

Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-165

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TECHNICAL REVISIONS TO ITS

Title: STATUTES.

Vote Date: 3/9/2018

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/28/2018

File No.: 88

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Public Health Committee
Department of Developmental Services

REASONS FOR BILL:

SB-165 makes numerous technical changes to statutes governing the Department of Developmental Services. These changes include the replacing of identifying terminology such as "client" or "consumer" with first person identifiers such as "individual" or "person". Other changes to the statutes include the appointment of members by camp participants to the Camp Harkness Advisory Committee, and the Department of Developmental Services' regional advisory and planning councils. This will allow other relatives, rather than just parents of individuals with intellectual disabilities, to participate in the councils.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner, Department of Developmental Services:

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) supports SB-165. DDS believes the statute changes replace obsolete terminology with "plain language", which will standardize the usage of certain terms throughout DDS statutes. Specifically, the proposed language includes (1) changes most references from "parent, guardian or conservator" to "legal representative" (2) replaces "parent" with "family" in certain section where not only a parent could be involved; (3) replaces "client", "consumer" and "patient" with "individual" or "person" (4) uses gender neutral terms; (5) replaces "caretaker" with "caregiver" and (6) replaces "ward" with "protected person" to reflect Probate Court terminology. Also, the proposed bill would allow a "relative" instead or a "parent" to be appointed to the Camp Harkness Advisory Committee.

DDS' recommendations come from families, providers, advocates and stakeholders who wish to promote appropriate language concerning persons with disabilities. DDS submitted Joint Favorable Substitute language to the Legislative Commissioners' Office for consideration.

Steven Hernandez, Executive Director, Connecticut Commission on Women, Children and Seniors:

The Connecticut Commission on Women, Children and Seniors (CWCS) submitted language for amending SB-165 in order to reinvigorate the Family Support Council for Children with Disabilities. The Family Support Council has numerous empowerments which enable it to support families and caregivers of children with disabilities. These empowerments include the removal of economic and academic obstacles that prevent children and their families from reaching their full potential.

In that respect, CWCS requests revisions to the general statutes, Section 17a-219c by adding a new subsection. This subsection would establish a working group by CWCS and UCONN University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities in order to evaluate the ongoing mission and mandate of the Family Support Council. The working group may include representation from various state departments related to children and health such as the Office of Early Childhood, Child Advocate, Department of Children and Families, Department of Public Health. The group would submit their findings and recommendations to the Public Health Committee no later than December 31, 2018.

For specific language revision recommendations, please see testimony provided by CWCS.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Stan Soby, Oak Hill:

Mr. Soby supports SB-165 as it will improve the statutory language by making it more individual-centered and less stigmatizing of Connecticut citizens with disabilities.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None provided.

Reported by: Valentina Mehmeti

Date: 3/12/2018