

Good afternoon,

I am a social worker at Beth Israel Hospital and often work with families around past, current, and future DCF involvement. I am a mandated reporter and know the ins and outs of needing to involve DCF when there are concerns. With this said, I strongly object to the draft statutory proposals put forward by the Commission, which will make children in the Commonwealth less safe, dramatically increase racial disproportionality in our child welfare system, and result in significant, long-lasting harm to low-income Black and Latinx children and their families.

I share your goal of protecting the health and safety of children. However, I strongly believe that the recommendations put forward would make children less safe.

By undermining families' trust in their relationships with those to whom they turn in times of need, the proposals would make it less likely that families would reach out for the help they need to keep their families safe.

By creating a system that would flood the DCF with unfounded or inappropriate reports, the Commission's proposals would make it harder for DCF to identify and respond adequately to those situations where a child is actually at risk of abuse or neglect.

The proposals are not just counterintuitive but are racist and dangerous with long lasting implications. The proposals would worsen racial disproportionality in an agency already characterized by racial disproportionality. The proposals would increase unfounded reports, which even if screened out or eventually found unsupported, would cause significant, irreparable harm to children and their families. Instead of helping children and families, this would penalize and target them.

I appreciate you taking the time to read my and others' comments regarding the proposed changes. I hope you take them into consideration as you make these drastic changes for our community.

Thank you,
Dory