



General Assembly

January Session, 2019

**Committee Bill No. 6403**

LCO No. 3834



Referred to Committee on COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN

Introduced by:  
(KID)

**AN ACT CONCERNING A CHILDREN IN CARE BILL OF RIGHTS AND EXPECTATIONS AND THE SIBLING BILL OF RIGHTS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2019*) (a) There is created a  
2 Children in Care Bill of Rights and Expectations, which shall pertain to  
3 each child placed in out-of-home care by the Commissioner of  
4 Children and Families pursuant to an order of temporary custody or  
5 commitment.

6 (b) The Children in Care Bill of Rights and Expectations ensures  
7 that, absent extraordinary circumstances related to a child's health or  
8 safety or unless otherwise indicated in a case plan prepared pursuant  
9 to section 17a-15 of the general statutes for a child, any child placed in  
10 out-of-home care by the Commissioner of Children and Families  
11 pursuant to an order of temporary custody or commitment has the  
12 right to:

13 (1) Develop and maintain the child's own values, hopes, goals,  
14 religion, spirituality and identity, including, but not limited to, sexual  
15 and gender identity, in a safe and caring environment;

16 (2) Visitation or ongoing contact with the child's parents, siblings,  
17 extended family and friends, and assistance in connecting or  
18 reconnecting with the child's birth family if desired;

19 (3) Be placed in a safe environment in the child's home community  
20 and preplacement visits to such placement when possible;

21 (4) Meaningful participation in the development of the child's case  
22 plan pursuant to section 17a-15 of the general statutes and permanency  
23 plan pursuant to sections 17a-11, 17a-111b and 46b-12a of the general  
24 statutes, including, but not limited to, the ability to participate in and  
25 select individuals of the child's choice to participate in meetings  
26 concerning such plans;

27 (5) Meaningful and regular in-person contact with the child's  
28 caseworker, who shall respond to the child's telephone calls and  
29 correspondence in a timely manner; and

30 (6) Stability and support in all aspects of the child's education.

31 (c) The Children in Care Bill of Rights and Expectations ensures  
32 that, absent extraordinary circumstances related to a child's health or  
33 safety or unless otherwise indicated in a child's case plan, the guardian  
34 or guardians of each child placed in out-of-home care by the  
35 Commissioner of Children and Families pursuant to an order of  
36 temporary custody or commitment shall:

37 (1) Maintain a healthy relationship with the child by emphasizing  
38 trust, understanding, empathy and communication;

39 (2) Set appropriate boundaries with respect to curfews, homework  
40 and household responsibilities in order to provide a stable living  
41 environment;

42 (3) Assist the child in building life skills, including, but not limited  
43 to, grocery shopping and cooking meals, personal financial  
44 management and washing laundry;

45 (4) Assist the child in obtaining legal documents and licenses,  
46 including, but not limited to, a birth certificate, Social Security card,  
47 state identification card and motor vehicle operator's license;

48 (5) Assist the child in participating in extracurricular and personal  
49 enrichment activities and obtaining networking and employment  
50 skills;

51 (6) Apply the same age-appropriate household rules and provide  
52 the same opportunities to all children residing in the home, including,  
53 but not limited to, participation in family activities and vacations;

54 (7) Participate in therapy sessions with the child upon request or  
55 when appropriate;

56 (8) Participate in additional foster parent training programs when  
57 possible; and

58 (9) Permit the child to have age-appropriate personal privacy and  
59 privacy with respect to personal items and communications, including,  
60 but not limited to, journals, diaries, letters, electronic mail, telephone  
61 calls and text messages.

62 (d) The caseworker of any child placed in an out-of-home placement  
63 by the Commissioner of Children and Families pursuant to an order of  
64 temporary custody or commitment shall meet in private with the child  
65 annually and any time the child is placed in a new out-of-home  
66 placement, provided the child is of an appropriate age. At such  
67 meeting, the caseworker shall: (1) Provide the child with a copy of the  
68 Children in Care Bill of Rights and Expectations, (2) review the  
69 Children in Care Bill of Rights and Expectations with the child, (3)  
70 explain to the child that the child may contact the caseworker, the  
71 Department of Children and Families Office of the Ombudsman or the  
72 Office of the Child Advocate if the child feels that his or her rights  
73 have been violated or expectations have not been met under the  
74 Children in Care Bill of Rights and Expectations, and provide the child

75 with contact information for such caseworker, the Department of  
76 Children and Families Office of the Ombudsman and the Office of the  
77 Child Advocate, and (4) explain to the child that if the child is in  
78 physical danger or experiences a medical emergency, the child may  
79 dial or send a text message to 9-1-1. The caseworker shall certify to the  
80 commissioner on a form prescribed by the commissioner that such  
81 caseworker has complied with the provisions of this subsection.

82 Sec. 2. Section 17a-10c of the general statutes is repealed and the  
83 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2019*):

84 (a) For purposes of this section, "Youth Advisory Board" means a  
85 board established by each Department of Children and Families  
86 regional office that is comprised of youth in out-of-home care.

87 (b) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall meet with the  
88 members of each Youth Advisory Board to gather recommendations  
89 for and to draft a "Sibling Bill of Rights", which may include, but not be  
90 limited to, ways to protect the relationships of siblings separated as a  
91 result of said commissioner's intervention and an affirmation by the  
92 department of its commitment to preserve the relationships between  
93 siblings who have been separated from each other while under  
94 department care. On or before October 1, 2013, the commissioner and  
95 members of the Youth Advisory Boards shall submit the Sibling Bill of  
96 Rights to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having  
97 cognizance of matters relating to children for consideration of possible  
98 legislative action.

99 (c) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall incorporate the  
100 final version of the Sibling Bill of Rights into department policy. [and  
101 share such policy with each child placed in the care and custody of the  
102 commissioner pursuant to an order of temporary custody or an order  
103 of commitment.]

104 (d) On and after January 1, 2020, the caseworker of any child placed  
105 in an out-of-home placement by the Commissioner of Children and

106 Families pursuant to an order of temporary custody or commitment  
 107 shall meet in private with the child annually and any time the child is  
 108 placed in a new out-of-home placement, provided the child is of an  
 109 appropriate age. At such meeting, the caseworker shall: (1) Provide the  
 110 child with a copy of the Sibling Bill of Rights, (2) review the Sibling Bill  
 111 of Rights with the child, (3) explain to the child that the child may  
 112 contact the caseworker, the Department of Children and Families  
 113 Office of the Ombudsman or the Office of the Child Advocate if the  
 114 child feels that his or her rights under the Sibling Bill of Rights have  
 115 been violated, and provide the child with contact information for such  
 116 caseworker, the Department of Children and Families Office of the  
 117 Ombudsman and the Office of the Child Advocate, and (4) explain to  
 118 the child that if the child is in physical danger or experiences a medical  
 119 emergency, the child may dial or send a text message to 9-1-1. The  
 120 caseworker shall certify to the commissioner on a form prescribed by  
 121 the commissioner that such caseworker has complied with the  
 122 provisions of this subsection.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2019	New section
Sec. 2	July 1, 2019	17a-10c

**Statement of Purpose:**

To create a Children in Care Bill of Rights and Expectations for foster children and to require caseworkers to annually provide the Sibling Bill of Rights to foster children.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*

Co-Sponsors: REP. CURREY, 11th Dist.; REP. LINEHAN, 103rd Dist.  
REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY, 133rd Dist.

H.B. 6403