

Dear Committee Members-

I am an attorney representing children and parents in the foster care/juvenile dependency court system. This is the only legal work I do, and I love it. The reason I love it is that under the Parent Child Representation Program model I am able to respond quickly to clients and advocate for them with the agency or the Court. I am able to practice law in a trauma-informed because the PCR model provides case limits, case managers, funding for staff and funding for me to be able to work evenings and weekends, when emergencies often arise or when clients need to talk and problem solve in times of crises. I cannot tell you how awful it makes these clients feel when they are in crises and have to leave a voicemail. They have told me this so many times. It makes the clients feel like the lawyers are the same as the agency who has custody of their kids. Luckily, the PCR model allows me the time (and energy) to prioritize the clients' crises, almost always resulting in better outcomes (ie families are reunified or never separated).

In our 1st 1.5-2 years under the PCR in Columbia County, we helped reduce the number of children in foster care by almost half! And I know since we are in a budget discussion that you can imagine how much money this saves the state in foster homes and all the costs associated with finding and supporting them. I wish I could have testified live but I had a family issue arise. I could talk so much about the PCR if anyone wants to know more. Please maintain our funding and expand this program to as many counties as possible. Poor children and families are depending on it.

Thank you for your time.