

Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-171

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY DESIGNATION.

Vote Date: 3/9/2018

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/28/2018

File No.: 23

Disclaimer: *The following Joint Favorable Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Public Health Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

SB-171 allows physical therapists who have received a doctorate in physical therapy from an accredited institution to use the designation “Doctor of Physical Therapy” or “D.P.T”. The bill prohibits anyone who does not meet the criteria of the designation from using it or its abbreviation. A violation of the prohibition is considered a Class D felony.

The bill removes obsolete statutory references to “registered physical therapist”.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Department of Public Health:

The Department of Public Health (DPH) has no concerns with the addition of “Doctor of Physical Therapy” to the list of terms a licensed physical therapist can use, however, their concern lies with the language as currently written on the bill. DPH notes the language would not prohibit licensed physical therapists that do not possess a doctorate from using the “D.P.T.” designation.

DPH submitted the following substitute language for consideration:

- (a) (1) *No person may practice as a physical therapist unless licensed pursuant to this chapter. No person may use the term “Registered Physical Therapist”, “Licensed Physical Therapist”, “Doctor of Physical Therapy” or “Physical Therapist” or the letters “R.P.T.”, “L.P.T”, “D.P.T” or any other letters, words or insignia indicating or implying licensure as a physical therapist in this state unless the person is so licensed and, for doctors of physical therapy, has attained such degree.*

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Connecticut State Medical Society:

The Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS) is not in opposition of SB-171, however, they ask that the language be amended in order to provide transparency as to the specific degree which enables the word “doctor” to be used. CSMS believes that the public associates the term doctor with its common usage of medical practice. CSMS notes that over the past decade there has been an exponential increase in the types of healthcare providers, and as such, the holder of a Doctorate of Physical Therapy should always be required to use the word “doctor” in association with “Physical Therapy”, and never in isolation. This would benefit patients as they deserve to know the credentials of their healthcare provider and their abilities as a doctor as not all holders of doctorate degrees can diagnose or prescribe medication.

Victor Vaughan, Connecticut Physical Therapy Association:

The Connecticut Physical Therapy Association (CTAPTA) is in support of SB-171. According to CTAPTA, the addition of adding Doctor of Physical Therapy as a designation will comply with national standards as described by the American Physical Therapy Association. Currently, a Doctor of Physical Therapy is the national standard for entry level education required by CAPTE, the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education. CTAPTA urges the Committee to make a change to the statute, which is to delete the term Registered Physical Therapist, or R.P.T. as it is no longer in use.

Perry M. Siegel, Connecticut Athletic Trainers’ Association:

The Connecticut Athletic Trainers’ Association (CATA) believes the designation of “Doctor of Physical Therapy” is justified, however, they believe the language needs to be amended. CATA suggests that the language needs to clearly define a physical therapist that uses the title doctor, and that such doctors should be responsible and make sure that no person believes they are a physician or surgeon. Under Connecticut state statute chapter 370, CATA believes that a doctor of physical therapy designation would not qualify them as a “health care provider”.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None provided.

Reported by: Valentina Mehmeti

Date: 3/12/2018