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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **sSB 155**

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill merges current Department of Children and Families (DCF) reporting requirements from eight statutes into one report. It does so by repealing certain reporting requirements and moving others to a new consolidated report that DCF must submit to the General Assembly on its activities for the prior fiscal year. The bill's consolidated report is due each year, starting on October 15, 2027. The current reporting requirements are generally kept.

The bill also:

1. merges two existing DCF reporting requirements on the Behavioral Health Partnership,
2. removes the requirement that DCF report any missing or abducted child in DCF custody to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) National Crime Information Center to align with FBI requirements for submitting these reports,
3. eliminates an annual DCF reporting requirement on the effectiveness of the Mental and Behavioral Health Treatment Fund grant program, and
4. eliminates a DCF reporting requirement on racial disparities in the population of children in the juvenile justice system.

Lastly, it makes minor and technical changes (§ 9).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026, except the provisions on the juvenile justice racial disparities report (§ 8) and the technical change (§ 9) are effective October 1, 2026.

**§§ 1, 4, 5, 7 & 10 — CONSOLIDATED REPORT**

The bill generally consolidates eight separate DCF reporting requirements into one report to the legislature on DCF’s activities and makes various changes to the information it must provide. The table below describes the bill’s changes for each of these reporting requirements, listed by topic. The bill also makes other minor and technical changes.

In consolidating the current reporting requirements, the bill (1) shifts their due dates, from the current dates in the table below to October 15 of each year, starting in 2027, and (2) requires DCF to report on all of these topics on a fiscal year basis. It requires DCF to submit the consolidated report to both the Appropriations and Children committees, rather than only the latter as current law requires for most of the separate reports. (The two exceptions are described in the table below.)

The bill specifies that the report must not include personally identifying information.

**Table: Consolidated Report Requirements Included in § 1**

<b><i>Topic, Bill §, and Statutory Citation</i></b>	<b><i>Current Reporting Requirement and Due Date</i></b>	<b><i>Changes Under the Bill</i></b>
Race and Ethnicity Data (§ 10) (CGS § 17a-6e)	Data showing DCF services use by race and ethnicity, an assessment of usage trends, and recommendations for results-based accountability measures for parity in access to services  Due by February 15 each year	None
Visitation of Children in DCF Care (§ 5) (CGS § 17a-10a(f))	Data showing compliance with the law on visitation for children in DCF care due to temporary placements or commitment orders; must include the number of (1) children with out-of-home placements who have siblings, (2) child cases with documented sibling visits, and (2) individual siblings involved in each case	Requires the report to have the number of sibling pairs in each placement, rather than the number of individual siblings involved in each case

<b>Topic, Bill §, and Statutory Citation</b>	<b>Current Reporting Requirement and Due Date</b>	<b>Changes Under the Bill</b>
	Due by October 1 each year	
DCF-Operated Facilities (§ 10) (CGS § 17a-32a)	For each DCF-operated facility, (1) aggregate resident profiles; (2) descriptions of, and updates on, major initiatives; (3) key outcome indicators and results; (4) operating costs; and (5) descriptions of educational, vocational and literacy programs, behavioral treatment and other services for residents, and their outcomes  No specified due date	Requires this information to be submitted to the Appropriations and Children committees, rather than the State Advisory Council on Children and Families and each facility's respective advisory group; eliminates related requirements that (1) these advisory groups respond to their facilities' annual report and recommend improvements and enhancements they find necessary and (2) DCF serve as administrative staff to these groups and post these reports on its website
Reports of Animal Harm, Neglect, or Cruelty (§ 10) (CGS § 17a-100c)	Number of written reports made by DCF employees and animal control officers of actual or suspected instances of animal harm, neglect, or cruelty they received (currently, both the DCF and Department of Agriculture (DoAg) commissioner must report this information)  Due by February 15 each year	Eliminates the DoAg commissioner's reporting requirement and instead requires DCF to include in its report data from DoAg's monthly animal abuse reports to DCF, required under existing law
Family Assessment Response Program (§ 7) (CGS § 17a-101g(g))	Status of the family assessment response (FAR) program, including specified data, statistics, and analysis for the previous 12 months, such as the number of accepted reports of child abuse or neglect and percentage of reports assigned to the FAR program  Due by July 1 each year	Removes the requirement to include the percentage of families receiving a family assessment response broken down by race and ethnicity and makes minor and technical changes  Eliminates the current requirement that this information be included in the annual children's report card
Private Provider Outcomes (§ 10) (CGS 17a-63a)	Information on DCF's efforts to determine measurable outcomes and incorporate them in provider contracts, including the (1) number of service types with outcomes, (2) types of outcomes, (3) application of outcome information to quality improvement  No due date specified	Requires DCF to also include information on outcome achievement and other quality indicators as noted in annual evaluations of each provider

<b>Topic, Bill §, and Statutory Citation</b>	<b>Current Reporting Requirement and Due Date</b>	<b>Changes Under the Bill</b>
Foster Care Licensing Practices (§ 10) (CGS § 17a-114g)	Specified information on DCF foster care licensing practices including (1) its methods of ensuring it complies with foster care licensing laws and regulations, (2) its methods of assessing the needs of children and youths in foster care and providing support for foster parents to meet these needs, (3) DCF safeguards used when it seeks to license a relative caregiver with a history of child abuse or neglect or psychiatric illness or a criminal record, and (4) the results of DCF's random audits of its licensing practices  Due by January 1 each year	Requires the report to include the results of any DCF audits of its licensing practices, rather than just random audits
Juvenile Referrals and Diversions (§ 4) (CGS § 10-19m(c))	Information on the referral or diversion of children under 18 from the juvenile justice and court systems; must include specified statistics and demographic information (but not identifying information) and any other statistics and information the legislature may periodically request  Due to the entire General Assembly by December 1 every other year	Requires DCF to report this same information annually, rather than every two years, and eliminates the provision allowing the legislature to request other statistics and information

## **§§ 2 & 10 — BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP REPORTING**

The bill merges two existing DCF reporting requirements on the Behavioral Health Partnership. It repeals a provision that requires DCF and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to monitor the Behavioral Health Partnership's implementation and annually report to the legislature on any related estimated cost savings. The bill instead adds this cost savings reporting requirement to the existing annual report that DCF, DMHAS, and the Department of Social

Services must make evaluating the Behavioral Health Partnership program and its services. By law, this annual program evaluation must, among other things, include information on the services provided, number of people served, program outcomes, and spending on child and adult populations under the program.

The bill requires the agencies to submit the next annual program evaluation by October 1, 2026. By law, and under the bill, they must submit the report to the Appropriations, Children, Human Services, and Public Health committees.

### **§ 3 — FBI NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT**

The bill removes the requirement that DCF report any missing or abducted child in DCF custody to the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC). In practice, only law enforcement authorities may access the NCIC to make these reports.

By law, unchanged by the bill, DCF must, within 24 hours after a child in its custody is determined to be missing or abducted, notify the (1) law enforcement authority with jurisdiction where the child was reported missing or abducted and (2) National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

### **§ 6 — MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TREATMENT FUND GRANT PROGRAM REPORT**

The bill eliminates the requirement that DCF report annually on the effectiveness of the Mental and Behavioral Health Treatment Fund grant program. By law, this program is designed to help families with the costs of prescribed drugs or treatments and intensive services for children with mental and behavioral health conditions if insurance or Medicaid does not cover them. Under current law, DCF must submit the report to the Public Health Committee by January 1 of each year.

### **§ 8 — DCF DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY CONTACT REPORT**

Under current law, the DCF commissioner and other specified state officials and entities must each submit a report every two years to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) on the plans they have

developed and steps taken in the previous two fiscal years to address racial disparities in the juvenile justice system. The bill eliminates this reporting requirement for DCF, including the related requirement that its report include (1) efforts made to address racial disparities in the child welfare system and (2) an evaluation of the relationship between the child welfare system and racial disparity in the juvenile justice system.

The bill keeps the existing reporting requirement for the other officials and entities, specifically the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection commissioner, chief state's attorney, chief public defender, chief court administrator, and Police Officer Standards and Training Council. By law, OPM must compile these reports into one report for the governor and the General Assembly by December 31 of each odd-numbered year.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 17 Nay 0 (02/24/2026)