



Testimony before the Government Administration and Elections Committee
In support of Governor's Bill 949 "An Act Improving Data Security and Agency Effectiveness."

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Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila, Senator McLachlan, Representative Smith, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, my name is Michelle Riordan-Nold and I am the Director of the CT Data Collaborative and I'm here today in support of the Governor's Bill 949 "An Act Improving Data Security and Agency Effectiveness." The purpose of the bill is to give OPM the authority to act on behalf of executive agencies and respond to research requests that require access to data maintained by two or more agencies.

This is definitely a step in the right direction to enable researchers greater access to public data. At the CT Data Collaborative we struggle with not only getting access to public data but also in a timely manner. Right now in order to get data, we go agency by agency, contacting the people we know and with whom we have relationships, and plead for them to send us the data. It is a lengthy process, we are asking it of agency staff who have many other responsibilities and are stretched thin, and staff are often dealing with antiquated systems to get the data. We work with many organizations to help get them access to data so they can answer important policy questions.

Centralizing data requests within OPM could help minimize the amount of time it takes to get data but also potentially reduce redundancies as OPM can serve as the filter and see if the same data is frequently being requested. It also opens up the doors to be able to answer research questions that are currently unanswerable without cross-agency longitudinal data.

I think it's really critical to understand the types of questions we're talking about answering with linked data across agencies. So let me give you a few examples.

I've heard discussion in this building about limiting student testing. As part of the decision making process for determining whether that's a good idea or not, it would be great to look at whether or not testing has been shown to be predictive of college graduation rates and



employment outcomes. This would require data from SDE to be linked with data from UConn, Board of Regents, and DOL.

Are the state's efforts to increase STEM education and awareness resulting in citizens being employed in STEM fields? This would require SDE data linked to DOL data.

Which schools have high numbers of students at risk of involvement with the juvenile justice system, and how can data help these schools and others manage the risks? This requires linking SDE, DCF, and juvenile justice data.

As the bill addresses, it's important that the proper protocols and mechanisms are in place for ensuring that greater access to data is also balanced with the appropriate protections for confidentiality and securing confidential data.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any question.