



**Committee on Government Administration and Elections**  
**Public Testimony of Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund**  
**RE: Proposed Bill No. 949: *An Act Improving Data Security and Agency Effectiveness***  
**Submitted by: Ashley Nelson, Research Associate**  
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My name is Ashley Nelson and I am the Research Associate at the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF). CWEALF is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to empowering women, girls, and their families to achieve equal opportunities in their personal and professional lives. Our Research and Evaluation department evaluates the effectiveness of programs supporting women and girls in the state. On behalf of CWEALF, I am writing in support of Proposed Senate Bill No. 949: *An Act Improving Data Security and Agency Effectiveness*.

**CWEALF supports Proposed Bill No. 949 because it:**

- 1) protects confidentiality by including clear, comprehensive protocols for the release of confidential information;**
- 2) supports real-time evaluations of state programs by reducing the turnaround time for data requests; and**
- 3) provides opportunities for longitudinal outcome evaluations of state programs.**

Proposed Bill No. 949 would protect the confidentiality of individuals by providing comprehensive protocols for the release of confidential information and for instances of data breaches. State agencies would themselves define confidential information, which will prevent any conflicts with current data confidentiality laws. The bill would allow the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to have control over the release of the information, ensuring a common data storage standard for contractors receiving confidential data. It would also expedite the process of reporting any data breaches because contractors would only need to notify a single person rather than several state agencies.

With a reduced turnaround time for state agency data requests, our agency would be able to complete real-time evaluations of state programs. In the past, we have been contracted to evaluate the effectiveness of state agency programs. With the current system, we need to submit separate requests across state agencies. This is time intensive and costly for state agencies contracting for our services. Data turnaround time differs between agencies; one agency may fulfill a request in two weeks, another may take several months. This delays the process of reporting program outcomes to state agencies, which delays improvements to these programs.

With this bill, our organization will be able to more easily complete longitudinal outcome evaluations of state education and employment programs. If this bill is passed we hope to use data from the Department of Labor and Board of Regents to determine effective education strategies that increase the number of women in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers. We also aim to assess State Department of Education data on whether lower-income students' participation in youth development and career readiness programs yields positive career and educational outcomes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. I respectfully request your support of Proposed Bill No. 949 to increase the ease and efficiency of evaluating programs.