

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Youth Health & Safety, Select  
For HB 1342

Compiled on: Tuesday, April 4, 2023 12:26 PM

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Hearing Date: March 27, 2023 2:30 PM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

William Carter, Chief JPO  
Lubbock County Juvenile Justice Center  
Wolfforth, TX

THIS IS A GREAT BILL (substitute)

As a reminder to why we are needing this:

Juvenile gets referred after hours/on a weekend. It may be a misdemeanor that we want to release and NOT detain. BUT: During intake process, while gathering demographic information and performing the state mandated assessments, the juvenile mentions previous or current activity with CPS. Usually the juvenile is very cautious about providing useful info regarding the CPS activity, sometimes even to the point of deception. At this point we need to gather information from a reliable source to make sure we don't release the youth to the WRONG PERSON. Scenarios we hear (thankfully not with frequency) is the fear of releasing a juvenile to a parent that might be the subject of investigation. We need to be able to at least have the capability of calling the hotline(which already currently is operated 24/7) if we cannot reach any local CPS personnel, and determine if we are releasing the juvenile to the appropriate adult. That's it. I envision us calling, giving the juvenile's name and DOB. The hotline being able to query that info. At that time we state the parent/guardian's name that we are wanting to release the child to. They can simply state "That is appropriate parent / guardian" or "That is not appropriate. The appropriate parent/guardian is \_\_\_\_". Then we can release with comfort. We NEVER want to put a youth in harm's way by releasing back to an abusive parent.

Tagging on to the JJFI Hearing most of the scenarios as above consist of runaways, misd thefts, misd drug offenses all of which we would not WANT to detain, however, if we can't obtain the information as requested above by the 6 hour mark of being in custody we are forced to formally detain until we can get that info. This could result in a youth being detained over a weekend when a simple phone call could have resolved the issue.

Kali Smith  
Moore County Juvenile Probation  
DUMAS, TX  
March 24, 2023

RE: House Bill 1342

Honorable Representatives on Youth Health and Safety Committee,

Thank you for your tireless work for this 88th Session at the Capital on behalf of the youth in your district and across the state of Texas. I would like to address the Monday March 27, 2022 Youth Health and Safety Committee hearing in regards to House Bill 1342.

As a rural department in the Texas panhandle, we have a few children who are addressed in this bill. Juvenile gets referred after hours/on a weekend. It may be a misdemeanor that we want to release and NOT detain. BUT: During intake process, while gathering demographic information and performing the state mandated assessments, the juvenile mentions previous or current activity with CPS. Usually the juvenile is very cautious about providing useful info regarding the CPS activity, sometimes even to the point of deception. At this point we need to gather information from a reliable source to make sure we don't release the youth to the WRONG PERSON. Scenarios we hear (thankfully not with frequency) is the fear of releasing a juvenile to a parent that might be the subject of investigation. We need to be able to at least have the capability of calling the hotline(which already currently is operated 24/7) if we cannot reach any local CPS personnel, and determine if we are releasing the juvenile to the appropriate adult. That's it. I envision us calling, giving the juvenile's name and DOB. The hotline being able to query that info. At that time we state the parent/guardian's name that we are wanting to release the child to. They can simply state "That is appropriate parent / guardian" or "That is not appropriate. The appropriate parent/guardian is \_\_\_\_". Then we can release with comfort. We NEVER want to put a youth in harm's way by releasing back to an abusive parent. Tagging on to the JJFI Hearing most of the scenarios as above consist of runaways, misdemeanor thefts, misdemeanor drug offenses all of which we would not WANT to detain, however, if we can't obtain the information as requested above by the 6 hour mark of being in custody we are forced to formally detain until we can get that info. This could result in a youth being detained over a weekend when a simple phone call could have resolved the issue.

Please consider taking a look at Senate Bill 1330 from Sen. Perry. There is some common ground to work together on to move this issue forward.

Again thank you for your service to this state and your commitment to the youth of Texas. If I can help you in any way, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Respectfully submitted,

Kali Smith  
Chief Juvenile Probation Officer  
Moore County Juvenile Probation Department  
806-935-2144 Ext 4

Heather Bachhofer, Chief JPO  
Somervell County Juvenile Probation  
Glen Rose, TX

I am for this bill. I already have a great relationship with my local CPS office and am able to get information easily. I hope everyone in the state is able to do the same.

Taylor Trevino  
self (organizer)  
Austin, TX

I urge the legislature to support this bill in order to act in the best interest of Texas children.

Anthony Ramos  
Tri-County Juvenile Probation  
Alpine, TX

I support HB 1342 Relating to the exchange of certain information between the Department of Family and Protective Services or Certain foster care services contractors and a state or local juvenile justice agency. IMPACT is the application DFPS uses to record case information about children and adults the agency protects. DFPS uses IMPACT to document all stages of service of a case. The Texas Abuse Hotline has available all information such as reports of abuse, neglect or exploitation, and when those cases are investigated and outcomes of the investigation. In the event that a Juvenile Probation officer needs information after hours or when the State Offices are closed then a call to the Texas Abuse Hotline would be valuable. Hotline workers are able to look up information in IMPACT and determine if a child or an adult has current or past history of abuse, neglect or exploitation. In the event that the child, adults or other family members have a history of reported abuse or neglect in the IMPACT system then Abuse Hotline Workers have the capacity to look that information up. This information is crucial on the occasions that a Juvenile Department is making to decide whether to release a child to a parent or adult, and when there is no other way of determining if the person that we are releasing the child to has a current or past history of abuse or neglect. DFPS case workers on current or previous cases involving a child document the information on the child and the parents. If the documented information in IMPACT provides details of the parent child relationship that would be significant information to maintain the safety of the child in the event that a parent has had their parental rights removed by the court and they are asking for a child to be released to them. By having the capacity of exchanging information with DFPS then Juvenile Probation Officers will have the ability to request information and be provided with a quick return of information regarding the child and safety concerns of that child. The Texas Abuse Hotline currently assist the Texas Department of Public Safety and Texas Law Enforcement by searching IMPACT when they have a child in their care and need to verify if the parent or adult the child is being released to has history with DFPS. Also, at night and when DFPS offices are closed. The Texas Abuse Hotline has available the cell numbers for the CPS emergency and on call personnel. Communicating with emergency DFPS staff for the safe release of a child to a parent, or adult would help with the decisions with children. I have over 38 years of experience working with children and families of at risk youth. Twenty of those years of experience as a CPS investigator. My opinion is that this is a step in the right direction for the Juvenile Justice System and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to work together to maintain the safety of our children.