

Senate Committee members my name is Aimee Dutkiewicz and I would first like to thank you for hearing my concerns as to the ineffective operations of the beleaguered and deeply troubled DCF Agency.

In 2003 DCF entered my life at the hands of a vindictive person in my life using the system as a means of revenge. Soon after making her report this individual was admitted more than five times to various mental health facilities for severe psychosis issues.

DCF's involvement in my life has had profoundly negative and far-reaching painful impact, the kind of impact that had a continued ripple effect for years.

After the withdrawal of the agency out of my family's life we were unable to pick up the pieces. I am now divorced as a direct result of agency abuses heaped upon my family and myself.

My children are now 21 and 16 and all three of them have serious adult authority trust and security issues, these issues from the agency impact will be with them the rest of their lives.

Following are several areas I see as needing changes. I would be happy to provide further proof and evidence from a complete un-redacted copy of the DCF file our Federal Suit against DCF afforded us.

1. We must look immediately at changing the current anonymous reporting procedures. Modification of the current procedures will effectively limit the ability of vendetta based reporting. Increasing utilization of prosecutorial methods will also reduce the current ability of individuals using reporting as a vendetta measure. Requiring mandated reporters to provide proof of their licensure will result in less chance of unnecessary interventions. In my case Bonnie Maskery made a verbal report and then REFUSED to supply DCF with the proper form required of a mandated reporter. She did however send a letter listing her qualifications, which turned out to be falsified, and self-aggrandized and nothing more than a certification in hypnotherapy.

2. There is a must for proper caseworker training as to law requirements on entry into the home. Any means other than permissible entry must be handled as a criminal act. Threats of Police force d entry are illegal and subject both the Police and the Agency to potential legal action. Even a Police officer cannot enter a home without permission or exigent circumstances.

3. Failure to understand and abide by and or be aware of agency policy is not an escape loophole. Applying appropriate policies to all cases is a must. Refusal to be compliant and fully cognizant of investigational requirements must result in appropriately punitive disciplinary action.

4. Best Interest of the child should never be used as a screen to hide behind. This frequently happens in many cases resulting in detriment to families being subjected to investigation. Many of these investigations are mere fishing expeditions and unnecessary in the first place, yet caseworkers utilize the guilty until proven innocent method and frequently make cases where none might generally have been warranted...often this is done but outright lying...and in some cases like the Valarie Miles case, the planting of evidence to ensure maintaining a case.

5. The fact that kinship placement attempts are a core part of receiving Federal funding yet this method is rarely used because non-family foster placement yields long term added bonus funds into the agency coffers. The practice of not seeking kinship placement and also refusing to supply kinship placement families with assistance must be investigated.

6. The misuse and abuse of automatic orders MUST be re-evaluated. Frequently when a family faces court petition often the automatic orders form JDJM106 gets signed by a Judge long before the service needs boxes are checked resulting in Judges arbitrarily granting excessively broad and often unnecessarily invasive requirements upon the family. For instance in many cases parents end up under judicial orders to cooperate fully with DCF and often families are repeatedly put through trainings and programs that there was never a need for.

7. Case workers need accountability as to honest documentation on cases. Any interviews with families should be audio and or video recorded and then transcribed in order to eliminate the risk of outright lies and embellishments on case specifics. Caseworkers should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law when evidence is found proving there was lack of candor and or deliberate falsifications of records.

8. Individuals who choose to misuse their power and access to DCF files and or inappropriately confidentiality must face prosecutorial action. Such as the case of Barbara Clair during my adjudication hearing she presented un-redacted evidence in an effort to parallel my case and the case of the Maynard family. Not only did I have enough information handed over by her, I was able to get the Danielson Police report and make contact with the family. When informed that this occurred out of her negligence she and her superiors blew it off. Now here we are in 2008 and AAG Barbara Claire stands accused of the very thing she's been doing all along. At the time it happened in 2004 I was told they would take no action against her.

9. There is a large percentage of cases that get reopened by caseworkers self reporting to the hotline. This is a tool frequently used when there has been no solid evidence found and a case is closed. Not only is it used to reopen a case when the reports are made it counts as an additional report and automatically puts the case directly into status of immediate service needs and frequently ends up with a court petition. DCF workers are not over worked they merely cannot "Let Go" of issues in an appropriate and healthy manner. This results in greater caseload and contributes to shoddy performance on a regular basis.

10. When a case is decided as substantiated most parents do not understand that this means their name goes on the Registry. This can potentially subject them to ineligibility for employment in the education and health care fields. The adjudication process must be far better defined and the parent's rights clearly outlined. While I was waiting for my hearing I lost my job as a Fitness Instructor. My employer was concerned that his reputation would end up besmirched if it were found out that I had been accused of neglect and my name placed on this registry. To this day I do not know if my name was left on there. This registry should not be monitored by DCF but by an outside impartial source. Some people who have ended up on the registry because they don't know the consequences have even been denied access to military careers. My own son was questioned when he applied to The Guard. So even now years later DCF continues to have a ripple impact in my life.

In conclusion I would like to thank all of you for giving me the opportunity to present my views, concerns and the changes I feel need to be made. Our current child protection organization is ineffective at best and dangerous at worse, case in point the Mansfield woman killing an innocent baby, a baby that really never should have been in care in the first place. I would be more than happy to offer further service and input as the necessary changes are put into motion. I can be reached via email at danae0706@yahoo.com or my home # 860-261-7976

I carry the psychological scars of a type of emotional abuse inflicted upon me by DCF agency employees. Many of these scars will never heal; sadly all of them were unnecessary. The hardest one of all is that DCF availed themselves of additional funding under ASFA/ KCFSA Federal programs by illegally reporting my children as being in state custody. We were informed when apply to be CASA volunteers that CASA had been told that DCF stated to them our son Garth had been in state custody from birth, he was nine at the time we learned this flagrant untruth. Recently we applied for SSI for our son and were told that SSI is already being collected on him by a state agency. We have legal services looking into this now. Should this be the truth based on falsification of records I will file fraud charges and have the parties involved arrested. I feel certain more will come to light as investigations proceed. This travesty and abuse of power must stop now.