

Senate Bill 2329 An Act Regarding Families and Children Engaged in Services Letter of Support Points

Need for Child in Need of Services (CHINS) Reform

- The current system fails to effectively address the needs of the children and families and divert youths from the court system
- Many families who are unable to receive services for their children turn to the courts, which is not the proper venue for providing such services
- Instead of seeking services through the courts, children and families will be better served receiving services delivered through community agencies
- Need to shift to community-based system of care

Purpose of This Bill

- Strengthen and support family connections
- Prevent children from becoming involved with the court system
- Streamline the court process for families who do file a request for assistance to increase efficiency

Now Is the Time for Reform

- The Commonwealth has recently demonstrated its commitment to children and families by reforming the child welfare laws, passing the children's mental health law, implementing the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative, and initiating a variety of innovative procurements of services for children and families
 - o Now is the perfect opportunity to align CHINS reform with these models of best practice
 - o It is a mistake to leave this population of children and families behind in the midst of the aforementioned reforms.
- The current difficult economic climate should not be the reason to resist reform
- The implementation of this reform may take some time, but now is the time to begin the process