

LB 993 - Testimony
Health and Human Services Committee
Monday, February 13, 2012

Scot Adams
Interim Director, Division of Children and Family Services

Good afternoon, Senator Ashford and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Scot Adams (S-C-O-T A-D-A-M-S), and I am the Interim Director of the Division of Children and Family Services. I am here to provide testimony in opposition to LB 993.

We support and commend the work of the Child Advocacy Centers statewide in their primary role of aiding in the investigation of child abuse and neglect. We consider them vital partners and collaborate with them in the work we all do to protect children. The Department currently contracts with seven Child Advocacy Centers at a cost of \$1,276,248.

However, I need to point to two significant issues that serve as the basis for our opposition to LB 993. The first concerns building additional service capacity in the Child Advocacy System beyond their primary function to support investigations of child abuse. We are concerned that additional layers of review are likely to further diffuse decision making that may result in longer stays in the state system through the LR 37 process.

The second concern is that this building of capacity has not been identified as a priority within the Legislature's review of the state's child welfare system. In my opinion, the additional \$385,000 of state funds that we estimate the cost to accomplish the changes proposed by LB 993 (an increase of approximately 30%), cannot compete with the level of urgency in the use of resources currently needed to improve our child welfare system.

I appreciate the opportunity to voice our concerns and I am happy to answer questions.