Child Protection and Accountability Commission's
Extended Jurisdiction Subcommittee
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS REPORT
MAY 2006

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

CHAIR: Julia Pearce, CPRB

MEMBERS: Candy Charkow, DFS; Pete Feliceangeli, DOJ; M. C. Landis/Angela Fowler, OCA; Trish Hearn, DSCYF; Judge John Henriksen, Family Court; Mike Kersteter, People's Place; Eleanor Kiesel, DE CLASI; Judge William Nicholas, Family Court; Kevin Slattery, DOJ

I. SUBCOMMITTEE'S STATED PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Extended Jurisdiction subcommittee was to identify the advantages and disadvantages of extending Family Court's jurisdiction for youth exiting foster care. Additionally, we were asked to define the population to be effected, specify the issues that need be remedied, and how or why extending jurisdiction is the necessary approach to implement as a solution.

II. INTRODUCTION:

The committee was unable to reach consensus regarding whether or not extending the jurisdiction of Family Court was necessary or viable for Delaware. A portion of the subcommittee did not waiver from the belief that there was a population of youth aging out of foster care for whom extending the Family Court oversight would ensure the provision of vital services and supports. In response to concerns claiming that extended jurisdiction would establish a new class of adults, it was argued that there are a number of populations for whom services and rights that were afforded to them as minors were extended until they turned 21 years of age. Another consistently expressed concern of those favoring extended jurisdiction, was that there were workers who seemed to look forward their client's 18th birthday when their responsibility ended and they failed to do their best for the youth. Additionally, it was expressed that too frequently, once the young person turned 18 years of age, efforts ceased to achieve promises that were made to a young person as a minor. Some committee members felt very strongly that the pressure from continued oversight by a Family Court judge would ensure successful outcomes for more youth.

Concurrently, there were members who never wavered from their belief that adequate support services already existed and that efforts should be focused on identifying where there were breakdowns or gaps in the provision of those support services. It was argued that it made more sense to work towards eliminating system barriers that hindered the achievement of successful outcomes for the youth. Their frequently expressed concern was that court-ordering workers to overcome barriers that were beyond their ability to change would only create additional frustration for the courts and would deflate the morale for the workers. They argued that the substandard work performance of some workers should not be used as justification for a change in statute, which would result in significant changes to the mandates of several state agencies.

The committee reviewed draft legislation, which had been written, by M.C. Landis with the Office of the Child Advocate prior to the creation of this subcommittee. A copy of the draft legislation is attached to this report.

III. HOW WE APPROACHED THE TASK:

There was no clear entry point to working on this issue. After several meetings discussing the issue to be remedied and the type of youth to be served, we settled into an exploration of the adult services that youth aging out of foster care transition to as young adults. We learned about the Independent Living Services programs provided by DFS. We also had representatives from the Department of Labor, Delaware Housing Authority and Department of

Substance Abuse/Mental Health meet with the committee. For each area, we explored the process that is followed when an individual transfers from youth services to adult services, as well as the programs and services provided by the adult service agencies. The following is a brief summary of the adult services explored by committee.

A. DFS'S INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES

The state has 4 providers with whom they contract to provide Independent Living services. Currently, the two New Castle County providers are West End Neighborhood House and NET. Murphey School has the contract to serve youth in Kent County and People's Place II has the contract in Sussex County. DFS policy requires that an IL plan be developed and implemented when the youth turns 16 years old. Support and case-management services are provided to a youth who ages out of foster care until they turn 21 years of age.

Delaware DSCYF Coordinated Plan for 2005-2009 Spending Plan-Detail, the following services are available to young adults age 18-20:

1. Life skills assessment
2. Case-management support services (referrals and other assistance to obtain housing, government funded entitlements, counseling, career development and job readiness)
3. Structured ILP activities, social skills groups, workshops and conferences
4. ILP discretionary funding
5. Chafee funded supportive housing program (s)
6. Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program
7. Comprehensive transition planning

In addition to the services and programs identified in the Coordinated Plan, youth who aged out of foster care in Delaware are also eligible for the Ivyane Davis Memorial Scholarship, as well as the federally funded Education and Training Vouchers.

Housing Assistance through the IL Program: A small percentage of the federal Chaffee funds the state receives is allocated for housing assistance for aging out youth. West End Neighborhood House in New Castle and Murphey School in Kent receive some funds to offer transitional housing programs with independent living support components where the residents pay a reduced rent. Additionally, a small amount of the Chaffee funds has been used to subsidize rent or board payments made to a youth's former foster parent so that the youth can remain in that home for a period of time. It should be noted that this assistance should not be confused with *board extensions*, which are granted so that a youth may stay in a foster home until they complete their senior year in high school.

B. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL)

The Department of Education and Training (DET) offers services in four locations through out the state of Delaware. Two sites are in New Castle County (Fox Valley Shops at Market St. in Wilmington and Pencader Corp. Commons in Newark) and one each in Kent (DuPont Highway in Dover) and Sussex (DuPont Highway in Georgetown) counties. All locations provide a computerized job search system, a resource room, job seeking workshops, training information, specialized services for veterans, and typing/data entry testing. In addition, there is a job hotline to call to obtain phone numbers for private and state job listings as well as DOL employees who are available to assist citizens in assessing their employment skills, developing a training plan, seeking financial assistance and their job seeking efforts. Additionally, some of these services can be accessed via the Internet, so that a person doesn't necessarily have to go to one of the satellite offices to utilize these resources

Within the DOL, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) provides specialized employment services to people with disabilities. In particular, students with specific disabilities, which qualify them for either IEP's or 504 plans, are eligible for their "School to Work Transition" program. DVR counselors work directly with 29 area high schools to provide counseling, guidance and job skills training to eligible students. The program is introduced to the students during their junior year, but actual participation in the program begins during their senior year. The primary effort is to identify potential barriers to employment and to develop an individualized plan to overcome those barriers to achieve viable employment. Youth do not have to have participated in the School to Work Transition program to retain their eligibility for DVR services. Eligible individuals may begin to work with DVR at any point they are ready to enter or re-enter the workforce.

In addition to the general support services provided by DET, they offers a variety of specialized programs targeted towards specialized populations to support their efforts to obtain employment. The programs discussed with us included the Women's Vocational Services, the State Summer Youth Employment Program and Veteran Services. Immediately following their meeting with us, the representatives from DOL learned of an opportunity to provide targeted employment support services for aging out youth. They applied for this federal grant within days after our meeting with them. At this time, it is unknown if Delaware will be awarded one of these contracts.

C. DELAWARE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY (DSHA)

Public housing entities are very segmented within the state. City of Wilmington, New Castle County, Newark, Dover, Kent County and Sussex County all have housing authorities that function independently of each other. Applications must be made to each authority. The waiting list varies between authorities. Aging out youth should expect that they would need to share a multiple bedroom unit with one or more people because single bedroom units are generally reserved for the elderly and disabled populations. This adds yet another complication for the youth and those helping them.

Potentially, youth aging out of foster care may be eligible for subsidized housing in *public housing units*, *Section 8 Certificates* that are excepted by landlords in the community and *housing at subsidized sites* (where property owners have received subsidies from the federal government in exchange for offering lower than market rate rents to working families and individuals with modest incomes). There are also a number of transitional housing programs for adults with impairments that significantly impact their functioning, for which some youth may be eligible.

If we advocated for aging out youth be considered as a "special class" in order to receive advance standing with the housing authorities, then that would lengthen the wait for other eligible citizens, equally in need of housing. Existing procedure requires that the youth be 18 years of age before they can complete a housing application. Efforts are already underway to hopefully remove this barrier so that youth may submit applications prior to reaching majority. It has been determined that allowing this practice is *not* prevented by code or regulation. This subcommittee recommends that an alternate committee, perhaps the CPAC Foster Care subcommittee, consider pursuing efforts to work with DSHA to implement this practice. Additionally, private landlords are hesitant to rent to younger adults because of problems they have experienced renting to this population.

D. DIVISION OF [ADULT] SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH (DSAMH)

The primary obstacle in transitioning from CMH to adult mental health services is that the services don't always match up and that the services within the adult arena are substantially less comprehensive. While there are community-based services within the adult system, the population served by those programs struggle with major "Axis I" types of diagnoses. These mental illnesses, such as major

depression, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorders and psychotic disorders, must have a *serious* impact on the individual's ability to adequately perform routine, daily functions, in order for the adult to qualify for community based services.

Commonly identified mental health issues for children, such as ADD, ADHD or oppositional defiant, are *not* mental health issues that would be addressed by the adult system. Additionally, providers in the child arena are not always providers to the adult population, requiring youth to switch providers during a critical time in their life.

Another difficulty is coordinating all of the activities to ensure continuity of care. A MOU between DSCYF and DSAMH requires that a transition plan be developed for any youth receiving mental health or substance abuse treatment services from CMH. Services through CMH terminate when the youth reaches the age of majority. Young adults who have aged out of foster care are generally eligible for Medicaid, which would pay for their mental health services. However, the young person cannot apply for Medicaid to pay for the adult services until their 18th birthday. The delays in Medicaid authorization frequently result in a cessation of mental health services for a period of time, and when it is reinstated, treatment is nearly always with a new provider.

Lastly, it was noted that an aging out youth rarely continues with any substance abuse treatment established while they were in foster care. Getting a young adult to transition to adult substance abuse treatment programs when it is not court ordered is very difficult and rarely occurs, especially if there is a disruption of services or a change of provider when the youth reaches majority.

CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM ADULT SERVICES PRESENTATIONS:

The presentations demonstrated that there is a fairly comprehensive network of support services for youth aging out of foster care. Yet, obtaining access to all of those services is not easy or always accomplished. Determining the precise reason for that is difficult. However, throughout the discussions, there were three primary explanations expressed by the group based on personal experiences. Lack of adequate preparation and insufficient oversight prior to the youth aging out of foster care was sited as one reason. The youth's behavior or lack of cooperation was also sited as a contributing factor. A third factor that was frequently expressed were realities faced by all adults, not just those aging out of foster care:

- There is a significant lack of affordable housing
- Entry level jobs don't always pay a living wage
- Committing to a post-high school education or training program when you are fully responsible for all of your financial needs can be daunting and overwhelming
- It's nearly impossible to sustain employment/school when you depend on Delaware's mass transit system for transportation. This is especially true in Kent and Sussex Counties.
- Current law, policy and/or regulation imposed restrictions:
    - Individuals can't applying for subsidized housing until they are 18 years of age
    - Because of liability issues, foster care youth rarely, if ever, get a driver's license as a minor
    - Applications to continue Medicare eligibility have to be completed after the youth turns 18.

Successful removal of some of these barriers will require diligent, goal-oriented efforts by the policy makers to target and resolve specific issues. The *good news* is that there appears to be a high level of interest and genuine desire to work together to remove the barriers by both child and adult service providers. The *bad news* is the reality of how long it can take to implement improvements of this nature.

IV. YOUTH TO BE SERVED:

Within the committee, there was *complete* consensus that young people between the ages of 18 and 21 do not generally possess the necessary skills to successfully navigate the adult world. And, there was shared recognition that this is especially true for youth who age out of foster care. All of the committee members expressed empathy and concerns for the plight of these young people. Opinions were split as to what to do about it.

There was agreement within the committee that extending the jurisdiction of Family Court would not be needed for everyone who ages out of foster care. Consensus was achieved regarding the factors under which extending jurisdiction would be considered. ***If a determination is made that extended jurisdiction legislation be pursued, the committee recommends that the following factors be present in order for a petition to be filed on behalf of a youth in Family Court:***

1. The youth must have aged out of foster care in the state of Delaware.
2. The youth must be amenable to Family Court's continued involvement.
3. The youth must be willing to accept ongoing services and:
    - be generally compliant with the provision of the services
    - be generally compliant with the rules and expectations of foster families or other out of home settings
    - be regularly attending a high school/GED/vocational training with an anticipated graduation or completion date and is achieving as capable and expected
4. The youth may withdraw their consent at any time.
5. Extended jurisdiction could be established for a youth while they are still in care, or could be established during a period of up to 6 months after the youth has aged out of foster care. *Note: as discussed in the " Impacted Systems" section, current Delacare regulations prohibit placement of an adult in a residential facility that also houses minors.*
6. The need for extended jurisdiction must be included in the petition to the Court and the goal or desired outcome (i.e. transition to adult services, completion of education) must be clearly defined.
7. The following conditions would exclude extended jurisdiction:
    - due to moderate to severe developmental delays, is best served by adult services for the developmentally disabled
    - due to serious mental illness, the young adult needs long term mental health intervention, residential treatment, or intensive community supports from the adult mental health systems
    - has been found not amenable to Family Court for delinquency proceedings
8. It was proposed that extended jurisdiction should automatically end if a youth was arrested after age 18 on a felony criminal charge. Agreement regarding this was not achieved. It was argued that working with adults who are involved in this level of illegal activity is beyond the expertise of a child welfare worker. Alternatively, it was argued that the nature of the charge might not significantly impact the provision of services for a youth. On another note, agreement was not achieved whether withdrawing extended jurisdiction should occur when an individual was charged or convicted of a felony.

Additionally, there was consensus that the language in the legislation would specify that DFS could not be courted ordered to provided services that were beyond the scope of their authority. Also, it should be clear in the bill's language that the extension of Family Court's jurisdiction would not establish DFS as having assumed the legal responsibility as the custodian of that young adult.

V. IMPACTED SYSTEMS:

Extending Family Court's jurisdiction could impact a number of state agencies. In addition to Family Court, DFS's statutory authority would need to be modified. It may be necessary to alter the statutory authority of other Divisions within DSCYF such as CMH and YRS. Continued involvement of a child's court-appointed advocate, such as their CASA or attorney GAL, should also be considered. The authority afforded to the CASA program and the Office of the Child Advocate would need to be modified to allow their continued involvement.

Current Delacare regulations prohibit the placement of a juvenile with an adult. If the young adult is in the program when they turn 18 years of age, the regulations allow them to remain in that placement. But adults cannot be placed in a (new) residential setting where juveniles also reside. As this is a regulation, it was argued that changing this standard would be more changed more easily than if it was a law. However it was also noted that even if the regulation was changed, it might still be difficult to find child welfare providers wiling to serve an adult, especially ones mixed with minors.

The additional personnel work hours and other associated expenditures these changes would generate within all of these organizations would result in increased expenses for all of the agencies involved. The number of young adults to utilize this option is unknown. Therefore, estimating the costs associated with extending Family Court's jurisdiction would be difficult to assess. Although the committee did not have an opportunity to examine the cost to implement extended jurisdiction, based on the current aging out population, DFS estimates that this Division alone would need an additional $2.9 million if Family Court's jurisdiction were extended. All of the other effected organizations would also need some increase in funding. To expect the organizations to absorb the increase costs without additional funding would be unrealistic.

Finally, it was noted that the provision of services by adult providers could be impacted by extended jurisdiction. Identification of specific implications was beyond the scope of what the subcommittee could do given time constraints.

VI. THE PROBLEM NEEDING TO BE REMEDIED:

The problems and struggles faced by youth aging out of foster care have been documented on a national and state level throughout the country. The Human Resources Subcommittee of the House Committee on Ways and Means was responsible for reforming foster care legislation. They conducted hearings that included the testimony of many child welfare stakeholders. The Associate Commissioner for the Children's bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services testified before the Committee citing studies that show that within two to four years of leaving foster care:

- Only half of the young adults had completed high school;
- Fewer then half were employed;
- One fourth had been homeless for at least one night;
- 30% had not had access to needed health care;
- 60% of the young women had given birth;
- Less then one-fifth of these young people were completely self-sufficient.

Evidence that significant issues exist for young people who have aged out of foster care has been established in a recent research study. Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago published a longitudinal study in May 2005 that followed youth who exited care after being in foster care in Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin. *The subcommittee established agreement that the experience of Delaware's youth mirrors the experiences of the youth in the other states. Therefore, efforts by the committee to explore this aspect of the issue were unnecessary.*

However, the *precise scope* of the plight of Delaware's youth that may or may not justify extending Family Court jurisdiction remains elusive. Delaware does not currently retain statistical variables that are needed to determine the number of aging out youth who need or would benefit from extended jurisdiction. Use of any existing statistics would only produce hypothetical assumptions of future need. The lack of data is only part of the reason why the committee struggled to succinctly define the "problem to be remedied." Another reason was because of a lack of agreement within the committee as to *when* increasing judicial oversight would be helpful or necessary. Even with the effort to establish eligibility criteria presented in the "Youth to be Served" section of this document, the answer to the question, "*who* would be court-ordered to do *what* specifically" remained vague for some committee members.

VII. THE PRO'S:

RATIONALE FOR SUPPORTING THE EXTENSION OF FAMILY COURT'S JURISDICTION

- There is established Congressional support at a federal level for enhanced services for youth aging out of foster care:

  Congressional findings supporting the 1999 Foster Care Independence Act (Chafee) as noted in 42 USCA δ677 NOTE indicate the following:

  > *"Congress has received extensive information that adolescents leaving foster care have significant difficulty making a successful transition to adulthood; this information shows that children aging out of foster care show high rates of homelessness, non-marital childbearing, poverty and delinquent or criminal behavior; they are also frequently the target of crime and physical assaults."*

  These Congressional findings are consistent with a number of other studies including the 2005 Chapin Hall research (previously circulated to this group).

  There is currently pending legislation, introduced by Congressman Danny Davis and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee, H.R. 3471, introduced on July 27, 2005, which seeks to more stringently mandate the provision of services to this population of youth both before and after reaching the age of majority. And, even without the passage of such legislation, there is a school of thought that argues that this population of children is suffering substantative due process violations as a result of inadequate preparation for adult by state systems who have been in the care of the state. See 9 U.U. Davis J. Juv. L. & Pol'y, 381.

- While some up front costs increases in terms of social work hours should be expected but such an extension (as noted below in con's), the costs incurred by society's failure to prepare youth greatly outweigh the costs of additional programs. For example, the financial expenditures required to incarcerate one individual, or to provide extended shelter for a homeless individual, are much more costly then case management or ILP services." *See 9 U.U. Davis J. Juv. L. & Pol'y, 381.*
- The court helps move cases forward by setting deadlines and holding everyone accountable.
- The available adult services are impressive, but some aging out youth aren't capable of accessing the available services.
- Some workers seem to be more interested in releasing their responsibility for a youth when he/she turns 18 years of age than in ensuring the youth is adequately transitioned onto the caseload of the adult service providers.
- The state is the "parent" for youth who age out of foster care, which justifies the state's continued involvement.

- Court oversight and enforcement powers are necessary to ensure that these youth receive the services that they are entitled to and to give them a forum to bring issues in those rare instances wherein they do not receive the services for which they are entitled.
- A variety of other states including California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Maryland, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Virginia and Florida have all enacted legislation extending the Family Court's jurisdiction beyond the age of 18. Given that Delaware is such a small state and the numbers of children who would likely be served by such an extension, comparatively, we are in a much better position then most of these states to provide the service.
- Extending the jurisdiction of Family Court would provide an additional "check-in" mechanism for vulnerable young adults.
- Accessing some adult services, such as subsidized housing and applying for Medicaid as an adult, can't begin until the youth turn 18.
- It is generally the youth with complications in their lives (i.e. mental illness, developmental disabilities) for whom it is critical to maintain the provision of services after they turn 18 years of age.
- Independent Living support services are adequate for some youth, but it would still be beneficial to have the option to extend Family Court's jurisdiction for those who have received inadequate or incomplete services prior to turning 18 years of age.

VIII. THE CON'S:
RATIONALE FOR OPPOSING THE EXTENSION OF FAMILY COURT'S JURISDICTION

- Extending jurisdiction would authorize the Family Court to oversee, regulate, and control the relationship between the Department and an adult solely because the adult was in foster care as a child and when he reached 18, the age of majority.
- By extending Family Court jurisdiction to include 18 – 21 year olds, you are creating a new class of adult. It isn't just the youth aging out of foster care that don't have affordable housing, adequate paying jobs and/or adults in their lives who mentor and support them. It isn't fair to pull out this select group of young adults and give them privileges that are not available to all of the young adults. It would be better to focus.
- Establishing continued court oversight for this designated group of young adults ignores the needs of many young adults whose parents and/or families have not prepared them for life after high school.
- Extending jurisdiction would create a new classification of people differentiated only because they were in foster care. There are other disadvantaged youth who could also benefit by extending court jurisdiction.
- In non-child welfare situations, custody orders established by Family Court terminate when a child turns 18 years of age. The Family Court does not continue to oversee, regulate, and control the relationship between parents and children in private custody cases, even though some of them could involve troubled young adults with no parental support system after they reach age 18.
- If Family Court could extend jurisdiction, they would be "ordering" a relationship between DFS and an adult.
- Imposes obligations on DFS not imposed on any other parent or guardian.
- It seems to be unfair to hold DFS responsible for an adult who it has no authority to control, as it did when the individual was a minor. In many cases, this will be asking DFS to do the impossible. The disputes in the Family Court would be over who was at fault for the adult's situation, DFS or the adult. That leaves DFS open to being "slap [ped] around" in court.
- The presentations that were made to the committee have shown that services—essentially, continuation services—are available to children in foster care as they "age out" and transition to adulthood. The real cure

may be to insist that the State does a better job of connecting kids in foster care with these services prior to the child's 18th birthday.

- Adequate consideration and discussion has not been given regarding alternative, non- judicial remedies to address the identified concerns.
- Court cannot impact the adult services agencies, which may frustrate court as well as workers.
- When workers are observed not doing their jobs, it should be reported immediately to the proper DFS supervisor or administrator so that it can be handled as a work performance issue. Legislative changes should not be pursued to address individual performance issues.
- The majority of people's concerns could be better addressed by focusing on ensuring *what needs to be done gets done* for a youth before they reach majority.
- We don't keep the type of data needed to determine the actual number, the situation or the needs of youth who would benefit from extending Family Court's jurisdiction. Other than anecdotal examples, the actually need for extending Family Court jurisdiction was never established.
- Extending Family Court jurisdiction would usurp worker time with Court appearances without evidence of benefit.
- The uncooperative (DFS) youth would benefit the most from court intervention. For the cooperative youth, creative ways already exist to extend services and supports past the age of 18. Therefore, extending Family Court's involvement isn't necessary
- The presentations made by the adult providers support the position that extending the jurisdiction of Family Court is not necessary.
- Extending the jurisdiction of Family Court would not offer anything that is not already available to aging out youth through existing IL services.
- Available funding for IL services is inadequate to provide the ideal level of case management and other support for the aging out young adult. Court-ordering the State to "do it anyway" isn't a realistic solution.
- Even the best laid plans by the adult mentors involved with these youth get derailed by the young adults as they assume responsibility for themselves. The young people need to be allowed to experience the natural consequences and outcomes of the choices they make. They have three years to experience the realities of the adult world with the backup support of IL providers. To override that opportunity with court orders assigning these responsibilities to others does a disservice to the young people.
- There is a wealth of adult services available to transitioning youth.
- On-going state support is available to youth who avail themselves of the Independent Living case managers.
- When you are working with cooperative teens, supporting them and getting services in place for them is already being done. However, when the concern is generated because the youth is uncooperative or services and resources simply don't exist, then Family Court involvement wouldn't necessarily be helpful
- If we extended the jurisdiction of Family Court, what authority or power would be granted? What consequences could be rendered and upon whom? Would the state worker be held in contempt of court; would the youth?
- Extending jurisdiction of Family Court would result in a series of other system changes that could be difficult to accomplish.
- The consequence for lack of compliance with a court order is unclear. Traditional consequences of a contempt order or some other type of court injunction are punitive in nature and wouldn't improve the situation for a young person.
- The subcommittee learned that DFS does not just automatically turn its back on kids in foster care when they turn 18. Continued help from DFS, including financial assistance, is there for kids who want it and can follow

the rules. It should not be necessary for the court to oversee, regulate, and control any continued relationship between DFS and adults who were formerly in foster care.

- Worker morale will diminish if they are court ordered to impact systems they cannot impact.
- Simply extending the jurisdiction of Family Court will not remove barriers related to transitioning youth from youth services to adult services. The most problematic situations are youth who need to transition from youth services to adult services. Especially difficult are youth needing to transfer to adult mental health services or to services for youth with developmental disabilities.
- By extending jurisdiction with Family Court, an agency that was created to provide services to children and families will be taken out of its element.
- The additional social work man-hours (to provide direct services and participate in court hearings) would result in additional fiscal costs.

IX. NON-JUDICIAL ALTERNATIVES

During discussions ideas of other ways to improve the plight of aging out youth were generated. Whether in addition to or in place of extending Family Court's jurisdiction, the following is a listing of other options, identified by the committee, that could be pursued in order to achieve more successful outcomes for these young adults:

- In observing youth aging out, they can't wait to be "free", they engage in dysfunctional thinking about what their life will be like and how they will manage it and that they are ill prepared to live successfully as adults. The aged-out youth will first take-off on their own, and then after they experience failure, come back and ask for help. The young adult will repeat this cycle of claiming their independence and then returning for help. A successful continuum of IL services should allow for the young person to waver in their willingness to participate. Having a place they can go back to and received help and support as needed is vital. It should be anticipated that they be allowed to engage in the cycle of resisting support and asking for support. To expect it to be consistent involvement on the part of the youth is unrealistic.
- More successful outcomes could be achieved by establishing better links between the adult and children providers of mental health services and services for the developmentally disabled.
- Improved worker training on issues related to independent living services for youth aging out of foster care including but not limited to their ability to help transitioning youth access services currently available to them in both the juvenile and adult systems
- Written, consistently applied policies and procedures that address: foster care board extensions & payments, host home agreements, development of independent living plans and other issues addressed under the federal Chafee legislation
- Some of these problem situations could be resolved if the service standards and policies for IL services were better understood and more vigorously enforced.
- Specific barriers related to housing needs that could be addressed:
    - Exploration of housing waiting lists (and enrollment of our aging teenage population when appropriate) including exploration of Federal law to determine the eligibility of this population.
    - Work with landlords to accept young tenants.
    - Develop more housing options specifically for aging out youth with supports such as IL training, subsidized rent with annual increases in the amount of the youth's contribution.
- Specific barriers related to employment that could be addressed:
    - Identify ways to engage more youth to utilize DOL services.
    - Work with employers and business to create employment opportunities for this population.

- Do a better job of identifying what impedes youth from obtaining viable employment, so that targeted efforts to address the impediments can be initiated.

- Specific barriers related to improving the provision of IL services that could be addressed:
  - Enhance financial aid opportunities.
  - Increase funding for case management services for 18 to 21 year olds.
  - Resolve issues preventing youth from obtaining a driver's license prior to turning 18 years of age.
  - Enhance efforts to resolve barriers preventing smooth transitions into the adult services arena.

Respectfully Submitted,
CPAC's Extended Jurisdiction Subcommittee

Attachment: Draft Legislation