

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Subcommittee on Child Welfare

April 12, 2005 Clackamas County Commission Chamber

6:00 P.M. Tapes 1 – 2

(Corrected 4/26/05)

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rep. Billy Dalto, Chair

Rep. Debbie Farr

Rep. Mitch Greenlick

STAFF PRESENT: Marjorie Taylor, Committee Administrator

Pamella Andersen, Committee Assistant

MEASURES/ISSUES HEARD:

HB 2010 – Public Hearing

These minutes are in compliance with Senate and House Rules. Only text enclosed in quotation marks reports a speaker's exact words. For complete contents, please refer to the tapes.

TAPE/#	Speaker	Comments
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TAPE 1, A

004	Chair Dalto	Calls the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Discusses field visit to child welfare office. Relates intense interest on part of legislature in improving the child welfare system. Opens a public hearing on HB 2010. Provides background on bill development.
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hb 2010 – PUBLIC HEARING

- 044 Marlene Shipley National Family Rights Association. Submits and reviews written testimony in support of HB 2010 (**exhibit a**). Discusses cracks in the system. Relates issue of missing foster child whose parent was notified nine days after they were reported missing. Expresses concern with putting a Band-Aid on a bad system. Reports her child was taken from her when she had surgery and was abused while in foster care. Encourages keeping children with their own families. Suggests helping families rather than just removing children.
- 126 Jessica Stevens Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Testifies in support of HB 2010, noting the language is too general, the role of the courts is not considered and it is unclear what an investigation looks like. Expresses concern with case file reviews and possible breach of confidentiality, and random inspections. Notes no conclusions are indicated, or what is done following reviews.
- 177 Rep. Greenlick Comments on the hotline phone calls he monitored. Asks if confidentiality can get in the way of effectiveness.
- 189 Julie LaChapelle Social Service Worker, SEIU. Testifies in support of HB 2010 and how to improve the system. Relates being overwhelmed with the increased number of calls and missing out on the relationships with clients due to paperwork demands. States case workers are addressing issues of families that require state intervention, only some of which want to address their problems. Confirms relationships motivate change, and case workers don't have enough time and resources to build relationships and develop empathy and compassion. States a valuable resource removed was the flex fund to support clients with specific, unique needs. Discusses demands of email and phone calls, and the impact of high turnover on client service and relationships.
- 346 Rep. Greenlick Asks LaChapelle to define her client.
- 348 LaChapelle Explains she has many: the family, other workers, and the community.
- 360 Rep. Greenlick Inquires whether the best interests of one client ever conflict with those of other clients.
- 371 LaChapelle States primarily, the parents' interests get in the way of the needs of the child.

386	Rep. Greenlick	Asks if it would help if the legislature made clear the child is the priority.
390	LaChapelle	Elaborates on why that might not be what is the best for the family.
402	Rep. Greenlick	Mentions Ashley Pond, whose interests transcended her family staying together. Discusses the conflict.
422	LaChapelle	Believes provisions are needed to serve both interests.
434	Rep. Greenlick	Inquires where a worker's responsibility lies in the face of limited resources.
435	LaChapelle	Responds prioritization and triage.
440	Rep. Farr	Requests quantification of success rate prior to lack of resources.
445	LaChapelle	States she is not prepared to provide this information.
448	Rep. Farr	Asks if incidents have increased since the last budget cut.
453	LaChapelle	Replies her view is limited.

TAPE 2, A

009	Chair Dalto	Questions the impact of court time on caseworker time with the family members and whether delegating that responsibility elsewhere would be helpful.
025	LaChapelle	Relates the protective services unit freed caseworkers from court responsibilities by establishing one worker to attend court. States the disadvantage is the social worker is no longer represented at the table. Comments on the difficulty of making legal recommendations without representation. Supports legal representation for caseworkers.
051	Rep. Greenlick	Asks how unorganized and ineffective the system is and whether it can be reorganized for work satisfaction and efficiency.

066	LaChapelle	Notes the fifteen people that meet weekly in her drug court and the effectiveness of the program, causing the clients to feel more connected, successful and accountable.
099	Rep. Greenlick	States detaining fifteen people for eight hours is not efficient.
104	LaChapelle	Comments on the daily issue of what to hold on to and what to release.
119	Marcy Kady	Social Service Worker, SEIU. Relates work history. Discusses impact of increased workloads due to budget cutbacks. Notes clients are frequently unaware of the resources available to them.
185	Chair Dalto	Inquires about caseloads.
188	Kady	Elaborates on personal caseload. Discusses assessments and how much time they require. Relates permanency worker caseload. Notes value of their court worker.
310	Chair Dalto	Asks whether it would be valuable to have an additional set of eyes reviewing these cases.
321	Kady	Reiterates concern for confidentiality. States the courts regularly review whether case workers are in compliance in that area, and the Citizens Review Board also checks. Notes the agency has checks and balances. Mentions others from whom they receive guidance.
383	LaChapelle	Addresses confidentiality issue and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations.
428	Chair Dalto	Inquires if LaChapelle believes no one should be able to review the files but the case worker.
431	LaChapelle	Responds, no, but more specific guidelines and language are needed.
449	Chair Dalto	Asks how existing oversight is conducted.
450	LaChapelle	Relates the Citizen Review Board is responsible for that. Elaborates. States Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) also provide input.

484 Chair Dalto Asks how children fall through the cracks with these systems in place.

486 LaChapelle Replies this is due to caseworkers with insufficient time to serve clients fully.

TAPE 1, B

009 Rep. Greenlick Comments there will be no more resources so we need to determine how to be more effective with what we have.

027 Chair Dalto Asks LaChapelle to share job risks.

028 LaChapelle Lists job risks she has encountered: being hit with a door; dogs; bad weather on the mountain; methamphetamine labs; people who are high on drugs; dirty houses; needles; glass shards; controlled substances and paraphernalia; firearms; lice and scabies; blood-borne pathogens; illnesses; and unusual animals. Notes they are not allowed any tools to protect themselves.

088 Rep. Farr Requests recommendation on how to ensure the safety of children if the Citizens Review Board is insufficient.

096 LaChapelle Replies the oversight in the bill is not the problem, it is the lack of specific language. States the questions, "How?" and "Under what conditions?" need to be clarified. Notes inconsistencies and generalities allows liberties.

109 Rep. Farr Asks if someone representing caseworkers would be willing to help develop the language.

128 Stevens Responds SEIU would be happy to assist in finding alternatives and solutions. Clarifies the "safe" concept - that reunification is ideal, but not if safety is a question.

150 Rep. Greenlick Confirms the primary responsibility is the safety and well-being of the child, and that needs to be clear in statute or rule.

169 Chair Dalto Questions if case workers see the same families over and over.

177 LaChapelle

States anecdotally there is intergenerational poverty and drug addiction, and many of the same families are seen multiple times, but there are also new ones.

- 191 Kady Reports their judge stated she has seen repeats decrease.
- 224 Chair Dalto Closes the public hearing on HB 2010. Adjourns the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

EXHIBIT SUMMARY

A. HB 2010, written testimony, Marlene Shipley, 1 p