

Housing Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5375

AN ACT CREATING A WORKING GROUP TO STUDY HOUSING OPTIONS

Title: FOR PERSONS REENTERING THE COMMUNITY AFTER INCARCERATION.

Vote Date: 3/14/2018

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/6/2018

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Housing Committee,

Rep. Brandon L. McGee, 5th Dist.,

Rep. Larry B. Butler, 72nd Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

Formerly incarcerated persons have difficulty integrating back into communities, including finding stable housing. Reentry is concentrated in certain neighborhoods, likely to be disadvantaged, disproportionately minority, and low institutional investment, all which could contribute to recidivism rates. This bill creates a working group to study housing options for those reentering the community after incarceration.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Evonne Klein, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Housing; supports this bill. It was pointed out that as part of an existing interagency collaborative with the Department of Corrections, The Connecticut Collaborative on Re-Entry already has had successful outcomes, which targets permanent supportive housing to households from homeless services to correctional systems. Recidivism rates for program participants are significantly less than the general re-entry population.

Subira Gordon, Executive Director, Commission on Equity and Opportunity; supports this bill pointing out that it is aimed to provide recommendations to policy makers that will help this population examine the current reentry process, and determine where changes can be made to assist with reintegration.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Brandon McGee, 5th Dist., State Representative; supports this bill because there is concern for both short-term and long-term housing options for persons released from prison and jail, particularly the population that suffers from mental illnesses and chronic substance abuse. This bill would provide understanding for the need for reentry housing in order to create policy or programs to assist in this process.

Raphael L. Podolsky, Public Policy Advocate, Connecticut Legal Services; supports this bill sharing the concern that Connecticut has increasingly recognized the importance of reentry issues for reintegrating formerly incarcerated residents into the community. Proper policy would stabilize living arrangements for persons reentering the community.

Chris Senecal, Senior Communications and Marketing, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving; supports this bill citing that it will expand and generate dialogue about housing options and barriers Connecticut residents face as they reenter their communities after incarceration. This bill would allow organizations, policymakers and funders to work together to understand these housing needs and provide evidence-based recommendations.

Kaley Lentini, Legislative Council, American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut; supports this bill pointing out it would enable a working group to study all available options for formerly incarcerated people facing challenges of finding safe, affordable and stable housing. This working group would demonstrate that the legislature recognizes the importance of this.

Ellen Crichton, Graduate Student, The University of Connecticut School of Social Work; supports this bill stating that without safe and stable housing, individuals reentering the community after incarceration cannot focus on other issues that may have led them into the judicial system to begin with.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Stated.

Reported by: Zoë Gluck

Date: 03/19/2018