

Government Administration and Elections Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5172

AN ACT CONCERNING STATE AGENCY DATA MANAGEMENT AND PROCESSES, THE TRANSMITTAL OF TOWN PROPERTY ASSESSMENT INFORMATION AND THE SUSPENSION OF CERTAIN REGULATORY

Title: REQUIREMENTS.

Vote Date: 3/9/2018

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/26/2018

File No.: 55

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Elections Committee, on behalf of the Office of Policy and Management

REASONS FOR BILL:

House Bill 5172 helps to improve the way the state will manage and use data to improve state agency programs and policies. Additionally, it ensures the open data portal will be a core responsibility of OPM so both the public and the state agencies continue to have easy access to critical datasets. And requires the creation of Open Data Publishing Plans so that there will be more predictability in the data that agencies make available. Making data available will help the public and state agencies to be more efficient and allow for better analysis to make improvements in government at all levels, support more evidence based policy making, and enhance transparency. The bill also establishes that all executive branch agencies will participate in LeanCT, the statewide government process improvement initiative which seeks to improve the services state agencies deliver. This legislation will officially codify the existence of the statewide process improvement steering committee, which has been working together since 2013. HB 5172 also requires each town that possesses digital parcel data in a geographic information systems format submit that data to its council of governments (cog) on an annual basis. This will help by eliminating an agency's need to submit numerous requests for data, and also reduce the burden on towns to process those requests. Finally, the bill will streamline operations by allowing agencies to accept electronic filing of documents and data. This will enhance an agency's ability to implement more effective service to the public and eliminate outdated paper based systems.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Benjamin Barnes, Secretary, Office of Policy and Management

Secretary Barnes notes that Connecticut has been a pioneer among states in the area of Open Data and that the state has been nationally recognized on multiple occasions. e been nationally recognized on multiple occasions. Since the inception of the Open Data Portal, state agencies have released over 550 datasets consisting of over 80 million records that have been accessed over 7.5 million times. House Bill No. 5172 will enable OPM to establish policies and principles to ensure the state's data is more effectively managed and used to support a more effective government. Further, updating the existing LeanCT statute will help to accurately reflect the work of Connecticut's statewide process improvement initiative, which has been actively engaged in state agency improvement work for nearly 5 years. Finally, several agencies and others consistently request parcel data (property boundaries) from municipalities on an ad hoc basis. HB 5172 will create a more efficient process for both state agencies and municipalities.

Michael R. Bzdyra, Commissioner, CT Department of Motor Vehicles

The Department of Motor Vehicles strongly supports section three of this bill and endorses using a disciplined approach to improving our processes that is data driven. Commissioner Bzdyra argues that HB 5172 is "critical for agencies so they can holistically and methodically make improvements to their service delivery". Furthermore, DMV's participation in the Statewide Process Improvement Steering Committee has allowed them to exchange ideas with other agencies and create solutions to inefficiencies.

Melody Currey, Commissioner, Department of Administrative Services (DAS)

Commissioner Currey notes that DAS has always supported improving the quality of state data, sharing data across agencies and analyzing it to find opportunities for "integration and innovation". The agency is supportive the LEAN practices and principles and believes that section 5 of the bill is "a common sense and efficient way of conforming state laws and regulations to modern practices".

CT Department of Social Services (DSS)

The Department of Social Services specifically supports Section 3, which relates to streamlining business processes and Section 5 regarding electronic filing of documents and data. DSS has implemented numerous LeanCT process improvements that have helped that agency transform the way they do business. Some of the initiatives include restructuring the Medicaid health care program, modernizing agency technology, rebalancing long-term services and supports and implementing major advances in benefit accuracy and timeliness in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

CT Department of Agriculture

The Department of Agriculture is a strong supporter of LeanCT and supports electronic filing as it will help improve government's response time and manage submissions.

CT Department of Developmental Services

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) supports the codification of Executive Order 39 regarding Open Data and codify LeanCT best practices. The agency has experienced the benefits of being part of a community of agencies working together to promote business process improvement through the Lean process. DDS believes that the

move to electronic filings and submissions is one of the single most impactful actions government can make because it helps to reduce paper. Additionally, by adopting electronic filing processes, agencies “can speed up response times, better track and manage submissions, and can utilize data analytics to understand work in progress and identify any backlogs or issues requiring action”. For example, DDS has implemented a fully-electronic filing process for new provider qualifications and contract execution. They assert that the staff can now access all information electronically, see progress of activities, and request modification or changes that can be re-submitted in minutes rather than weeks. And their community providers can submit information in real-time from any internet connection in a secure fashion, which gives them more time supporting the individuals they work with

CT Insurance Department

The Insurance Department supports section 3 with regard to LEAN initiatives and section 5 with regard to e-filing and e-signatures. The Department has used LEAN practices to help improve turnaround times for the review of all insurance products so that consumers have more choices of products. Additionally, through LEAN processes have helped the Department eliminate inefficient internal process and improved communication of department standards and expectations to companies. The efficiencies have allowed the Department to redeploy two staff to the Department’s Market Conduct unit.

Scott Jackson, Commissioner, CT Department of Labor

Commissioner Jackson notes that the Department of Labor support for Section 3 and Section 5 of the bill. The Department has been involved with LEAN process improvement activities for the past fourteen years and has been part of the Statewide Process Improvement Committee since it began in 2013. The more usage of LEAN process improvement activities within organizations yields more positive outcomes with waste reduction and preservation of resources. The Department of Labor has instituted processes that allow employers and employees to file certain forms and documents electronically.

Elin Katz, Office of Consumer Counsel

Ms. Katz asserts that, “In this global Information Age in which Connecticut competes, big data has value to all segments of the Connecticut market, including government, community anchor institutions, and residents and businesses”. The work enabled by H.B. 5172 provides the confidence and volume of data that users require through the open access to the quality and unbiased public data that H.B. 5172 ensures.

Robert Klee, Commissioner, CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

DEEP Supports HB 5171. In 2011, DEEP was one of the founding members of the state-wide process improvement steering committee. DEEP supports a state-wide process improvement initiative with an established steering committee chaired by the Office of Policy and Management (OPM). DEEP has offered process improvement training to other agencies, participated in interagency LEAN events and opened DEEP’s doors for other agencies to participate in or observe our LEAN events.

Evonne Klein, Commissioner, CT Department of Housing

Commissioner Klein asserts that HB 5172 will build upon Connecticut’s proven track record of success by creating a coordinated strategy to manage and treat data as a strategic asset. For these reasons the Department of Housing strongly supports Raised Bill 5172, specifically sections 3 and 5.

Kevin Lembo, CT State Comptroller

Comptroller Lembo notes that transparency in Connecticut state government has vastly improved in recent years. For example, in 2009 the state received a C- in PIRG's annual "Follow the Money" state financial transparency ranking. Connecticut was one of only 5 states to receive an A+ grade.

The Comptroller's office initiated and maintains Open Connecticut – a centralized online hub for state financial data. It includes tools like OpenCheckbook, OpenBudget and OpenPayroll, which are built upon the state's open data platform. According to These applications take complex financial data and make it easy for users to search, study and export key state financial information. The Comptroller puts his support behind open data initiatives in Connecticut.

Jorge Perez, Commissioner, Department of Banking

Commissioner Perez supports HB 5172, especially sections 3 and 5. He asserts that because of the LEAN initiative, the Department of Banking, "was able to reallocate three financial examiners to other divisions to help increase our capacity to perform additional examinations of the entities we regulate, a vital part of the work we do to protect Connecticut consumers of financial services". Furthermore, the Department was able to digitize and centralize several processes within the consumer affairs division and begin a new online consumer assistance form that has reduced consumer wait time by up to 5 days. The Department's is now ahead of industry standards when it comes to the average time needed to close complaint cases.

Raul Pino, Commissioner, CT Department of Public Health (DPH)

The DPH is a strong supporter of the LEAN process. As members of the Licensure Certification Workgroup established by Special Act 17-21, they have firsthand experience of the benefits of working collaboratively with sister state agencies and nonprofit partners to promote process improvement. They note that by creating multi-agency and public-private partnerships it helps to remove the red-tape and redundancy while providing value to the individuals they support daily.

Michelle Seagull, Commissioner, CT Department of Consumer Protection (DCP)

Commissioner Segull notes that the Department of Consumer Protection has participated in the LEAN process; along with many other state agencies and that the results are tremendous, saving hundreds of hours of staff time. This has enabled the DCP to better allocate internal resources DCP has already moved toward accepting most applications and renewals of credentials electronically and fully supports fully modernizing state agency business processes.

Catherine H. Smith, Commissioner, CT Department of Economic and Community Development

Commissioner Smith notes that since the state is working with less, that HB 5172 helps to ensure that the state is operating efficiently and transparently.

Dianna Wentzell, Commissioner, CT State Department of Education (CSDE)

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) strongly supports the Office of Policy and Management's (OPM) efforts to lead a statewide process improvement initiative as outlined in Section 3 of HB 5172. In the past few years, they have streamlined educator certification processes and eliminated or greatly reduced data collections from districts.

The CSDE also supports the new language introduced in subsection (c) of Section 5 of HB 5172. This would enable the CSDE to become more responsive to the needs of its constituents by suspending any agency regulatory requirements for paper/facsimile submissions and instead utilize electronic submissions where appropriate.

David Wilkenson, Commissioner, Office of Early Childhood (OEC)

OEC has used the LEAN framework within two of its divisions to transform agency work streams. For example, OEC's contract payment process in its Family Support Division underwent the LEAN process to identify steps within the work stream that were time consuming and not valuable. As a result of the LEAN process, the division was able to reduce the amount of time and effort to complete the process, resulting in increased customer satisfaction.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Michelle Riodran-Nold, Executive Director, Connecticut Data Collaborative

Ms. Riodran-Nold, notes that the Connecticut Data Collaborative works with state agency staff, nonprofit staff and community organizations and sees the need for data collected by state agencies to provide context to data collected in programs. She asserts that, "data users from all sectors across the state are hungry for unbiased, high quality public data".

Katie Roy, Director and Founder, Connecticut School Finance Project

Increased public data helps to drive programming decisions, support funding opportunities, and benefit the health and well-being of our residents and municipalities. Ms. Roy asserts that it is important to be able to access and work with public data to ensure, "thoughtful, conscientious policymaking" and also to have an "informed, knowledgeable, and engaged public". H.B. 5172 helps meet these calls for accessible public data, and further enhances and solidifies Connecticut's commitment to data transparency, which is fundamental to good governance and good policy.

Matt Fulda, Executive Director, CT Metropolitan Council of Governments

Mr. Fulda supports the bill, with reservations.

Frances Pickering, Executive Director, Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG)

WestCOG supports initiatives to facilitate data collection, processing, and analysis at the regional level, as well as to share that data with the state. In our experience, the COGs are a natural fit for the type of data collection and storage. However, WestCOG is concerned because municipalities store data in many ways. Municipalities store data, including parcel maps and property cards, in a wide variety of formats. These discrepancies present a significant challenge to using the data. They suggest that the process be standardized and

include all stakeholders, including the state, COGs, and municipalities, as well as software vendors.

Pickering also notes that state funding to the COGs has been sharply reduced. These cuts have resulted in staff reductions, elimination of needed computing purchases, and slowing/suspension of projects.

WestCOG supports the intent of the bill. However, they believe that they do not have the resources to more than minimally satisfy new unfunded mandates.

Steven Birney, Norwalk, CT

The bill is important first step in developing a shared data model with respect to town's digital parcel files and assessor databases.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Betsy Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST)

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns *opposes* Section 4 of HB 5172 that mandates that towns electronically transmit property assessment data to the regional Councils of Government (COGs) or the Office of Policy and Management (OPM). They assert that the bill seeks to codify Executive Order 39, but the Order does not mandate the transmittal of a municipality's property assessment data to the COGs or OPM.

While the requirement is limited to towns that possess or have contracted for the creation of a digital parcel file, COST is concerned that this requirement will wind up being another unfunded mandate on municipalities. They are also concerned about the costs associated with transmitting and updating digital parcel files and are also concerned if information included in the digital file is protected from disclosure under the security exemptions outlined in the state's Freedom of Information Act. Ms. Gara noted that most municipalities are actively engaged as members of their COGs. If they believe their COG needs access to a digital parcel file, they can provide this information to them at their discretion, subject to the limitations of the state's FOI laws.

Steve Perry, GISP

Mr. Perry makes comments and suggestions in relations to Section 4 relating to Digital Parcel Data. He argues that having accurate and up to date parcel data is key in economic growth, public safety, storm water management and transportation to name a few. And cites the State of Vermont's "Statewide Digital Parcel Return on Investment Study" completed in 2015 that highlighted various cost savings when there was access to digital parcels.

Mr. Perry supports the idea of the State obtaining digital parcel data from local units of government (LUG) but feels that the language in the bill will not lead to the desire outcome. He presents several problems and possible solutions. He believes that the State should gather the proper stake holders in the Surveying, Assessor and GIS community (CT GIS Steering Committee) to craft a statewide parcel program that benefits everyone. And

suggests looking at the state of Wisconsin's program (see link cited in testimony). He also argues that there needs to be "Buy-in" from the LUG's are critical for a successful parcel program. Work with the COG's, Assessor Associations, and Planning Associations to convey the benefits of a statewide digital parcel program. He suggests formulating a standard statewide parcel scheme based on stakeholder input and looking at current parcel business models between the state and LUG's. Then they can see how incorporating a digital version can benefit the process both in time and money. And possibly pass the savings to the LUG's to support their parcel maintenance program. Finally, he suggests that we should work to get non digital parcel LUG's converted and maintained digitally and devise a funding mechanism to sustain the digital parcel program.

Reported by: Susan Tufts

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