



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 512

January Session, 2001

Substitute Senate Bill No. 470

Senate, April 30, 2001

The Committee on Education reported through SEN. GAFFEY of the 13th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT CONCERNING RESEARCH AND EVALUATION PROJECTS
RELATED TO THE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN
CONNECTICUT.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (a) The Commission on Children shall establish a
2 formal relationship with The University of Connecticut School of
3 Family Studies by August 1, 2001, to carry out research and evaluation
4 projects related to the well-being of children and families in
5 Connecticut including, but not limited to:

6 (1) Detailed data collection and analysis to determine client
7 populations served, reasons services are provided, services received,
8 services available and not used and case management and service
9 outcomes;

10 (2) Identification of the indicators of risk for child abuse, neglect,
11 and abandonment, juvenile delinquency, educational failure, mental
12 illness, emotional disturbance and substance abuse in children, and the

13 prevention and intervention policies and programs required to address
14 those risks at the earliest point possible, including ways to maximize
15 points of contact with and referral to service systems;

16 (3) A detailed assessment of current service needs and projected
17 needs based, to the extent possible, on client population analyses, well-
18 being indicators, surveys and clinical studies; and

19 (4) The development and monitoring of indicators to measure the
20 progress toward goals of current state policies and programs for
21 children and their families, including, but not limited to, healthy,
22 thriving children, strong, nurturing families, positive youth
23 development and educational progress and success.

24 (b) The University of Connecticut School of Family Studies shall
25 apply for funding from public and private sources to support the
26 research and evaluation required by this section in addition to state
27 appropriations it may receive.

28 (c) For the purposes of conducting the research and evaluation
29 required by this section, The University of Connecticut School of
30 Family Studies shall be granted complete access to all records of all
31 state agencies and state-funded programs providing services to
32 children and their families. The university and any such agencies and
33 programs shall at all times protect the right of privacy of all
34 individuals involved, in accordance with section 17a-28 of the general
35 statutes.

36 (d) The Commission on Children shall submit the results of the
37 research and evaluation required by this section to the Governor and
38 the General Assembly on or before January 1, 2002, and annually
39 thereafter.

40 Sec. 2. This act shall take effect from its passage.

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

Subsection (c) was rewritten as two sentences for clarity.

KID	<i>Joint Favorable Subst. C/R</i>	HS
HS	<i>Joint Favorable Subst. C/R</i>	ED
ED	<i>Joint Favorable Subst.-LCO</i>	

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: See Explanation Below

Affected Agencies: University of Connecticut, Commission on Children, Various State Agencies

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

State Impact:

This bill requires the Commission on Children to establish a formal relationship with the University of Connecticut School of Family Studies to carry out research and evaluation projects relating to children and families. The bill specifies that the UConn School of Family Studies shall apply for public and private sources of funding to support the projects in addition to state appropriations it may receive.

It is unclear as to how many research projects will be completed and the cost resulting from the data collection and analysis. sHB 6668, the Appropriations Act (as favorably reported by the Appropriations Committee), does not include funding specifically earmarked for these projects. The Commission on Children can establish this formal relationship with UConn School of Family Studies and submit results of the required research and evaluation to the Governor and General Assembly within the available resources. It is not clear to what extent existing resources within the School of Family Studies can be used for

these projects.

In addition, this bill requires all state agencies and state-funded service programs providing services to children and their families to give the UConn School of Family Studies complete access to all records. The various state agencies responsible for maintaining these records will experience a workload increase. The extent of which will vary depending on the volume of data held, and the administrative support required to provide such access. However, it should be noted that due to federal law, the Department of Social Services may not be able to accommodate all such requests for data. Federal law mandates that information regarding client-specific Medicaid services can only be shared if necessary for the direct administration of the program.

OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 470

AN ACT CONCERNING RESEARCH AND EVALUATION PROJECTS RELATED TO THE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN CONNECTICUT.**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the Commission on Children to establish a formal relationship with UConn's School of Family Studies to research and evaluate the well-being of Connecticut's children and families. The research must examine service needs, clients, risk indicators, and performance indicators. The commission must establish this relationship by August 1, 2001 and report annually to the governor and legislature on the research results beginning January 1, 2002.

The bill requires all state agencies and state-funded service providers to give School of Family Studies' researchers complete access to all records. But they must protect individual's privacy rights in accordance with state law governing the confidentiality of Department of Children and Families records.

The bill also requires the School of Family Studies to apply for public and private research funds to support this effort.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION PROJECTS

The projects on child and family well-being the bill describes include:

1. collecting and analyzing data to determine who is served and why, what services they receive with what outcomes, what services are available but not used, and what the outcomes are of case management;
2. indentifying risk indicators for child abuse and neglect, juvenile

delinquency, educational failure, mental illness and emotional disturbance, and substance abuse in children;

3. identifying prevention and intervention policies and programs to address identified risks at the earliest possible point, including ways to maximize contact with services;
4. assessing current and projected service needs, based as much as possible on client population analysis, well-being indicators, and surveys and clinical studies; and
5. developing and monitoring indicators that measure progress toward current state policy and program goals for children and families, including healthy children, nurturing families, positive youth development, and educational success.

CONFIDENTIALITY REQUIREMENTS

The bill requires all state agencies and state-funded service providers providing services to children and families to give School of Family Studies' researchers complete access to all records. But they must protect individual's privacy rights in accordance with state law governing the confidentiality of records the Department of Children and Families maintains.

That law, while generally requiring a person named in a department record to consent before it can be disclosed, allows the commissioner to disclose records without consent to people conducting bona fide research if she determines it is in the best interest of the person named in the record. But no information identifying the person can be disclosed unless it is essential for the research, the person or his representative has authorized disclosure in writing, and the department gives written approval. Disclosure under this law means an oral summary or allowing the review or copying of records in whole, part, or summary form.

It is not clear whether or how the requirement that this law govern access to records under the bill might affect other laws that govern access to particular records. For example, the 1974 Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act governs access to students' records, and state

law bars inspection of these records without a court order. Court records of delinquency matters, including medical and psychological studies, are generally confidential and can be disclosed only by court order. They may be made available to state agencies providing services to delinquents, but these agencies may not disclose them further. And information about people applying for or receiving assistance from the Department of Social Services cannot be disclosed except for purposes directly related to the administration of assistance programs.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Select Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference
Yea 12 Nay 0

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference
Yea 16 Nay 0

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Report
Yea 32 Nay 0