are made on how to protect yourself.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: I'm a little confused. I haven't been able to participate. I know you are Civil Service, but it was brought up that the Communications Workers Union is also what you are representing. That still does not have the effect of going in. That is what you are telling me. That tells me that we should be getting together as quickly as possible. I agree with you that Civil Service has to be reformed, like yesterday. That is what you said here.

MR. GALLAGHER: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: Hopefully we can get that done and resolve it somewhat.

MR. GALLAGHER: I would hope that we will have your support on that. We would appreciate it.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: You have support on Civil Service reform, and I have been involved with it in many, many areas.

MR. GALLAGHER: Maybe we can talk about that later.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Mr. Gallagher, would you categorize the relationship of what I'm hearing between the workers and administration? Is it an embattled one?

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: It sounds like it.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Is there an embattled relationship here?

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes, I would say that as far as the situation in the office is concerned, workers feel -- I think you've heard this several times -- alone. They feel that management is out to get them.

As far as the relationship between the union and management is concerned, as a union, we have tried over the last two years to establish an ongoing labor/management relationship with the DYFS management team, based on problem solving. We feel we have been stymied in that effort.

Using the grievance procedure which exists, our approach is to solve problems. We have addressed a number of problems through the grievance procedure. Mr. Schiff's office filed a grievance about State cars. We have had other grievances about job stress, and these grievances were dealt with in a strictly legal sense.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: That is not the way to handle good labor relations.

MR. GALLAGHER: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: You solve the problem before it gets to the grievance level.

MR. GALLAGHER: Right. They would pick out little points and say, "You don't have a case here." It doesn't mean that the problem doesn't exist.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: The steering committee has the potential of being what you need, if the steering committee is done properly.

I don't know if our interim report should get into anything beyond what appears to be the urgent need. The urgent need is the additional money for the caseworkers. I think we should limit our interim report to that aspect.

Regarding the other aspects -- like you said, you want to hear all sides of the coin -- I think we'll await the full statewide hearings we are going to have in order to have all sides of the coin.

Then we can make a full recommendation on the other aspects. I think the money is desperately needed now, and it can't really wait. So, I would like to limit the interim report to the money.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: There is no question that that is needed, but in order to have the money spent correctly and to help the labor side, the caseload side, management is still sitting in there somewhere.

I asked the question before. Perhaps our problem is that one supervisor should be over three to five caseworkers, so there is a closer working relationship between labor and management. Management may be so far away that their problem is the same thing. They are handling 30 or 40; I have no idea. If we don't approach it that way--

I don't believe just throwing money out is the answer. We'll go whatever way is expeditious to do the job.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: The thing is, I don't know if we can get those answers that quickly. I would like to get the money, but you know how long it takes to get money. The bill can't be put in until November 19.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: We can hold it on the side and say, "Okay, you have \$12.5; now let's spend it wisely."

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Now, we'll spend it wisely, right? But, I want to get the money in the pipeline and get it rolling.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORD: Assemblyman, I would suggest that that type of analysis might be more appropriate within the Appropriations Committee.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Spending the money? I don't think the Appropriations Committee has the time to do an analysis. We are going into some minute portions of their overall budget in-depth. I don't think they could possibly spend the amount of time that we're going to spend on this. We can make recommendations to them.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORD: No, I mean as far as the concerns about placing restrictions on the money. There are ways of doing that within either legislation or the Appropriations Committee.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Okay. You are on that Committee, of course, so you will be able to express the total Committee's view on that.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN FORD: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Okay, fine. Continue, please.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: Excuse me, I have to get back to southern Ocean County. I really apologize. My agent is here, and I've told him--

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: (interrupting) We are going to have one of our hearings down in the Monmouth/Ocean region.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: I would like to see it in Toms River. We have plenty of room now. We'll get you a big area so we can have plenty of people. I believe we are on the top of the list, and we have a large caseload.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: We are going to try to have one down there at perhaps two of the DYFS facilities. We're going to do it right.

ASSEMBLYMAN HENDRICKSON: Absolutely, and then maybe we can have one in Atlantic/Cape May.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I have one last question for Mr. Schiff. We have been told that the paperwork, by and large, is mandated, and that there isn't too much that can be done to cut it down. Are there any committees within your organization that are working on reducing the paperwork and maybe making suggestions as to what can be eliminated?

MR. SCHIFF: It seems as if there are always paperwork committees within DYFS, and in the years--

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: (interrupting) Are they union oriented, worker oriented, or are they management oriented?

MR. SCHIFF: In the years I have been with the agency, I have witnessed a number of turnovers in forms, including the entrance of the SIS system, which is a major part of our paperwork. We have stated that a lot of that work could be more efficiently and better done by clerical staff, if there was clerical staff available to do it. That would free us. We constantly have to look up codes in code books, and decide which number to put on a form. If we make a mistake, we have clerks running back to us in the middle of our conversations on the phone saying, "why did you put a 2 here and not a 3?"

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: What is the SIS? Is that your computer system?

MR. SCHIFF: That is our computer system, and we have a number of different forms we have to utilize. The actual dictation forms we use have changed at least four times, and we are in the process of another one. Each time we get one or two days of training to learn how to use the new form, when many of us are having trouble even writing up our dictations, we are getting new forms on which we have to learn how to properly write up the casework plans and assessments. Some of us get a little bit like, "Here we go again," because we have seen this happen a number of times. Everybody has a better way of doing it.

It turns out to be disruptive and time-consuming, and in another year or two, people will be saying, "Well, there must be a better way of doing it."

What seems to have happened is that the paperwork burden increased--

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: (interrupting) My point is that everyone has said there is too much paperwork, but no one seems to have any ideas or solutions as to what can be eliminated.

MR. GALLAGHER: I would say from our end, there is a paperwork committee that was set up by the management team. There are workers on that committee; some of them could be union people. But, there has been no direct labor/management discussion about paperwork.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Why not have, for example, your membership sit down with your own committee and come up with what the people on the firing line think is the necessary paperwork, and then submit it to management, rather than just throwing your hands up and saying, "We've got too much paperwork?"

MR. GALLAGHER: We know we are getting close to the end of our time. We would like to try to bring forth at least one more witness, who will be Joe Walsh. Joe is a Family Service Specialist from the Mercer District Office, and he is going to address the steering committees and community resources.

JOSEPH WALSH: I remember watching the Reagan debate the other night, and realized our attention span is twenty minutes, at most, so I guess all of us are beyond paying attention to one another.

I want to thank you for being invited here today. My name is Joe Walsh and I work in the Mercer District Office. Many of my clients live within about four blocks of this building, so I am familiar with the downtown area.

My preparation for my work in the Mercer District Office is, I have a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts, School of Education; I have a master's degree in social work from Temple University, School of Social Administration, with a focus on social policy and planning; I have certification from the Academy of Certified Social Workers; and, I am a Certified School Social Worker in New Jersey. But, the real thing that qualifies me to be here today is that I work in the Mercer District Office doing investigations of physical and sexual abuse cases.

There are three points, really, that I wanted to bring to your attention, and they are: How the steering committee has worked in our local district office; how the new overtures in the public/private partnership towards the resolution of child neglect and child abuse in New Jersey is working; and what some of those problems are.

However, the main point I would like to start with is to say there is a certain kind of theme which overshadows much of what we do. I can't say strongly enough how important it is for those of us who work in this field to realize that we work with the poor, racial and ethnic minorities, women, and children. Now, in our society that is the bottom, and I think that until people realize that is the bottom we are not going to really understand the nature and the gravity of the problem.

I used to be a school teacher. Middle class parents wouldn't put up with 65 children in a classroom. They simply wouldn't have it. But, there is really not the same kind of concern with 65 children on a protective service case load, because those people don't have the political clout; they don't have the economic clout; and, they are at the bottom. The majority of people I see are 16 to 18 to 22 year-old

mothers with two or three children and no male support in the home. There is no economic support, no education, and few resources in the community to deal with the overwhelming problems of being a young mother.

It is not fashionable any longer to talk about race and sex and class as issues which affect people's lives, because we are in a different era now. That was the '60's and this is the '80's. But, that hasn't changed the reality of what poor people deal with in this society, and in this State in particular. I just think it is important to realize that impacts not just our clients, but those of us who work with them, because the closer you work with the poor, the minorities, and the neglected the more you are like them and the more you are treated like them in society, because of your connection there.

If you work with poor people, you are like poor people. So, as I said, the public perception of what we do is, we don't do much and we are not qualified because we work with people who really can't be helped.

Regarding the steering committees, our office, at the time of the DYFS reorganization, was told that we had an over-staffing and we had to move from-- When I started, full time, with Mercer we had about 60 workers; we now have 35 workers. We are considered to be over-staffed. Consequently, there was a need in our office -- having been told that we had to reduce our staff -- to figure out how this could be done in the least disruptive way to our clients and to our work system. So, we are in a situation different than some, where during this recent hiring, offices were expanding, and we were constantly contracting. That has affected the morale.

So, a group of workers got together with the management in our office, as well as with someone from our central region and from Central Office, to try and deal with this. Now, these changes were imposed -- the things we thought ought to be done. Many people dealt in good faith, and I include people from the Central Office and people from our local management area. The bottom line is, the issues the workers needed to address were issues of caseload size, worker morale, and quality services to clients. Those are issues which the steering

committee never could address, and still cannot address, because those things had to do with the funding and with management assessment of resource allocation. Those things have not worked in our office.

People, in addition to increasing their caseloads, have had to take time out of their day -- sometimes a whole day a week -- for committee work. They then had to take home and write up the documents and bring them back for proper discussion in committee, this on top of their increasing caseloads. So, we were working double time doing management and doing casework, and the end result was that people couldn't take it anymore.

In our particular office, as a result of the ongoing frustration with the inability to effect real changes and to have real input into decision-making, our steering committee has resigned. We have no steering committee in our office, and we will not have one. I am here with the full support of every social worker in my office. We are not interested in participating in any kind of management, steering committee scheme which doesn't give people real input and real decision-making ability. In all honesty, some of the issues which they address, they can't really solve either. That is one of the reasons why we are here to support the increased funding for the agency. I would fully support that.

The other issue I would like to address is the one of public/private partnership. Currently our county, Mercer County, has the luxury, in some regards, of having more services available than many other counties have. We are not a resource poor county, per se, in comparison with other counties. We have done a lot of recent contracting of services with private agencies, to do the kinds of things we used to do ourselves. This has created certain kinds of problems.

For one, the clientele that DYFS has worked with are traditionally involuntary multi-problem families. Most of the traditional middle class treatment programs in our area don't know how to deal with involuntary clients who don't want help; they are based on a more middle-class model: "If I have a problem, I will go to you and get help." So, there is a question about how the treatment is handled by those agencies.

This has created some conflict between the DYFS workers and the private agency workers, and in some ways we admire workers in the private sector. They say, "I take ten cases," and when they get ten cases, that is all they take. Meanwhile the DYFS worker is handling 45 and 50 cases. So, the DYFS worker has to finally say, "How can DYFS say to the private agency, 'We think you can only do quality services with ten families; we are only going to give you ten; you don't have near the paperwork because you are not the State agency; but, we will give the DYFS counterpart 45 cases and say, "You will take as many as you get."'"

The private agencies have the right to say, "We will only contract with you for ten families per worker, and that is the limit." When you work in our agency, as many calls as come in in a week, that's how many cases you get. This creates real tension between the private agencies and the public agencies which is unnecessary.

Also, there is the issue of accountability. Accountability by DYFS is-- And, you can't be assumed to have anything done correctly; therefore, there is an elaborate accounting mechanism. When it goes to a private agency, it is assumed that because they are private, even though the same employees are working back and forth between the system, they know how to do the job competently, so they don't spend as much time being accountable. So, I have a problem with the different standards of accountability in that regard.

The other issue is -- as long as we are dealing with the issue of accountability, which has not been spoken about here -- my feeling about accountability is the management team and the Department are accountable to me and to the clients I serve. This has been turned around and somehow says that I am accountable to the Department for the client and his behavior. I think the workers in the field have to begin to say, "This is not the case. This Department, this society, and the citizens of this State have some responsibility to us as workers in protective services, and to the families that we serve." That's real accountability.

The accountability of how many forms were filled out, and when "this" was done, and when "that" was done, is one kind of

accountability which ensures the flow of Federal dollars. But, where is the accountability to me? The issue people brought up earlier was about support. There really is a problem here. People do feel alone. If something goes wrong, you will be the sacrificial goat. In the private system, if a company is not performing properly the stockholders vote the management out. When something is not functioning properly in DYFS, they put out the worker. We have to start saying that this whole scope of accountability and the whole way in which it is looked at is backwards, and turn it around. This is not to cast stones, but to tell you that it is very hard to say to somebody that you have no control over the amount of work you are given to do in a day, and, yet, you are held accountable for everything that happens to you in that day, and for everyone assigned to you, regardless of its appropriateness. I think it is time that this be the focus: How is the State going to provide for adequate protective services, and not how is a DYFS social worker going to provide for it?

You know, many of us are professionals in our jobs, and we have really done an outstanding job, but there are limits to what people can effectively do and still expect to stay with the Agency.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Joe, right now you don't have a steering committee at all?

MR. WALSH: No, we do not. I understand there is an appointed time for them to meet, but no one is meeting.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: What would it take to get your steering committee going?

MR. WALSH: In our office, we are in a position where there are certain major problems that can't be resolved by a steering committee until a management team and the people who affect funding and planning deal with us seriously. So, there has to be some gesture, such as an increase in staffing — which has been our constant cry — and some sensitivity to morale issues -- whether it be appropriate training for workers, or whatever.

I was involved with the committee that helped foster the new twenty-day worker training program. It was an excellent program and we had nothing before that. That is essential.

We need to see-- I guess I will back up a little bit. Symbolic communication is so important, and I think that is something we do not understand enough. When a management team took over, a cloud was created about the credibility and the competency of DYFS workers. Many of us were well trained before we came here. That said to us that they did not think we could do our job. That image, which is basically media image, was fostered and fed for the last two years: "DYFS workers can't do their jobs. They make mistakes. They are not properly trained. They are incompetent."

You know, it is very hard, when you are going out knocking on a very hostile door in a vicious neighborhood, to have a client say to you, "I read the paper, and I know you don't know what you are doing." To get no support whatsoever from the management about that, so that even your own supervisors are uncomfortable about how to handle situations because they have to watch out for the constant winds of change, creates an atmosphere where trust has simply broken down.

So, you are asking me what can be done to get that started again, we need some clear-cut, symbolic, and real communication, which makes clear that a change has come in the way workers are dealt with.

To give you an example in terms of a communication mix-up, on the one hand we get a set of memos saying, "These are the new guidelines for services. These are the kinds of things that need to be done in every case to ensure that every child is safe." These are elaborate procedures. They are very professional and appropriate procedures. They are outrageous, given the number of pages we have, to even expect people to do this, but this will be the standard against which we are held. It would require the workers to do about 15 to 20 hours of overtime per week, per worker, to do cases in that fashion.

Within a period of two weeks comes an interim policy memo on overtime usage: "It has appeared that too many workers are accumulating too much overtime. This must be reduced to a maximum of 60 hours. Those who don't reduce them within the next two months will lose their overtime." So, it is this constant kind of harassment-- And, I am not even stating that as a judgment; it is a fact. That is the way it is coming down. People are saying, "Well, fine. You have

to use up the overtime" -- which means taking off time -- "and you have to work harder."

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Is the overtime in compensation time or in money?

MR. WALSH: It is in compensation time.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: And, you never get the time off anyway?

MR. WALSH: Well, you have to fight to take off. The problem is, you tend to need the overtime after you have worked a long stretch of overtime. You need to take time off. But, the situation in our office is, over the last year it has gotten so that we are constantly in crisis. Asking to take overtime off requires supervisory approval.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: If you take the comp time off, then what happens to your caseload?

MR. WALSH: You can't take the time off without approval, you see. And, since you are constantly getting new cases, it is very hard to schedule overtime.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: You also said one thing that I was concerned about, and that is that some of these steering committees only want to do this if it is done on actual work time.

MR. WALSH: I'm sorry?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: When people serve on steering committees, or paper work production committees, or whatever, do they want to be compensated for that?

MR. WALSH: Well, in our office people were doing it on their work time. You know, obviously management works the same hours as workers do, so they would come during the workday. That is part of their responsibility to do that. It is not part of our outlined responsibilities, so we were actually winding up trying to do five days of casework in four days so we would have the extra day for the committee. People might be interested in staying later, but the point is, that people are working so many long hours now, to ask them to do one more thing in the hope that things will change -- I don't know how people will feel about that.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: We are talking about professionalism and the fact that you are professionals. Most professional organizations,

when they work on committees -- whether it be a medical society or accounting -- they are doing it on their own time. They are doing it on Saturdays or nights, or whatever. So, I think that is part of being a professional, as opposed to be a straight hourly worker.

MR. WALSH: Of course. Well, many of us are already working, through the SPRU system, on emergency response through the night. I work on our child abuse hot line at least one day a week, sometimes longer. I also have involvement with professional organizations. I am a member of NASW, and that takes a certain amount of my time. And, there are other kinds of commitments that all of us have. So, I don't think it is an issue where workers aren't interested in their professional commitments outside of the nine-to-five area. Sometimes it is just hard to work overtime for long stretches, and then not see that work out. I think that is the issue. People are willing to give the time.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Well, if it doesn't work, I can see that; you feel you are wasting your time because the steering committee has no power. I think maybe if you had a steering committee that had some power, you might be willing to work on it.

Okay, thank you. Jim, do you have any other witnesses?

MR. GALLAGHER: We have one more witness.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: One that is left, that hasn't testified so far?

MR. GALLAGHER: We have one witness that I think we would like to have address the Committee. She would like to respond to a few of the things Commissioner Albanese brought up yesterday, which I think needs response. She is Delores McDyer, from the Ocean District Office.

DELORES McDYER: My name is Delores McDyer. I am a Field Service Specialist 3 with the Ocean County District Office. I have been with the Division since June, 1973.

I just lost my train of thought immediately. It is very difficult for me to speak loud, so I will have to move close to the microphone. Does that help?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: That is just for recording; it is not an amplifier, so do the best you can.

MS. MCDYER: I heard Dr. Cahill speak about the stress level and the harassment of the workers in the Division, and the fear that is generated by the harassment. I have told you that I have been with the Division since June of 1973. In that block of time, I have seen many changes in the Division.

For two years I worked as a screening and response unit worker. This is a highly-specialized focus of the social worker's role. What we do is, we accept the immediate referral, screen out what is inappropriate for the Division to look into, and respond to the situation, either on an emergency basis or within a certain time frame.

In July of 1983, I went into a generic caseload and left the screening unit. At that same time, we lost the sense of screening in the Division. We were told that we must basically respond to every call that was focused at the Division.

If I may be very specific, I will describe certain calls, two of which I was personally involved with. There was a call regarding a child of three or four, who was seen in a car without being in a car seat, and the license plate number was given to the Division; two adolescents climbing a ladder to the loft over the family garage, we had to respond to that; and, a child, 11 years old, playing at nine o'clock at night, in front of his house, in the summertime, with a group of his friends.

Now, the reason given for those responses was, "We have to be sure. We have to make sure the child was all right."

The situation with the two children climbing the ladder to the loft over the family garage — the police were first asked to go out. They found no problem, but the worker was still told to go out, because, "we have to be absolutely sure there is no problem with those two children."

If I may ask your indulgence, I would like to explain a premise. Historically, parents, as they raise their children, are met with certain decisions, and these decisions are based upon the judgment of the parent: The decision as to when a child can go outside the house alone; the decision as to when a child can walk to a local grocery store to do an errand for his parent; the decision as to when a

daughter is old enough to go out on her first date. Basically, parents use good judgment in their decisions, and this is the responsibility and the right of the parents.

When the parent uses poor judgment, that is when the family comes under the realm, or under the jurisdiction of the Division of Youth and Family Services. We cannot prevent every situation from happening. We cannot ensure the safety of every child within the State of New Jersey. There are certain parental rights. There are certain rights and responsibilities of caretakers that preclude our involvement. I presently have 79 children under supervision. I have children in their natural home. I have children in foster care. And, I have children in institutions. A few of those cases are in the process of being terminated, and those cases that are in the process of being terminated, I feel, do not require in-depth services.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: What would terminate those cases?

MS. McDYER: Pardon me?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: What would terminate those cases, adoption?

MS. McDYER: No, sir, not at all.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: What would terminate them?

MS. McDYER: The fact that the family is stable enough to secure solutions to their own problems, and that the child is not in any danger, or at any risk.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: It is a judgment by you or someone higher than you, is that the way it is?

MS. McDYER: Primarily by the worker, by myself -- by every worker.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: So, in your judgment, when you decide it is a stable situation, you then close that case, is that it?

MS. McDYER: Yes, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Then, God forbid, something happens, you are called on the carpet because you made a mistake in judgment, is that the way it is?

MS. McDYER: Yes, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Maybe this would be a good time for you to give us -- since somebody asked about it earlier -- a typical day in your life on the job.

MS. McDYER: If I can remember every event in a typical day -- I'll try.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Take, for example, yesterday.

MS. McDYER: Yesterday was very typical. The first scheduled appointment was to visit with the natural mother of a child in a foster home. I had to pick the child up at the foster home. I had to solicit the aid of another worker to go with me in order to do so. The child is only five months old.

I had to sit with the mother and the child during the visit because there is concern for the welfare of the child even during that time frame. I also had to discuss with the mother her considering the possibility of adoption for that child. The mother became very upset with that option, or that possibility. I, therefore, had to call the foster mother and ask her if she could pick up the child. Oh, there is another step I left out. I had to solicit the aid of another worker to care for the child prior to calling up the foster mother. I drove the natural mother to her mother's home.

I came back to the office, and returned about three telephone calls. Messages were left for me during that interim.

I think I took 15 minutes, at the very most, for lunch yesterday.

I attempted to find another foster home for two boys, aged 5 and 9, because I wanted to develop a relationship between the foster parents and the natural family so that the natural family could visit the children in the foster home. I am getting tremendous resistance by the present foster family.

In the afternoon -- a co-worker just handed me a note, because we share the telephone -- there were at least eight telephone calls that I had to address.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Were they ongoing cases?

MS. McDYER: They were ongoing cases. A difficult issue was a 17-and-8-month-old girl who was living independently. That is a

program that the Division of Youth and Family Service sponsors for more mature 16 and 17 year olds. The school is refusing to allow her to enter the school district unless we have a letter from an administrative law judge, or from a lawyer, citing the statute under which she is being placed in the independent-living program. So, I had to direct that issue to my supervisor.

I had a very upset teenager on the phone yesterday, who calls me twice a week. I am probably the most stable adult figure that she has, so she will come to me immediately, and I had to listen to her to find out her needs and try and assist her.

I also had another contact with a prospective foster home for the two boys that I previously defined.

I had about a 20 minute conference with my supervisor, and I requested the day off today. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: The other 65, or so, cases -- you couldn't touch them at all yesterday. So, it could be as much as a month or so before you actually get to some of those cases?

MS. McDYER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: So, really, you have at least double the caseload you can really handle?

MS. McDYER: Yes, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Do you think there is any mechanism we can devise in the Legislature, or are there any guidelines that you yourselves, or your administration, can devise that would be able to better screen some of these cases? The three you mentioned are certainly borderline investigation type cases. Is there any way we can--

MS. McDYER: (interrupting) Those investigations, sir, are generated primarily out of fear -- the "what if?" principle.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: "CYA," that's what somebody said. Suppose you had 100 of those cases. In just one of those 100, somebody could get hurt. That justifies the other 99, I suppose.

McDYER: If I were in the middle of all I had to do yesterday, and there were an overflow from the screening and response unit, a supervisor would come to me and say, "You have to do this

referral immediately." It might be one of those situations where, when you look at it there are no allegations; there are no real causes for concern. But, you have to take that block of time out of your day to respond to that situation.

We can have a tightening up of the screening unit again, sir; we really can.

Historically, problematic families are not directed to us on only one occasion. Neither I nor any other member of my profession suggest that a child should suffer. But, what I am saying is, realistically if there is a problem within the family other agencies become aware of it and they address the issue to us.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Do you find you get a lot of clients saying they have difficulty in getting hold of you because you don't have the time to respond to phone calls?

MS. McDYER: Occasionally — just occasionally.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: You have been here most of the day and you have heard many of your co-workers express certain opinions. Do you concur that these problems are widespread, in terms of labor/management relations not being what they should be, and that the stress problems are as widespread as we heard today?

MS. McDYER: Yes, sir. If I may give you another example of the lack of support, this is a crucial and a very serious issue. We have all recently read, unfortunately, of sexually abused children in institutions in this State and in other states. Two workers in the Ocean County District Office have addressed, in memo, their concerns to the District Office Manager. We deal with the segment of society that may be pathological; that may make accusations that are not necessarily true. The memos were answered. The response was very short. Basically, the response was that the Commissioner was looking to the community for answers.

Recently, unfortunately, a worker in my office was accused by a teenager on his caseload of sexual improprieties. Not only was that worker accused, but two workers in an institution were comparably accused, as was a male caretaker. Before any investigation, any informal investigation, was made, before the child was even

interviewed, the worker was relieved of his duties on that case, which was the appropriate thing to do. But, over and above that, he was suspended from all field work, and he was suspended from all client contact. This is a worker who has worked for the Division for a number of years, someone who has certain stability and certain professionalism. He felt he was tremendously undermined, and he was given no support by the administration whatsoever.

When he was asked if there would be legal representation, he was told that may or may not be the case, but the process takes a long time and it was suggested to him that he get his own lawyer. Fortunately, as soon as a member of the prosecutor's office did interview the child, the allegations were totally unfounded. But, we as workers jeopardize ourselves every day of the week. We go into homes alone without any knowledge of the total violence in that home. We approach people without any knowledge of their total pathology. And, we put ourselves in situations of imminent danger to protect the children in the State of New Jersey.

In return we want, not necessarily protection from our supervisors and our administration, but we want recognition and support for the work we do.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Were you aware of the memos that had apparently circulated, that social workers were not supposed to be talking to the press or to legislators?

MS. McDYER: Yes, I was, and I feel that was in--

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: (interrupting) How did you react to that memo?

MS. McDYER: I felt it was in violation of my civil rights, a right guaranteed to me under the Constitution of the United States. As long as I am not disclosing confidential information about a client that I am obligated to, I have every right to do so, as does every citizen in this country.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Did you find out whether legal representation will be afforded to someone who is accused due to a job related activity?

MS. McDYER: That issue has still not been defined.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: I think that would certainly be something that would go a long way toward making the workers feel they had some support, because legal representation in cases such as the one you mentioned can cost a lot of money.

MS. McDYER: Yes, sir.

MR. GALLAGHER: We have several other workers that haven't testified, and I would just like to thank them publicly for coming down. As I said yesterday -- and I think you got a sense of it today -- there is a great deal of fear that exists in DYFS, and it took courage for workers to come down here and testify today. I want to thank those who came down and did not get a chance to testify.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: We certainly appreciate their input. As I said, we are going to have more hearings, and perhaps even go to their areas so that they can testify in their own areas.

Yes, sir?

DAVID J. HARRIS: Before you close, I have a procedural question. Can you adopt a motion today to let people get in line for funding for some additional workers?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Yes.

MR. HARRIS: I wonder, just in terms of the standing of the clients that the workers are turning down, what does that say about the condition of the citizens of the population, and I wonder how that issue will be addressed by DYFS as to the number of cases they can serve? Certainly, they need more workers. But, it seems to me that this situation is now caught up in what appears to be a political structure, at the expense of the people in the community who vitally need very competent and effective workers and managers.

We have a struggle between labor and management here, and it seems to me that your obligation -- the Committee's obligation -- and the obligation of the distinguished members of the Legislature -- You have a responsibility which goes to the issue of the conditions. If the workers are afraid to go into the houses, it would seem to me to be logical that the members of the Legislature would say, "Well, what about the people who live in that house?" What about those conditions? And, can we have some hearings, or an adjunct set of

proceedings, to look at the condition of the poor in the State who are faced with this situation? People always say, "well, that would throw money at the problem, shall we than simply throw in more caseworkers and get our piece of the action, in terms of the surplus?"

When will we face this issue in a more comprehensive sense? We have had constant turmoil in terms of this agency. It is a slow moving, easy target, and we can all get back by beating up on DYFS and the agencies that work with the poor and downtrodden. When will we face the essential issue of the gross inequities in our State, in terms of the poor and the affluent? We need, and we require, and we suggest, respectfully, sir -- today -- that our Legislature and the representatives attached thereto face this higher question of the gross inequities in our State, the conditions that people live under 24-hours a day -- not 35-hours a week. This is not an attempt to diminish their livelihoods, nor to demean what the Department stands for, it is simply to ask you, and to remind the distinguished gentlemen of this Committee and the other legislators that we need to face the larger issues.

After we throw some caseworkers at them, what shall we do in terms of the comprehensive nature of the conditions that people find themselves in in our beloved State of New Jersey?

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: You have certainly raised some serious philosophical questions that have to be addressed after we address this smaller point, of course.

For the record, may we have your name, sir?

MR. HARRIS: My name is the last name on the list, David J. Harris.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: You are from New Brunswick, right?

MR. HARRIS: Yes, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: What you have suggested, of course, would be a comprehensive analysis of poverty in general. Certainly, we can make some inroads on that, but I am not going to sit here and say I can come up with a panacea for that. We are going to try and make some inroads. Hopefully, what we have accomplished today -- and will accomplish with these hearings -- is to get the system functioning better so that the clients will at least have a better chance. Some

people make it through the system. How, I don't know, because it is certainly a tough system.

We had one witness here today who was in the system, and somehow, through struggle, she got ahead of the system; she has bettered herself through college. We are proud that she has been able to do it. Maybe she did it in spite of the system, I don't know; I'm going to have to ask her that some day. But, if we can accomplish something with additional caseworkers, if we can get their morale better so that they can do a better job, the clients will be benefited, and then we can tackle some of the more comprehensive issues you are talking about.

We will have statewide hearings, and I welcome you to come.

THEODORE H. FREEMAN: Mr. Chairman, if I may, my name is Ted Freeman. I am the President of the State Council of Urban Leagues.

Yesterday you made the statement that today you wanted to start looking for solutions.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Right.

MR. FREEMAN: We have had a lot of problems enunciated, and the last thing I want to do is to do some focusing. There are a lot of angry people in this room, and they have a right to be angry. They are in a system that is very demanding, trying, troublesome, and always having trouble, historically.

Because of those particular problems, it becomes harder to focus on what some major concerns are. One of the biggest problems we have concerning these individuals working in the field is the fact that their caseloads are too large, and there is a blockage in the flow of services to the clients.

One of the things that has been happening over the last year and a half is — and I think we have to continue to question this whether you give them additional caseloads or not, they are still going to have this problem — the utilization of community services.

Now, to give you a quick example, I am from Hudson County. I am the President of the Urban League of Hudson County. We have contracted with DYFS to the tune of \$139,000 over the last year, to assist them in carrying out their mandate. Two hundred and thirty-nine

of their clients have been serviced my my agency. That means there will still be an individual, such as this young lady right here, who has a problem with trying to figure out how to get to an individual. A phone call can be made, referral can be made, and services can be utilized. What has happened is, the DYFS workers have become caught with this problem of feeling that they have to do this all by themselves without availing themselves of resources that are there.

I think the other thing that has come up is that when you are caught in that type of frustrating position, it becomes very difficult to determine where to focus your anger. And, what I have been hearing yesterday and today is that they are frustrated. Their daily work is twenty-three feet long. Six years ago it was forty-six feet long, and we still have to move in that particular area.

How do you reduce caseloads? Yes, the first thing with additional case work is, "We will assist," but you have to begin to better utilize the services in the community, and that trend has begun. So, I think we have to begin to look at the entire problem. I am going to testify at the next opportunity available, since I am in this too. I didn't want to leave here with us being in a state of confusion, a state of confusion that has staff looking at management, and management looking at the Legislature.

The Legislature has a responsibility. It has the responsibility of allocating the necessary dollars to make sure the mandate can be carried out. The mandate of DYFS is to protect children and families, and there are no if's, and's, or but's about that. They have a charge in this State.

Organizations such as Urban League, and other agencies, have a supportive role, and recently they have begun to be utilized. Up to a year and one-half ago, we had no contact with DYFS. There was nothing going on in terms of DYFS' relationship with the community in any substantial proportion. I think that you are going to have this burnout factor increase unless we do some focusing. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLYNN: Thank you. We will notify everybody on the list as to the next hearing, so everybody who did not get reached today will have an opportunity to be reached.

This concludes the hearing.

(Hearing Concluded)

APPENDIX

Testimony of Betty Wilson, President
Center for Non-Profit Corporations

Before the
Assembly Oversight Committee

October 22, 1984

The Center for Non-Profit Corporations is a statewide advocacy organization for non-profit groups in New Jersey. We are here today to speak from the community perspective on the needs of the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS).

Demand for services and increased public awareness of child abuse have combined to create caseworker overload and burnout. Just note that reports of child abuse alone have doubled in the last several years. All of these reports must be investigated and where substantiated, casework begins. According to information we've seen, at least half of the reported cases are borne out and require caseworker followup.

The legislature has increased support for caseworkers but, unfortunately despite your support, DYFS has not been able to keep up.

We don't say this as a criticism. Quite the contrary. Who could predict that reports of child abuse would skyrocket from 200,000 to over 400,000 in a few short years?

This unprecedented increase in casework is why we're here seeking your support for a supplemental appropriation for DYFS. This current and immediate need could not be foreseen. But now that it's known, it requires our attention and action.

In pursuing this solution we urge you also to keep at the forefront the historic partnership between DYFS and the community based organizations. These community organizations are the essential resource for the DYFS caseworker. It is the community non-profit groups that the caseworker turns to in working with children and families. Without the community groups, such as child care centers, after school programs, specialized programs for battering parents, and group homes for example, our caseworkers would be overwhelmed with problems and needs with no place to get help.

It's a symbiotic relationship and both partners must be strong and vital to serve our families and children.

To close I want to say that in the 12 years I've worked with and followed DYFS and its predecessor, the Bureau of Children's Services, I've not before seen such a rich blend of community groups serving as equal partners with the state to deliver needed services to the people of our state.

We welcome your reliance on the community and the trust and respect you've placed in us. We need your continued support to stay strong.

Right now, the other partner, the state, ^{also} needs some shoring up and we ask your help. Out of a strong partnership, New Jersey's children and families will be the winners.



ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDREN OF NEW JERSEY

17 Academy Street, Suite 709
Newark, New Jersey 07102

October 22, 1984

TO: Assemblyman William E. Flynn, Chairman
Members, Assembly Legislative Oversight Committee

FROM: Ciro A. Scalera, Executive Director
Cecilia Zalkind, Staff Associate
Association for Children of New Jersey

We are here today on behalf of the Association for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) to present testimony on the issue of the operation, management and needs of the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). ACNJ is a statewide citizen-based advocacy organization whose goal is to ensure that those systems which affect the lives of New Jersey's children are both effective and responsive.

Child welfare in general, and child abuse and neglect, in specific, have long been concerns of ACNJ. Our 1981 research report, Beneath the Labels, examined children who had had prior extensive contacts with the DYFS system and made several concrete recommendations concerning the need to develop and implement a system of comprehensive services in the community to provide assistance to maintain and strengthen families at the point when serious problems are first identified.

ACNJ has also long advocated and supported the need for immediate intervention and response to reported incidents of child abuse and neglect. We were very involved in the passage of the Dodd law several years ago and have remained active in this area. We are thus most concerned with the staggering increase in the number of child abuse and neglect cases reported, projected to reach 45,000 referrals by the end of 1984.

Our purpose here today is thus two-fold. We support the Division's need for more resources due to the increased demand upon their already overburdened staff and services. We must, however, balance this support with the need for DYFS accountability. We cannot advocate for new Division resources without some accountability for both these new and already existing resources.

There are many dimensions to this question of accountability. One certainly concerns DYFS central office staff and involves their follow through on new policy directions they have proposed which are designed to increase the availability of concrete services in local communities for children and families in their care. Another certainly involves their maintaining adequate outreach and dialogue with their case worker and supervisory staff to insure that not only are needed resources

developed and utilized but also that internal worker needs and working condition issues are addressed. Yet still another dimension of accountability rests with the case workers to give, as they presently are, their utmost effort to meet the present crisis and, with the caseworker's union, to give to the administration the opportunity to address these existing problems.

What is not needed now, is posturing and attribution of fault by either the administration or the case worker union. This will benefit no one and can ultimately be harmful to children. I would hope that in these hearings in addition to highlighting problems and complaints, that individuals make positive recommendations to deal with the problems they present. In our view, one of the real problems at work here is the fact that at precisely the same time that new initiatives are being implemented in the system, the increase of reports of abuse and neglect and the concomitant pressure this causes on the system are also being felt. This situation is definitely one that with some timely additional resources, dialogue, and clear policy direction, can be addressed.

We would like to cite a case in point. The controversy surrounding the Commitment to Change policy document can show how all "sides", if you will, are in basic agreement on some of the fundamental steps that are needed to improve our child welfare system.

THE NEED FOR CHANGE IN THE POLICY DIRECTION OF DYFS

In January, 1984, the Division's Commitment to Change policy report set forth a comprehensive set of recommendations to change the approach and actual delivery of services it provides to the children, families and communities of New Jersey. The objectives and goals of this initiative were to increase prevention services, to develop comprehensive and unified community service supports, to increase the Division's responsiveness to families in need of services, and to enhance community involvement of the Division at the local level. ACNJ, along with many other community agencies and groups, participated in this process and endorsed these goals and objectives as sound policy. Because of the nature of this commitment in part, ACNJ can now support the additional resources requested by the Division.

One of the most basic underlying problems that has been documented by most people that have looked at our child welfare system is the lack of resources or concrete services in the community to help troubled families. There simply are not enough of the kinds of programs and services that families need.

One of the more recent reports in this area which addressed this issue is the Barriers to Permanency Planning Report released in September, 1983, by the New Jersey State Child Placement Advisory Council. I understand you will hear from a representative of this Council later. I commend this report and its recommendations to you. It covers from all perspectives issues related to staffing, working conditions, paper work, and needed policies. On this lack of resources problem it states:

"Caseworkers in 11 offices mentioned the lack of community resources as a major factor limiting their capacity to

effectively serve children who are placed and their families. The lack of housing was the most pressing problem, mentioned by caseworkers in six offices. Workers observed that sometimes the sole reason for placement is a horrendous housing situation; in some cases, children are not able to return to their families because of the inability to find adequate housing. Other resources mentioned as lacking or insufficient were homemaker services (three offices), adequate counseling services (two offices), legal aid (one office), financial assistance (one office), services for adolescents (one office, and volunteers to provide companionship to clients (one office). Caseworkers in five offices mentioned a severe gap in community resources generally, but were not specific."

Another significant problem in this area and again I quote:

"A very prominent concern of workers is the negative view of DYFS held by the general public and other agencies and community groups with whom DYFS works. Workers felt that this negative image seriously hampered their efforts to function effectively. Not only is it destructive to caseworker morale; it also blocks the collaboration between DYFS and various community organizations which is necessary in working with children and their families."

It is with at least these two fundamental problems in mind that ACNJ and other organizations promoted and endorsed a community partnership model for DYFS in our state. In our view it is this approach that will ultimately lead to the development of resources that families and caseworkers need and it is this approach that will improve the image and climate in which DYFS operates.

ACNJ SUPPORT FOR DIVISION REQUESTS

The Division is requesting an additional 354 caseworks and 150 supervisory and clerical support positions, increased state aid, and a \$7.6 million child care package that includes an increase in the number of state-sponsored day care slots, transportation incentives, additional licensing staff and a statewide information and referral system. ACNJ strongly supports these Division requests. More staff is essential to respond to the tremendous increase in child abuse reports. Increased state aid, earmarked for residential services, foster parents, homemaker services, etc., is necessary to meet the increased demands for services to families under Division supervision. In addition child care has become a necessity for a large percentage of families in New Jersey which merits a strong State role and responsibility.

ONGOING DIVISION ACCOUNTABILITY NEEDED TO MAINTAIN EFFECTIVENESS OF NEW RESOURCES

We believe, however, that these increased resources must be utilized appropriately. Additional staff positions must be deployed to those areas of greatest need. Statewide statistics indicate that certain areas of the state, such as Newark and Camden, have a disproportionate

percentage of child abuse referrals. We also believe that physical support issues such as office space and availability of cars must be addressed to insure maximum utilization of caseworkers in the field.

Management of community support and services is also essential. Statistics indicate that too large a large percentage of children are placed in out-of-home care because their parents have alcohol, drug abuse and housing problems. At least one position in each District Office should be utilized as a community resource specialist to identify, organize and develop community support services in areas such as housing and, housing treatment programs. More direct services to families are essential to prevent placement and to reduce the need for Division intervention.

The Division has already begun to move in this direction, but it is difficult to implement changes at a time when protective service demands are rising. Although it might be natural to forego a community specialist position at the present time, it is important to maintain this position despite the immediate problems. Ultimately, the identification of community resources and a system to utilize them will take the pressure off the individual DYFS workers.

It will also help to address what may be a serious issue in the future. The Division has begun to make efforts to develop intensive, supportive services to families through purchase of service contracts with community agencies and district office directives, but there has been no assessment of how such services have been utilized and coordinated to increase their accessibility to those children and families in need. This issue must be addressed now.

DYFS ACCOUNTABILITY NEEDED TO IMPROVE ONGOING OPERATIONS

Although we are supporting the Division requests with certain accountability recommendations, there is still a need for further accountability in other ongoing areas. When the new Management Team came into place in the Division, one of the programs it announced was a quality assurance program designed to periodically measure the quality and quantity of services. ACNJ supported this initiative since one of the major recommendations of Beneath the Labels was that the Division undertake a review of its caseload to identify the needs of its children in relation to its existing services and placement resources. To our knowledge, this has not yet been accomplished. We understand that an initial internal quality assurance review was conducted which uncovered many problems. This report, as well as other studies recently completed, have not been reported to the public. This program, including recent additions such as a Citizen Action Line, must be maintained and reports must be made available to the public on their findings.

Another ongoing accountability system has been the Child Placement Review Boards. ACNJ originally supported the Child Placement Review Act to ensure that those children in foster care receive goal-oriented permanency planning casework services. A similar system is presently in place in most other states. The Division must maintain a strong cooperative effort with the Child Placement Review Boards to

ensure that plans for and services to children in placement are monitored and implemented.

One other broad accountability system is permanency planning services to children in out-of-home placement. We are concerned that without a renewed commitment to permanency services, the increased demands of the child abuse and neglect caseloads will engulf those services to children in placement.

The Division must re-emphasize goal-oriented permanency planning through caseworker training, the maintenance of separate and discrete permanency caseloads, and increased support for permanency services. More attention should also be given to beginning permanency services when a child first comes into care and not when he or she has been in placement for a year or more.

Although the focus on protective services is essential, we must also look at what is happening in other areas. Over six months ago, new initiatives were announced to recruit and retain foster homes. We are concerned whether or not these goals are being accomplished in light of the present demands upon the Division. It is our understanding that in certain district offices this is not happening and that the automated statewide foster home information file has not been utilized in a way to improve the accessibility of foster care.

ACNJ is certainly sensitive to the tremendous pressure and demands put upon line workers. We are aware of their needs and fully support the Division requests for increased staff and support. Our emphasis upon DYFS accountability, however, reflects our strong concern that positive policies and plans are no more than that until they are actively implemented.

The child welfare system is complex and presently under much pressure to meet the demands of child abuse. But it is not a system where one may focus on one area to the detriment of another. Ultimately, the demand for accountability will result not only in a benefit to our children and families but will also inure to the benefit of the caseworker by insuring that needed resources are developed.

Testimony Before the New Jersey State Legislature

October 22, 1984

The DYFS mandate is perhaps the most critical, most demanding, and most elusive in the State of New Jersey. We must protect our children. That is as basic, as fundamental, as compelling as any other priority there could possibly be under the stars. Yet how difficult it is to do so, and how painful it is when we fail. Each time any of us reads in the paper about a child who has been abused in any way, I am sure we are all touched and all moved to try harder, to look further, to be ever vigilant, and to prevent such hurt .

I am here today to speak in three capacities, first, as the Executive Director of Family Service of Burlington County; second, as the Convener of the Southern Regional Council of Human Services; and third as Chair of the NASW Task Force on Families and Children.

The responsibility for our children lies with each of us in all of our communities. It certainly can not be conveniently assigned, and then forgotten, to a state bureaucracy.

Perhaps the best written document we have had spelling out this philosophy comes from the Mission Statement put out by DYFS this past summer. In it we have a clear understanding of the importance of shared responsibilities with the state, the community, families, and the individual, with no partner paying any heavier a role than the other. We need

to develop this sense of partnership and this sense of power, for ironically out of this kind of power we find one of the most abiding answers to child abuse.

Our Agency has provided intensive services to families with child abuse, for the past 10 years, funded first by the Federal government and now by the State of New Jersey. We have come to be very familiar with the dynamics of child abuse. Perhaps the single largest common denominator ingredient is a sense of powerlessness the parent feels in a mass media society - powerlessness at work, powerlessness from being unemployed and even powerlessness in making my child behave. From this frustration we have seen some of the most tragic cases of broken families and child abuse.

Now, today, the issue that you must address as our legislators is to oversee how we are doing. Very frankly the jury is out. On the one hand we have a document that represents the best of all thinking; on an other hand we have 'burned-out, over-worked, DYFS workers. And, we have just touched the beginning of full partnership of community services to undergird and help families at risk and even to speak in terms of prevention.

We are at a crossroads. We must be careful that we do not establish rivalry among the various sectors involved in the solution to the problem. We must nurture community involvement at the same time that we support the over-worked DYFS case worker. We must be sure that the workers we are sending out on the most difficult, frustrating cases have

solid training in human services, for example, that they have a B.S.W. or are supervised by an M.S.W., people who have background and insight into the helping process.

Finally we must support each other financially, morale-wise and in every other way. Good morale comes from a sense of power, commitment, and purpose as well as from a working partnership. Sometimes there is a gap between our words and our actions. Any of us who is a parent can relate to that. We must work cooperatively. We must support each other. Each time a child is hurt we are diminished and because we have committed ourselves to prevent child abuse, we face that possibility on a daily basis. In order to get beyond the risk, the dangers, and the disappointments we must help families to break long standing patterns of abuse, literally a life and death struggle. The stakes are high and it is our children that hang in the balance. We must support DYFS, the community sector, and families at risk. We must protect our children.

Thank you.



Mary Wells, A.C.S.W.
Executive Director of Family Service
of Burlington County
Convener of the Southern Regional
Council of Human Services
Chair of the N.A.S.W. Task Force on
Families and Children

State of New Jersey
Assembly Oversight Committee

I am pleased to have this opportunity to address this Committee on an issue which I believe to be of crucial importance to the delivery of child welfare services by this state. The Committee should be commended for affording an opportunity for professionals in the field to address the issue of caseload sizes of social service workers in this forum.

As a staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union's Children's Rights Project I approach this issue from a slightly different perspective than others who will address you. I approach it as one who has litigated issues concerning foster care in several jurisdictions around the country. I would like to share with you the increasing willingness of both state and federal courts to intervene on behalf of children to ensure that they receive necessary and appropriate services.

It has long been recognized that the State, as parens patriae, has an overriding right and responsibility to protect the welfare of children. But the state may only intervene in the life of a family for compelling reasons -- to ensure the physical or psychological well being of a child where a clear danger is present. Once it does so, it is legally required to act in a responsible manner.

In recent years the federal courts have become increasingly willing to enforce this responsibility and to ensure that children receive necessary and appropriate services and are protected from harm while in state custody. For example:

In New Mexico a federal judge held that the state could be found liable for violating children's statutory and constitutional rights by its failure to adopt and implement permanency plans for foster children. The case was resolved by a far reaching consent decree mandating specific policy changes to ensure that children exit the foster-care system within reasonable periods of time.

In Kentucky, the Department of Social Services was found to be a negligent guardian for its failure to make permanent meaningful plans for children in its custody or to achieve those plans by any reasonable means. After the court refused to dismiss the case, a consent decree was entered providing timetables and other guidelines to ensure that children did not languish in foster care.

In Kansas City, Missouri, a federal judge ruled that the Division of Family Services could be found liable for violating foster children's constitutional right to be protected from harm while in foster care. That case also resulted in a consent decree. The decree mandates changes in the Division's practices in virtually every aspect of foster home care, including the licensing of foster homes, caseload size, training of foster parents and social service workers and provision of medical or other essential services to foster children.

In Minnesota, a federal judge has refused to dismiss a lawsuit brought by parents alleging a failure by the Community Services Department, Child Protection Division to follow child abuse regulations requiring immediate investigation of complaints, and offer of social services and an attempt to preserve family life whenever possible.

Several state and federal courts have awarded damages to foster children who were physically or psychologically harmed while in state custody; including a case in federal court in New York City where a former foster child who was sexually abused by her foster parent received a jury award of \$225,000 based upon the agency's failure to properly supervise her care.

These dynamic legal developments will undoubtedly result in better lives for many children. The state, as it has been in the areas of mental health, mental retardation and prisons, is now being held accountable by the judiciary to protect children from harm and ensure that they receive necessary and appropriate services.

An essential component of such services are caseload sizes that are low enough to permit the social service worker to spend the necessary time investigating allegations of abuse and neglect, providing services to the family to prevent removal of the children, or to supervise the child's placement in foster care to ensure that the problems which necessitated placement are rectified as quickly as possible and the child may be returned home or adopted.

Although the necessity of manageable caseloads has long been recognized by social work professionals, both the Child Welfare League of America and the American Public Welfare Association include this as part of their standards for the delivery of child welfare services, historically almost every public agency has suffered from the effects of unmanageable caseload sizes. The consequences, all too often, result in children being physically or emotionally harmed, sometimes fatally; as well as a demoralized staff and high staff turnover.

Therefore several recent court orders have mandated maximum caseload sizes. The federal district court of Massachusetts, in Lynch v. King^{1/} found:

A clear theme emerged from the testimony of these Department employees. Because of

pressures created by heavy caseloads, they are relegated to responding to crises in their cases. They do not have time to engage in appropriate planning and review, or to furnish the ongoing supervision and services they feel are necessary to assure appropriate care for foster children and to improve the conditions in the homes from which they were removed.

* * *

Most of these social workers testified, on the basis of their experience, that their failure to plan for and deliver appropriate services was causing harm to the children -- including children in foster care -- under their supervision. Some provided examples of cases in which harm befell foster children. as a result of lack of proper attention and provision of appropriate services. . . . Moreover, files of actual cases revealed several instances in which children in foster care suffered serious emotional and physical injury -- and even death -- that could have been prevented. Only less serious injury or none would have been sustained had the Department taken reasonable steps to ensure the safety and welfare of these children.^{2/}

On the basis of this testimony the federal court mandated that the Department may not assign to its social workers a number of cases that is greater than they are able to carry and fulfill their obligations under Title IV-A of the Social Security Act. He further ordered that if the Department failed to abide by that or other aspects of his order, he would prohibit further federal funding to the Department through the Social Security Act.

Maximum caseload sizes have similarly been mandated by federal court orders in Kansas City, Missouri^{3/} and for the

^{1/} 550 F.Supp. 325 (D. Mass. 1982), aff'd sub nom Lynch v. Dukakis, 709 F.2d 504 (1st Cir. 1983).

^{2/} 550 F.Supp. at 336.

^{3/} G.L. v. Zumwalt, 564 F.Supp. 1030 (W.D.Mo. 1983).

entire foster care system in New Mexico.^{4/}

In the Kansas City case the Division of Family Services agreed to the following provisions in a consent decree designed to protect children from harm while they are in foster care.

IX. Caseload Size

A. Defendants shall prohibit excessive caseloads which prevent social service workers from providing adequate services to children and natural parents and from providing appropriate supervision and support of foster parents. To that end defendants shall adopt and implement the following caseload limits:

B. Caseload Size of Social Service Workers

1. DFS social service workers should never have caseloads that exceed twenty (20) to twenty-five (25) children per social service worker. Any exception to the provisions of this section shall only be on a temporary and emergency basis.

2. If a social service worker leaves DFS, that caseload will be assigned to other social service workers within a maximum of two (2) weeks.

3. A supervisor shall only be responsible for a caseload during the time that it takes to reassign cases as provided in ¶B.2, supra.

C. Ratio of Social Service Workers to Supervisors

The ratio of immediate supervisors to social service workers should be seven to one to ensure adequate supervision. Supervisors should meet with social service workers at least twice a month.

The New Mexico Human Services Department, in acknowledging that children in its custody have "rights to fair, reasonable and

^{4/} Joseph A. v. New Mexico Department of Human Services, 575 F.Supp. 346 (D.N.Mex. 1983).

timely decision-making with regard to access to adoption, and to fair, reasonable and adequate procedures and practices necessary to insure access to permanent adoptive homes" agreed to the following provisions:

II. Supervision and Case Loads

A. Absent documented exigent circumstances, social service caseworkers with responsibility for any foster care cases for whom the permanent plan is return home or adoption or for whom there is no permanent plan shall have a case load of no more than twenty families, with a maximum of thirty-five children in foster care. The Department shall develop and provide to Plaintiffs for comment a reasonable formula for weighing different types of social services cases and shall use such formula to determine the maximum caseload size for mixed caseloads equivalent to the maximum set herein. Any changes in the formula shall be provided to Plaintiffs for comment prior to implementation. All children who enter HSD custody shall be assigned a social services caseworker.

B. Supervisors shall be responsible for supervising the work of no more than six (6) children's services caseworkers. . . . In the event that a caseworker leaves, his/her caseload must be reassigned as soon as possible, but no later than two months after the caseworker leaves. During the interim, the caseload shall not be uncovered.

I do not want to suggest to this committee that maximum caseloads are a panacea, for many other elements such as training of workers and clear policy guidelines, are also necessary to ensure the provision of quality services and to protect children.^{5/} But realistic, maximum caseloads, determined on the basis of the nature of the caseload, e.g. protective services,

5/ For example, see G.L. v. Zumwalt, Joseph A. v. New Mexico and Lynch v. King.

preventive services, etc. are absolutely necessary to enable social service workers to adequately perform the difficult tasks which are required of them.

I thank you for this opportunity to share these concerns with this Committee. I hope that this perspective will be of assistance in your deliberations.

Lauren Anderson
Staff Counsel
Children's Rights Project
American Civil Liberties Union
132 W. 43rd Street
New York, New York 10036

October 23, 1984



PUERTO RICAN CONGRESS OF NEW JERSEY

CASTO MALDONADO
Chairman
MARINA A. PADOVANI
Executive Director

STATEMENT

BY THE PUERTO RICAN CONGRESS
OF NEW JERSEY, INC.

TO THE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
OF THE NEW JERSEY STATE LEGISLATURE

PRESENTED BY: Marina A. Padovani
Executive Director
October 22, 1984

Honorable members of the "Oversight Committee, I want to thank you for allowing me to appear before you today to address the issue of the caseworker load of DYFS and related management policies. My name is Marina A. Padovani, I am the Executive Director of the Puerto Rican Congress of New Jersey, Inc. (PRC), located at 515 South Broad Street, Trenton.

As you are aware, the convergence of several trends in this region, as well as the recent, highly publicized cases of child abuse, have prompted heightened interest in prevention services and foster care placement, and have also contributed to an increase in reporting of child abuse and neglect cases (20,000 in 1982, 26,000 in 1983). The PRC is sensitive to the fact that this increase in reported cases, coupled with a reduction of resources available for responding to them, is causing severe strains on investigative units and treatment services. Also, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 requires public child welfare agencies to provide preventive services in order to limit the use of foster care.

The PRC is concerned that this increased workload may create other problems which may be reflected not only on individual workers' burn-out, but also in reducing or hampering the quality of delivery of services to those in need.

The recently issued Department of Human Services Mission Statement and Service Principles states that: "the mission of the social services system, including private non-profit providers, county welfare and other local government agencies and state agencies, is to: (1) protect vulnerable children and adults from abuse, neglect or exploitation; (2) support family preservation and community living; and (3) prevent family violence and disruption". One of the Human Services Department Service Principles is also

stated as "an individual, family and community approach to services, which contributes to the growth of individuals and emphasizes the maintenance of individuals within their communities..."

The Commissioner of Human Services, Honorable George J. Albanese, before the Joint Appropriations Committee of the New Jersey Legislature on May 10, 1984, stated that: "Our new focus will encompass a new approach to old problems. It will no longer respond to social problems, but will attack the causes and address the symptoms. Our new focus will be prevention. We will need the private sector, the public sector, and other state departments..."

We are glad to see that the Commissioner's new approach will involve the community and will place an emphasis in prevention, since in the past, most of the efforts of the State Human Services Department have been directed toward the general population in understanding how to identify and treat, rather than prevent, child abuse. There has been little attention focused on child abuse prevention and treatment among minority groups, especially Hispanics. Identification of child abuse and neglect is difficult enough within a community sharing a basic definition of abuse; the problem is increased when different cultures come in contact and differ in their beliefs about child-rearing practices, including concepts of child abuse. Previous efforts in New Jersey to address Hispanic issues as they relate to child abuse and neglect have been mostly geared to sensitize non-Hispanic professional to Hispanic cultural differences through in-service training. To our knowledge, there has never been an attempt made to involve Hispanics in child abuse and neglect primary prevention programs. Looking at the rate in which the Hispanic population is growing in New Jersey, we can assume that the effort in addressing child abuse and neglect from a Hispanic per-

spective is still in an embryonic stage.

The 1980 Census reported 491,833 Hispanics in New Jersey compared with 288,488 in 1970. Individuals of Spanish Speaking origin or parentage are the second largest minority group in New Jersey. The single largest Hispanic group in the State are Puerto Ricans, who represent 49.5% of the Hispanic population, followed by Cubans, who are 16.4%, Mexican Americans 2.7% and other Hispanics 31.4%. The data on New Jersey Hispanics affirms the notion that Hispanics are among our poorest citizens. While one out of every 15 New Jersey families lives in poverty, one out of every three Hispanic families is either poor or working poor.

Of all Hispanic families, 31.2% have children under the age of 14 years and 66.2% have children under the age of 18 years. Female headed households represent 25.6% of Hispanic families. Of these Hispanic female headed households, 81.9% have children under 18 years of age. While the rest of the state is growing older, Hispanics in New Jersey are still a very young population. They are in need of adequate prevention services more than ever before.

It is common knowledge that abuse and neglect of children can occur in any type of family composition regardless of race, ethnic background, socio-economic status, education and other factors; and is not the sole misfortune of any group or class. However, even though any one can be abusive or neglectful, the literature suggests that given certain conditions or situations. the likelihood of such behavior occurring is increased. Among the most notable factors identified which can make a family at risk are: isolation, lack of parenting skills, lack of economic resources, alcohol and/or drug abuse, special needs children,

and having been abused or neglected as a child. Anyone of these factors or the combination of them, have proven to increase the stresses placed on family members and their inability to cope effectively with the responsibility of child rearing.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights report "Puerto Ricans in the Continental United States: An Uncertain Future" clearly places Puerto Ricans, the largest Hispanic group in the state, beneath the bottom of the socio-economic ladder based on quality of life indices. We can infer from the data related to causal factors of child abuse and neglect that Hispanics are particularly made vulnerable to incur in child abuse and neglect situations because they are involved in crisis, life transitions and chronic privations. The potential for child abuse and neglect is real.

Besides the lack of human resources needed in the public system, there are also no models available for providing child abuse and neglect prevention programs to the Hispanic community; programs are in English and are not applicable to the Hispanic culture and norms. Popular mainstram programs, such as Positive Parenting and Parent Effectiveness Training, hold values and practices that are incongruent with the Hispanic culture.

Currently, the services to Hispanic children and their families is inadequate. The human services system was designed to serve other groups long before the Hispanic population was large enough to warrant special consideration. In order to develop relevant and functional services to this unique client group, service providers must understand that services and programs must generally be available in Spanish and that public servants must also take in consideration cultural attitudes and norms. Even though the Department of Human Services is making an effort to recruit Hispanic workers,

there is still an insufficient number of professionals in the system who can speak Spanish and work with Hispanic families in a culturally responsive manner.

Like Commissioner Albanese, we also believe that in an era of declining resources, activities promoting private and voluntary efforts are critically important.

Therefore, the Puerto Rican Congress calls on this Committee to support a budget appropriation that will enable the DYFS-DHS to:

- hire the necessary personnel to provide support and to reduce the workers' caseload to an "acceptable" level that will allow clients to receive the services they so desperately need,
- provide necessary resources to develop and implement community-sponsored purchase of services contracts, since community organizations have an existing natural network, a built-in trust, in the community, and because the Hispanic organizations also have the bilingual capacity, which facilitates the development of the "partnership" referred to above.

Furthermore, we recommend to DYFS-DHS officials to make a sincere effort to hire Hispanic (bilingual-bicultural) personnel as part of those newly hired, so that we can further insure that Hispanics will receive the quality of services we are entitled to.

The result should be a partnership in improving the functioning of the public and private system in better serving Hispanic children and families in the state of New Jersey.

Thank you.

PROCEED, INC.

STATEMENT

By the Puerto Rican Community Education
and Economic Development, Inc.

To the Oversight Committee of the
New Jersey State Legislature

Presented by: José A. Morales
Executive Director

October 22, 1984

Allow me to admit that as an advocate of equity and quality service for Hispanics, I really had sincere reservations about the DYFS Management Team's intentions and purpose for the reorganization and its ability to implement same.

In following its planning process and concrete actions, I encountered honesty in the philosophy and purpose, as well as a highly qualified group of individuals attempting to bring change not through the traditional vertical approach, which always affords to leave behind a segment of the human service delivery network, but through a comprehensive horizontal one, seeking to utilize the totality of the network to its fullest potential.

The recognition of local community based organizations and other elements in the private sector, as "partners" in the service delivery system is a major achievement.

Even though previous administrations attempted to incorporate community based organizations within the Human Services Department's network, they fail to recognize these as an equal, and moreover, as genuine resources capable of assisting its clientele become self-reliant and self-sufficient.

The current increase in the DYFS-DO's caseload is a result of a wide variety of factors, of which not all have been within the control of the Management Team. (For example, the media coverage of child abuse and neglect cases has re-awakened people's interest in the issue.)

I concede that the new approach ("Family and Community Services") is partly responsible. Yet, I have to pinpoint that there are now

more readily available community resources, and it is the caseworker's responsibility to reach into the community for them, rather than perceiving themselves as the only agent capable to bring positive change. I also have to underline that we are just beginning to feel the effects of the transition to a family and community approach to services. It is our responsibility to facilitate it, in a way such, that our misgivings do not destroy or stagnate what we have already achieved.

We have to be supportive not because "government" is attempting to "govern", but because in our hearts we know that the changes were needed and they are being channeled in the right direction.

Support should not only mean funding, which in this case is necessary, but also patience and cooperation as well as an understanding of purpose.

As a Hispanic, I still have questions concerning service definitions, county planning processes and affirmative action, but I am in support of a system that is sincerely attempting to best meet the needs of individuals and families within their own communities.

Honorable Committee Members:

My name is Hugh Kilmer; I speak here as an individual.

Over the past several years, I have been involved with three statewide organizations which have received especially effective help as a result of the management team headed by Mr. Blatner at the Division of Youth and Family Services. Each of these organizations, as of this month, is reaching a turning point in its activity; the DYFS role has been crucial, in each case.

APL-NJ (Accountants for the Public Interest) worked earlier on several accounting-related problems which concerned DYFS alone. After the management team took charge, we were introduced to representatives of other divisions, and to representatives of the Department's Contracting and Auditing offices so that we could provide some suggestions both for contracting and for auditing. We expect to work with the Department, now, on implementation problems which may arise for provider agencies.

Since DYFS was first apprised of the existence of the New Jersey Network for Family Life Education, Ms. Pamela Wentworth has been the division's representative to the group. Her contributions have been consistently valuable. We were also especially glad to have Mr. Ray Cmielski offer us the training office's new material on child sexual abuse at the Conference we held in conjunction with the State Department of Education on October 3 and 4.

The third organization is the Statewide Protective Services Coalition with which Mr. Blatner himself has worked directly over the past two years. He has shown great interest in our efforts to coordinate information about abuse and neglect, and about preventive and treatment programs which are available -- or which need to be developed -- on a county by county, or on a statewide basis. He has taken part in our conferences (serving twice as principal speaker). It is largely because of his encouragement that we

have decided to maintain, and -- if possible -- to increase our efforts, despite the loss of our staff and our funding.

The concern for all our children, which is shown in the division's new mission statement, is a good reflection of the professional work which is in process, and of the community relations which make that work especially fruitful. In many individual counties, it is clear that a far greater sense of confidence in the Division is now in place than there has been previously -- thus permitting division personnel to do their work with less of the semi-automatic distrust and opposition that there has been in the past: with far less expectation that money appropriated for the Department, and therefore the Division, would be spent for administration rather than on programs. With this confidence, I can clearly approach this Committee with my request that the existing policies of the management team be made more effective on the program level by assignment of more funds.

Recent developments, especially in Day Care and in institutional programs, have pointed up increased reports of incidences of abuse which may, to some extent, reflect actual increase in their number, but which even more certainly indicate a growing awareness on the part of New Jersey citizens that these cases exist, that they are far too frequent, and that they are serious matters. To deal with this concern, we need -- as an issue of second importance -- money to provide excellent training for DIFS program personnel and for providers. This training will enable people not only to recognize the problem of abuse, but to provide preventive programs consistent with the Department's long-standing policy of primary reliance on family strengths, and on restoring those strengths where they

are lacking. Still more important, we need the money to provide just salaries to DYFS and provider personnel on the immediate program level who -- as we now realize even more strongly than before -- must have very sophisticated skills, as well as admirable character, to offer to their charges the services which our people clearly need.

The management team itself and the programs it is using are very helpful indeed; what we need to do now is to make sure that the personnel on the front lines have the resources in training and in remuneration to keep them there, and to make them effective while they are there.

Hugh Kilmer

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

by

Joan M. Wright, Director
Division on Women
N. J. Department of Community Affairs

October 23, 1984

IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO MEASURE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DELIVERY OF HUMAN SERVICES. IN FACT, MANY SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS TELL ME THAT THERE IS NO WAY.

THIS WAS A REVOLUTIONARY CONCEPT TO ME WHEN I FIRST BEGAN TO DISCUSS THE SUBJECT AS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF FAMILY COUNSELING SERVICE, INC. OF BERGEN COUNTY. I ALSO LEARNED A GREAT DEAL ON THE SUBJECT WHEN DRAFTING ASSEMBLY BILL 1647 IN 1982 WHICH ESTABLISHED A COMMISSION ON MISSING PERSONS IN NEW JERSEY. I LEARN MORE ABOUT IT EVERYDAY.

THE DIVISION ON WOMEN DOES NOT DELIVER DIRECT SERVICE. WE INTERACT WITH NON-PROFIT, PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WHICH DO. OUR ROLE IS AS AN ADVOCATE FOR WOMEN. MANY ISSUES AFFECTING WOMEN, SUCH AS CHILD CARE, AFFECT CHILDREN. THEREFORE, IN FULFILLING OUR MISSION, WE HAVE FORMED A SOLID, PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DIVISION OF YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES, NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.

AS STATED, THE MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS IN THE DELIVERY OF HUMAN SERVICES IS AT BEST A DIFFICULT TASK:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
PAGE 2
OCTOBER 23, 1984

"IS THE SYSTEM WORKING WHEN ALL IS QUIET?"

"IS THE SYSTEM NOT WORKING WHEN THERE IS A LOUD PUBLIC OUTCRY?"

I BELIEVE THAT THE LOUD PUBLIC OUTCRY IS TESTIMONY THAT THE
SYSTEM IS WORKING.

AS DYFS MOVES FROM A CLOSED SYSTEM TO AN OPEN SYSTEM, THE INCREASED
REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE AS IS CURRENTLY UNDER DISCUSSION IS ONE RESULT.

THE PRESENT SITUATION IS THE RESULT OF BETTER MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES
IMPLEMENTED BY DYFS. POSITIVE NEW INITIATIVES TO CREATE PUBLIC AWARE-
NESS ARE WORKING. AN OVERWHELMING NUMBER OF CASES OF ABUSE HAVE BEEN
REPORTED WE KNOW.

I KNOW THAT THIS IS A FACT THAT REGARDS THE ISSUE OF DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE. BECAUSE OF AN AGGRESSIVE PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN, GRASS-
ROOTS ACTIVISM AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES BY THE
DIVISION ON WOMEN REPORTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN OUR STATE HAVE INCREASED
WELL OVER 50% IN JUST A YEAR. THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT THERE
ARE MORE VICTIMS; IT MEANS THAT MORE VICTIMS ARE SPEAKING OUT BECAUSE
THEY NOW KNOW THAT A SUPPORT SYSTEM EXISTS FOR THEM. I HAVE WORKED
CLOSELY ENOUGH WITH MY COLLEAGUES IN DYFS TO BELIEVE THAT THIS IS ALSO
THE CASE WITH THE INCREASED REPORTS OF CHILD ABUSE.

THE CHALLENGES TO STATE AGENCIES PRESENTED BY THE REALITY OF FAMILY
LIFE IN 1984 ARE BEING FACED OPENLY, HONESTLY AND STRAIGHT-FORWARDLY AND
COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS ARE FOCUSING ON THE ISSUES IN NEW WAYS.

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
PAGE 3
OCTOBER 23, 1984

A THOUGHTFUL LEGISLATIVE RESPONSE IS CRUCIAL TO THE ABILITY OF
THE DIVISION OF YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES TO FULFILL ITS MISSION.

STATE HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL

TESTIMONY

DELL RAUDELUNAS, CHAIRPERSON

OCTOBER 22, 1984

CHAIRMAN FLYNN, VICE CHAIRMAN FOY, COMMITTEE MEMBERS, I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY BEFORE YOU TODAY.

I AM HERE AS CHAIRMAN OF THE STATE HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL.

OUR COUNCIL WAS RECENTLY CONVENED BY COMMISSIONER GEORGE ALBANESE TO:

- ° PROVIDE INPUT INTO DEPARTMENT POLICY ON HUMAN SERVICE ISSUES EFFECTING THE STATE;
- ° TO WORK WITH THE DEPARTMENT TOWARD A COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH TO ACHIEVING STATE-WIDE HUMAN SERVICE GOALS;
- ° TO FOCUS ON ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE TWENTY-ONE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCILS REGARDING LOCAL HUMAN SERVICE FUNDING, NEEDS AND SERVICES; AND
- ° TO WORK WITH THE DEPARTMENT ON EDUCATING THE PUBLIC AND FOSTERING AWARENESS OF HUMAN SERVICES.

OUR COUNCIL IS COMPOSED OF SIXTY-FIVE COMMUNITY LEADERS IN HUMAN SERVICES WHO ARE EXPERIENCED AND WELL QUALIFIED TO HELP SHAPE DEPARTMENT POLICY.

WHEN I BEGAN MY PLANNING FOR THIS TESTIMONY, I ASKED EACH COUNCIL MEMBER FOR THEIR THOUGHTS ON THE ISSUES WE ARE HIGHLIGHTING TODAY - THE EFFECTS OF INCREASED REPORTING AND CASELOADS ON DYFS STAFF AND DIVISION MANAGEMENT.

I BRING TO YOU THE CONSENSUS OF THE EXPERTISE OF OUR MEMBERS.

THE COUNCIL IS COGNIZANT OF THE IMPORTANCE AND COMPLEXITY OF THE DYFS RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FROM VIOLENCE AND NEGLECT.

WE RECOGNIZE THAT THEIR JOB IS AN AWESOME TASK EVEN UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES. HOWEVER, WITH A PROJECTED CASELOAD OF OVER 43,000 BY THE END OF FISCAL YEAR 1985, AND A 100% INCREASE IN INVESTIGATIONS OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CASEWORKERS IN CARRYING OUT THEIR CRITICAL WORK IS JEOPARDIZED.

IF THIS PROBLEM IS NOT RESOLVED, THE CHILDREN OF NEW JERSEY WILL BE AT GREATER RISK, FOR INSTANCE:

- ° INADEQUATE PREVENTIVE PROGRAMS WILL CAUSE FAMILY PROBLEMS WHICH LEAD TO ABUSE/TO GO UNRESOLVED;

-AND-

- ° OVERTAXED CASEWORKERS ARE UNABLE TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO REPORTS OF ABUSE-MAKING IT IS LIKELY THAT THE ABUSE WILL CONTINUE.

THE BOTTOM LINE IS - KIDS ARE GOING TO GET HURT. I PERSONALLY FIND THIS UNTHINKABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE.

WE STRONGLY URGE THE LEGISLATURE TO TAKE WHATEVER STEPS ARE NECESSARY, BOTH LEGISLATIVELY AND ADMINISTRATIVELY, TO SEE THAT THERE ARE NOT ONLY SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO PROTECT OUR MOST VULNERABLE CITIZENS, BUT RESOURCES THAT ARE OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY.

SPECIFICALLY, WE RECOMMEND LEGISLATIVE ACTION TO COMPLY WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S REQUEST FOR AN ADDITIONAL 507 DISTRICT OFFICE WORKERS AND 7.85 MILLION DOLLARS FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES.

OUR COUNCIL STANDS READY TO WORK WITH YOU, THE COUNTY WELFARE AGENCIES, DYFS, AND THE COMMUNITY IN A PARTNERSHIP OF CARE TO SEE THAT OUR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS ARE PROTECTED.

AS COMMUNITY LEADERS IN THE HUMAN SERVICES FIELD, WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO LET YOU KNOW THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITIES AND CITIZENS, AND TO OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE.

AS LEGISLATORS, I KNOW YOU HAVE A COMMITMENT TO HEAR OUR VIEWS AND RESPOND.

OUR STATE HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL COMMENDS EACH ONE OF YOU FOR YOUR CONCERN ABOUT THE IMPACT THAT INCREASED CHILD ABUSE REPORTING HAS ON DYFS OPERATIONS AND ON THE VULNERABLE AND NEGLECTED IN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY.

WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT YOU WILL ACT APPROPRIATELY TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP AND RESOURCES TO RESOLVE THIS PROBLEM.



HISPANIC ASSOCIATION OF OCEAN COUNTY

223 Second Street
Lakewood, N.J. 08701
Tel. 367-0619

October 23, 1984

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President: Eida Maldonado
Vice President: Marcos Suarez
Secretary: Jose A. Morales
Treasurer: Blanca Lewis
Trustee: Dolores Corona
Trustee: Gary Reyes

Lydia J. Valencia
Executive Director

Mr. Steve Frakt
Office of Legislative Services
Room 103
State House Annex
CN 042
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Dear Mr. Frakt:

Enclosed herewith please find testimony that I had expected to be able to offer at the Oversight Committee Hearing.

I was unable to attend the second session, because of unforeseen circumstances. I would appreciate your registering same on behalf of the Hispanic Working Group.

Sincerely,

HISPANIC ASSOCIATION OF OCEAN COUNTY

Lydia J. Valencia
Lydia J. Valencia
Executive Director

cc: Ted Allen

LJV/id

T E S T I M O N Y

Presented

to

N. J. General Assembly

Oversight Committee

By: Lydia Valencia

Hispanic Working Group

October 23, 1984

At the risk of repeating what others have said I feel the responsibility to describe to you how individuals like me at the local level perceive what the DYFS Management Team has implemented.

The new focus in family and community services is developing individual capabilities to understand their problems and facilitating that these will be better prepared to face them and attempt to solve them. In this process clients make themselves capable of continuing to deal positively in control of their lives (self-generating).

The strength in the provision of services is placed in assisting the clientele visualize their problems and solutions at two levels: short term solutions and long term ones.

While assisting individuals open-up to themselves, we must provide for others in similar situations to share and experience same. This will facilitate a bond among peers, thus satisfying people's need for human contact. In consequence, a horizontal assistance network is created. People assisting people, rather than institutions/government assisting or doing things for them.

Though short term solutions are needed in order to decrease the risk of danger or satisfy immediate major problems, services must encourage clientele to look at their situation in a long term basis and assist these identify how to improve same.

2.....

Assisting the client to understand that he/she can, "through long term planning" bring quality into their lives will present opportunities for growth and personal investment/involvement.

The emphasis is therefore in transforming our communities from ones that follow the leadership of service/public institutions, to communities that articulate, dictate and present a demand for what they understand is needed. Rejecting the conformist view of: I am benefiting from what is available - to one that states: this is what I need.

We at the Hispanic Working Group encourage you to support the Human Services Department funding request since these will focus in the development of factors that are not only renewable but self-generating, well informed individuals working within a well intended system.

New Jersey Congress of Parents and Teachers

A BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL

OFFICE

900 BERKELEY AVENUE - P. O. BOX 1774
TRENTON, N. J. 08607



TELEPHONES: (609) { 393-6709
393-5004

October 22, 1984

TO: Legislative Oversight Committee

FROM: Mia Andersen, Chairman
Juvenile Protection

RE: Department of Human Services Request for Additional
Personnel for the Division of Youth and Family Services

I am here today as Juvenile Protection Chairman for New Jersey PTA to represent New Jersey's oldest and largest child advocacy organization with 215,000 members. We appreciate this opportunity to share out concerns with you.

New Jersey PTA urges you to approve the Department of Human Services request for an additional 507 positions for the Division of Youth and Family Services. We believe that DYFS must have these additional positions if the Division is to be successful in meeting its mandate.

The Division of Youth and Family Services and the Bureau of Children's Services before it was formed in response to a community/societal need. In order to successfully address that need and reduce the problems of child abuse and neglect and sexual abuse, DYFS must reach into and work with the community it serves. New Jersey PTA does not believe that DYFS nor any other social service agency can solve community/societal problems without the cooperation and support of the community because those problems exist within the context of and not separate from the community. Therefore, New Jersey PTA strongly supports and endorses the new mission statement and the policies and procedures which flow from it as critically important to the potential for success of DYFS to meet its mandate.

(2)

Child abuse and neglect are not new problems. While recent increases may reflect a slight increase in actual incidence of abuse and neglect since 1982, we believe that the dramatic rise more correctly reflects the success of DYFS in:

1. providing and creating avenues for communications with the community
2. educating the community so that it is beginning to accept its responsibility to protect its at risk children.

We believe that the DYFS mandate can only be successfully fulfilled if sufficient resource are provided to meet existing case load as well as provide for program and personnel resources for prevention. If we only provide resources for staffing of program services for those already on the critical list, so to speak, we will not be doing enough to reduce the incidence of the dysfunctional behavior that results in abuse and neglect. To meaningfully address the issue of child abuse and neglect, we believe it is necessary to focus on means of reducing the incidence of abuse. To do this it is necessary to:

1. work with abusive parents and abused children to;
 - a. remediate abusive behavior
 - b. give abused children the skills necessary to overcome the effects of abuse and hopefully break the abuse cycle
2. establish broad based prevention programs which will;
 - a. develop skills in children to protect them from abuse
 - b. prevent children from becoming abusive parents
 - c. educate the community

In order to accomplish any of these or any other programs and services the Division must have the necessary resources.

New Jersey PTA is very encouraged by the new more appropriate direction instituted by the new management team of DYFS. We advocated for many years for the adoption of such a community based, unified services approach for the Division believing that DYFS must reach out into the community in order to successfully fulfill its mission. we are optimistic that the new philosophy will result in positive cooperation between the Division and the community it serves to address the needs of children and families.

(3)

DYFS and New Jersey PTA are currently working together to develop materials and programs about child and sexual abuse for distribution and presentation to parents through PTA's. This important cooperative project will reach into the community at large to develop an awareness and better understanding of:

1. child and sexual abuse
2. ways of identifying abused children, abusive families and at risk families
3. how to report suspected child abuse
4. DYFS as the community resource; its purpose and function
5. what happens after an abuse report
6. importance of community in addressing problem of child and sexual abuse and neglect
7. current community resources
8. needed community resources

We are convinced that in order to reduce the incidence of abuse it is necessary to work in and with the community as a whole.

Clearly child and sexual abuse and neglect are major problems-an epidemic-in New Jersey communities today. Government alone does not have the resources to remediate this epidemic. Government and its agencies must forge a partnership with the community it serves in order to successfully address the enormous social problems endemic to today's society. This project and projects like it are critically important if the community is to be educated to its responsibility for and ability to address its problems.

In conclusion, we believe that the Division of Youth and Family Services cannot fulfill its mandate without additional resources. Clearly the problem of abuse and neglect has not disappeared. What has been done historically has not been adequate to stem the rise of abuse and neglect let alone reduce it. New Jersey PTA urges the legislature to respect the request by the Department of Human Services as a responsible administrative evaluation of organizational need in the best interest of the at risk children and families of New Jersey.

PRESENTATION TO THE
ASSEMBLY OVERSITE COMMITTEE

BY JUNE K. WEAVER
ADMINISTRATOR
NEW JERSEY COALITION FOR BATTERED WOMEN

OCTOBER 22, 1984



**NEW JERSEY
COALITION FOR
BATTERED WOMEN**

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Serving Victims of Domestic Violence

The Problem of Family Violence is one which affects us all in one way or another. If not in your nuclear family most of us know someone at work, in our neighborhoods, or in our extended family who is suffering due to violence in the family. Call it child abuse, incest, spousal abuse or elderly abuse, the bottom line is the same for programs providing services for victims--ending the violence in the home.

My name is June Weaver. I am the Administrator of the New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women. Member programs provide services for victims of Family Violence throughout the State. We represent the interests of 27 programs providing services for Battered Women in New Jersey. These programs provide Shelter, Counseling and Advocacy Services, Hotline, Information and Referral and Batterer's Counseling.

Over the past decade services for Battered Women have grown from a grass roots program operated out of a private individual's home in Bergen County to the current levels of including 13 current Shelters, 2 Shelter programs to be opened in the next several months, 8 counseling, advocacy, information and referral programs and 8 batterers services.

All of these programs are contracted through the Division of Youth and Family Services to provide these Services. While the DYFS has historically recognized the connection of child abuse and spousal abuse by funding these programs, it is only in the past two years that the extent of connection has begun to be address by the State.

Two years ago Division of Youth and Family Services Management Team representatives requested a meeting with all the programs through the New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women, founded by program representatives in 1977 to address common statewide concerns on a joint basis.

Through the work of this management team programs serving Battered Women in this state provide Shelter for more and more families each year. In 1982, programs provided Shelter for 4,142 New Jersey residents; in 1983, 5,139 individuals were sheltered; and for the first eight months of this year almost 3,000 women and children left their homes because of the violence in their lives. Other services offered by battered women's programs have provided counseling, information and referral and advocacy services for almost 40,000 additional families over the past three years.

Anyone working with Battered Women quickly recognizes that battering spouses frequently also physically abuse children in the family. Of the number of children sheltered by Battered Women's Shelters approximately one third have been victimized by physical abuse or incest as well as their mother. It is the position of the New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women that every child of a battered woman is victimized by the abuse if not physically, certainly psychologically and emotionally. Last year according to New Jersey's Uniform Crime Report 55% of the 24,477 Domestic Violence Spouse Abuse Offenses reported involved children or had children present during the violence.

Because of this clear relationship it is important that services for Battered Women also include services for their children. Through the close partnership that the Division of Youth and Family Services Management Team has built with programs serving Battered Women, this administration for the first time has identified and begun to address the fact that many of the families served by Battered Women's Programs are also families working with DYFS because of child abuse. Because of the proximity of these families when they are in a Shelter program and to coordinate the counseling offered it is vital that a working relationship between programs and local DYFS case workers be developed.

Because of initiatives of the DYFS Management Team and the Commissioner of Human Services, the need to address this joint population as well as the overall problem of Family Violence, including child abuse, spouse abuse and elderly abuse was identified in New Jersey long before last months Attorney General's National Task Force on Family Violence Report was issued.

Currently plans for joint training between DYFS staff and Battered womens program staff is being coordinated. The Coalition has been funded to work on gathering more precise statewide statistics, to develop a resource center on family violence and to educate the community about this complex problem. Last year DYFS sponsored the first statewide forum for discussion between program representatives and district and regional DYFS staff. The resulting plan, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: PROTECTION, SUPPORT PREVENTION, A DRAFT PLAN FOR POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT is in the forefront nationally as a DEMONSTRATED formalized commitment to working towards home by working with Battered Womens Programs and child abuse case workers.

In making this commitment, I believe the DYFS Management Team is attempting to prevent duplication of services while at the same time provide services to child abuse victims which it is mandated to provide. Properly coordinated Battered Womens Programs can help alleviate the case load of DYFS staff. In working with the whole family violence problem which frequently includes spousal abuse we have a better chance toward achieving the ultimate goal of ending violence in the lives of families in New Jersey.

To: N.J. Assembly Legislative Oversight Committee
From: Beverly Gilbert
Date: 10/22/84

As a private provider agency working with victims of domestic violence I would like to add our agency's support of the DYFS service principles outlined in the mission statement; service principles that emphasize the preservation of families through a unified system responsive to the individual and to the community needs as identified by that community. In addition we particularly support the need for additional case workers and the continuation of the management team's efforts to address the needs of families victimized by abuse, neglect and exploitation.

In Atlantic County We have long recognized the connection between domestic violence and child abuse/neglect. We have a long history of co-case management with our local District Office and experience the same frustrations in dealing with these cases as they do; lack of time, lack of resources and lack of case workers to address the needs of our mutual clients in breaking the cycle of abuse-neglect that so often perpetuates itself from generation to generation.

From 1982 to 1983 our program experienced an 8% increase in requests for service. In the first half of 1984 the trend indicates a 29% increase. In August alone we received 40 requests for counseling appointments, twice as many as usual. And these requests are no longer limited to "specific" issues of domestic violence. More and more they tend to be women who were sexually abused as children or mothers who are seeking counseling because they've just discovered their own children are victims of sexual abuse. In some cases shelter has been provided at the request of the courts and/or DYFS for these families.

In the District Office in Atlantic County the increase in cases reported (1983) has risen 13.8% since 1982 and continues to hold for 1984. They too have experienced a significant rise in the number of reports of child sexual abuse in addition to the increase of reported abuse/neglect cases for 1984. Approximate figures for August/September indicate a rise from 180 referrals (303 children) to 257 referrals (378 children) from one month to another. There are approximately 1200 children presently under supervision in Atlantic County with an approximate average case load of 51 children per case worker, and there is no indication that either referrals or requests for service are going to do anything but increase in the months ahead. There is an increasingly apparent need for an increase in the number of both case workers and support staff as well as a need to streamline the process of rehiring case workers lost through normal staff turnover. The cumbersome process of hiring or rehiring case worker slots already allocated exacerbates the problems of case management when already overloaded staff are required to take on additional cases due to a "temporary" reduction in staff.

Beyond the need for additional case workers is the need to continue the efforts begun two years ago to unify the service delivery system in addressing the needs of abuse/neglect victims. Additional case workers may solve half the problem, but without community resources to address the problems, without community planning and community support the victim continues to become lost in the system. The Department of Human Services-DYFS has made a commitment to the protection of vulnerable individuals, to the preservation of the family and to the community as the resource most capable of identifying, planning and providing solutions. The shift in thinking has not been easy. At the local level we still struggle with many issues and we have much more work to do. But the commitment of the Department as exemplified by the Management team is apparent.

: N.J. Assembly Legislative Oversight Committee
om: Beverly Gilbert
te: 10/22/84
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As a private provider agency struggling with the ins and outs of the bureaucracy for six years and consistently frustrated by the seeming lack of response at the state level for four of those six years I have to say that finally it seems that the priority of this agency and of the Department-the clients-are the same. And though I know that this has always been so-its nice to feel it for a change. The Department of Human Services, DYFS, and the management team have demonstrated a clear and consistent committment to victims, families and communities, a committment not taken lightly by any of us working in social services. I support their recommendations.

Thank you,

Beverly I. Gilbert

Beverly I. Gilbert
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Vice President, NJCBW
Member, ACHSAC
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Association For Advancement
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Testimony Submitted By
Association For Advancement of the
Mentally Handicapped

To

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee
of the New Jersey State Assembly

October 24, 1984

ADY

The Association for Advancement of the Mentally Handicapped welcomes this opportunity to submit testimony concerning the Division of Youth and Family Services' request for additional funding in order to hire additional caseworkers.

The need for additional field personnel has been well documented by others. Your committee and most witnesses, AAMH included, seem to be in agreement as to the very real need for additional caseworkers. However, several of the problems raised at the hearings will not be resolved by simply throwing additional workers at them.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Workers should be carefully screened prior to hiring and once employed, must be oriented to the Division's goals and objectives.
2. Training prior to dealing with clients must be thorough, particularly for those who will be conducting investigations of alleged abuse and/or neglect. Periodic training should also be required at least on an annual basis.
3. Support services must be provided for all workers. Transportation, clerical and secretarial services should be appropriate to the workers's needs. If these supports are not readily available, the mere addition of caseworkers will not alleviate the problems confronting clients.
4. Needed community based services must be developed and maintained. Without the expansion of service programs, the addition of more workers will do little in providing for client's needs.
5. The uses of paraprofessionals should be more thoroughly explored.
6. Caseload size should be carefully evaluated. Caseload is not synonymous with workload. A worker could conceivably have a full workload with five children at great risk. Conversely, if forty cases required nothing more than a token visit, such a load would not entail an overload. The quality of performance of the worker can and should be assessed.

SUMMARY:

The addition of social workers is needed but would only partially address the issues raised. Support services should be added to enable caseworkers to perform their assigned tasks. More training is needed. Most important, if the Division is to fulfill its mission, additional community based services must be secured so that the Division and its workers have the resources available to address the needs of their clients.

