

Pamela A. Marsh, Esq.

On behalf of the Juvenile Law Section of the Vermont Bar Association, which I chair, I want to communicate the position of the Section on one small part of S.9 – the removal of the Office of Child Advocate/Ombudsperson from the Bill. The Section supports the pared down version of the Ombudsperson, based on the Washington State model, which we understand was removed from the Bill by Senate Appropriations.

The Section sees the Ombudsperson's Office as a small but independent office through which all participants in the child welfare system, from parents to children to relatives to DCF case workers and others aggrieved by actions of DCF can investigate those actions and make recommendations. (By the way, there is still a reference to the office which has been eliminated in the portion of the bill relating to disclosure of records by DCF.)

We hope you will reconsider and reinstitute the scaled-down version of the Ombudsperson's Office based on the Washington State model in the bill.

Sincerely,

Pam Marsh  
Chair, VT Bar Juvenile Law Section

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