

Notes/speaking points for testimony on 10-20-15

Intro – Warren (BPD Sgt) Director at CUSI

I have a few main points I'd like to discuss today. First, before I discuss those points I'd like to talk about CUSI and the other SIU's around the state. (Discuss conversation with Major Glenn Hall VSP regarding their concerns of over burdening the SIU's- He is in agreement that there is too much piled on already)

- Each SIU very different
- Funding varies from SIU to SIU (some solely rely on SIU grant, others get contributions)
- Number of detectives varies from SIU to SIU
- Types of cases accepted and investigated varies from SIU to SIU
- Support staff and CAC's vary from county to county
- Some SIU's have direct supervision and some rely on supervision by administrators not directly associated with the SIU

CUSI is the biggest, and has most resources, however it sees the most complex cases, it is the longest running unit, it has the strongest reputation and has many outside agencies other than DCF all competing to partner on various fronts... Regardless of whether you are at CUSI, or a smaller SIU in the far corner of the state the challenges remain the same....

This brings me to my first point that I'd like to make to you today. "we are tasked with doing too much with too little"

I know we are here to speak specifically today about SIU notification of DCF unaccepted cases however, due to the increases in requirements put on the SIU's, there just aren't enough resources to handle any further increases in the workload. Remember, **the SIU's don't just investigate cases against children**, we are also required by the agencies in our regions to investigate adult sexual assault cases, cases involving vulnerable adults, as well as sex offender compliance checks. (over 350 in Chittenden County that we are being asked to check every quarter...Which we just can't do...)

The state legislature has passed recent legislation that now requires SIU's to investigate Human Trafficking cases. CUSI has already begun investigating a few Human Trafficking investigations. These cases involve adults as well as teenagers (as designed by statute). The victims in these cases are very different from other investigations and require different methods of gaining rapport by the investigators. We have had to invest in training investigators specifically in these types of investigations and will have to continue to attend trainings to further develop our investigative capacity in these areas. These cases are also VERY complex and require many investigators, many hours to complete even the most basic investigation due to the complex hierarchy of the organizations involved, and the vast amount of evidence needed to gather in these cases to be successful.

Adding the "notifications of unaccepted cases" to the SIU's is only making an already overworked system, even more overworked. We simply cannot be good at the work we do when we are tasked with too much overall. It is unknown exactly what the burden is going to be on the SIU's, as we have not been given an exact number or the exact criteria that will meet the threshold for notification. In Chittenden County, the number of cases referred could be significant. We are creating a system that WILL fail if it is not properly funded and designed.

If you look at the very first page of S9, you will see multiple places that reference proper funding. (Read the S9 highlighted areas).

The State of Vermont needs to re-evaluate the funding of the SIU's and provide an increase in funding to ALL SIU's to allow them to be successful prior to adding any new responsibilities that we simply cannot handle.

In the next 3 years, CUSI is seeing a rent increase of over \$55,000 a year by BGS. This money will have to come from the SIU budget which, if not increased, will be taken from other SIU's around the state who also need that money. There still remains questions about whether or not a "one year lease" (that is renewed year after year) violates the statute which states:

(1) The Commissioner of Buildings and General Services **may lease** or license State-owned property under his or her jurisdiction **for less than prevailing area market prices to municipalities, nonprofit organizations**, school districts, or to persons whose proposed activities are determined by the Commissioner to serve a public purpose and when the **term of the lease or license is less than three years**.

(2) The Commissioner of Buildings and General Services **may lease** or license State-owned property under his or her jurisdiction **for less than prevailing area market prices** with the approval of the Joint Fiscal Committee **when the term of the lease or license is three years or longer, or when the lease or license requested is a renewal of a lease or license issued pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection**.

During the fall of 2014 members of CUSI testified before a "special funding committee" that was put in place to evaluate the funding methods and attempt to secure better, more secure funding sources. At CUSI, we currently struggle with towns that do not pay their full contribution that is requested for our budget as well as towns that threaten to remove their investigator year after year due to the high cost associated with having an investigator assigned there.

In Closing, I would like to reiterate that these cases are extremely complex, they require a significant amount of experience and training to investigate and they require time. These cases are not completed in one day, one week, or even one month in most cases. Technology brings a new increased level of time and energy required to investigate these cases and it only gets worse as time goes on. The current system cannot continue to get tasked with solving every new problem without having the resources to do it. There simply is a maximum capacity and the SIU's are at it. This needs to be considered when the legislature drafts laws that affect the types of cases that the SIU's will be required to investigate.