

To Whom it may concern:

**The Honorable Representative Jeff Barker, Chair
The Honorable Representative Jennifer Williamson,
Vice-Chair The Honorable Representative Andy Olson, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Judiciary, Members**

I am opposed to this legislation. Here's my email to the Sponsor of this bill for more information.

Hi Rep Sollman,

I've been knee deep in advocating for parents who have been wrongfully targeted by caseworkers on power trips or that racially profile and think they know what's best for parents and the removal of their children from their custody.

This bill makes it even more possible for a caseworker, who have already been proven to lie to a judge, to just get a sworn affidavit, declaration or otherwise and fully remove a child and on top of that effectively terminate their parental rights?

I have seen your legislation last year and I supported it. I am presently working with one of your very own constituents who is being wrongfully targeted by DHS. The father was kicked out of his home because a caseworker felt he abused his daughter after he fell down the stairs with her in his hands. The father, a US Army Veteran has stage 3 cancer and is living out of his car. Mother is under 24/7 supervision by DHS appointed "room-mate" and can't get any responses to her emails to DHS/CPS or follow on the remaining items on the action plan (now 7 weeks behind). I am very shocked that you are sponsoring this legislation. This bill needs to be thrown out, **as currently written**.

As can be seen by the recent case of the low "IQ parents", DHS employed almost 30 expert witnesses to try to win this case and not allow the parents to have their children back all the while the attorney representing them got paid peanuts compared to the DHS attorneys. They will do the same for the many other parents who cry foul play on the part of the caseworker. DHS will fight to win that case. The odds as Attorney Jamie Gerlitz [said](#) is stacked against these parents.

If there's anything this bill should have done would be:

- 1. How to keep the families together. Partnering with community programs to have second set of eyes that see how these parents are and holding DHS more accountable for their decisions.**
- 2. Protects against zealot DHS/CPS workers who lie and give false statements**
- 3. Bolster the rights of parents.**
- 4. What about making sure state appointed lawyers are paid the same as DHS attorneys?**

Obviously if a child is seriously at risk, then this makes perfect sense. But actually, we are finding that DHS already is removing way too many children from parents and their case loads are overwhelmed, children are being stuffed in Hotels or put with abusers. Why are we making that even easier for an agency with serious trust issues? Where is the options for the state run nurseries that help the parent? Where's the community partnerships and bolstering that?

The previous Child Welfare Director, Ms. Lena Alhusseni just released her own [Guest Opinion](#) in Oregonian on the issues she sees that face DHS. Why aren't we focused on these? Why are we focused on removing parents rights? Why aren't we focused on the children currently in foster care and improving that?

Anyhow, would love to chat on this and give you my input and the issues that I have run up against dealing with DHS in the past year. While not everyone is a bad hat, there are key players within the agency as it stands now that will make sure that a good parent doesn't get their child back to protect the agency or will drag it out for months or even years at a time just because they can.

Best regards,

Brittany Ruiz

