DCF Legislative Testimony

March 3, 2026

TESTIMONY OF: Marc Altenbernt, General Counsel, Department for Children and Families

TESTIMONY ON: Oral | Oppose | HB2731 : Directing the secretary for children and families to contract with the office of the inspector general for the establishment of a fraud detection unit to detect, investigate and assist in prosecuting fraud in the food assistance program.

DCF | HB 2731 | FRAUD INVESTIGATIONS & CLIENT DATA

Chair Erickson and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on House Substitute HB2731, requiring the department for children and families and the office of inspector general to exchange information and documents related to cash assistance, childcare assistance and food assistance fraud investigations.

DCF's Fraud Investigations Unit aggressively **investigates**, **detects**, **prevents** and **prosecutes benefit recipient fraud** in all assistance programs. The unit operates under the DCF Office of General Counsel and partners with the Attorney General's Office of Inspector General (OIG) when applicable for cases involving SNAP, TANF and Child Care fraud. Under this new law, DCF would be required to exchange information and documents related to SNAP, Child Care and TANF investigations.

Much of the data used by DCF for the administration and enforcement of SNAP, TANF, and Child Care comes from the Social Security Administration. Sharing this data with the OIG would violate the Information Exchange Agreement between DCF and SSA. To the extent SSA data is incorporated into DCF systems, SSA may authorize it to redisclose SSA data as required by state law for *audits* of the state agencies' administration of the identified programs for which DCF was authorized to receive SSA data.

DCF would ask the committee to oppose the proposed bill and support the continued practice of DCF fulfilling its federally required fraud investigation activities and partnering with the OIG and the Attorney General's Office for assistance and prosecution without any additional requirements to share further data, documents or resources.

If the will of the committee is to see the bill passed out, DCF would propose the following language to ensure federal compliance.

PROPOSED LANGUAGE

(a)To facilitate in the detection, investigation and prosecution of fraud in the cash assistance, childcare assistance and food assistance programs, the secretary for children and families and the office of the inspector general shall exchange, *absent federal law to the contrary*,: