

Public Health Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

10:00 AM in Room 1A of the LOB

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM by Chairwoman, Sen. Gerratana T. S06.

The following committee members were present:

Senators: Gerratana T. S06; Kennedy T. S12; Logan G. S17; Markley J. S16;
Moore M. S22; Somers H. S18

Representatives: Betts W. 078; Borer D. 115; Candelora V. 086; Carpino C. 032;
Cook M. 065; Cummings S. 074; Demicco M. 021; Genga H. 010;
Klarides-Ditria N. 105; McCarty K. 038; Perillo J. 113; Petit W. 022;
Riley E. 046; Ryan K. 139; Scanlon S. 098; Srinivasan P. 031;
Staneski P. 119; Steinberg J. 136; Tercyak P. 026; Winkler M. 056

Absent were:

Senators:

Representatives: Juleson-Scopino K. 012

Sen. Gerratana convened the meeting at 10:02 AM.

Sen. Gerratana asked for a motion to JF to the Floor [Substitute for H.B. No. 5169](#) (Raised) (File No. 232) An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Office of Early Childhood. (Ed,Ph)

Rep. Steinberg offered the motion which was seconded by Rep. Betts.

Sen. Gerratana noted that this bill comes from the Education Committee and it has been referred to the Public Health Committee because the Office of Early Childhood

statutes are here. H.B. 5169 includes recommendations for the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and makes a number of filing changes based on these recommendations. Part I of the bill allows homeless children and youth, as defined under federal law, to attend a childcare center, a group child care home, or a family child care home up to 90 days without meeting the customary physical immunization requirements. According to the testimony of Mr. Wilkinson, commissioner of OEC, the bill would allow a child experiencing homelessness to immediately enroll in an early childhood setting and gives parents 90 days to submit the health physical immunization records. According to OEC, the H.B. 5169 makes additional changes.

Rep. Petit asked for an explanation on the thought process of the language added to the bill. He said he assumed the genesis of the 90 compliance clause is threefold, namely it complies with federal guidelines to ensure federal funding. The concern is about students who are homeless or immigrants and may not have a trail of immunization records. A 90 day period may be too long to not be vaccinated especially without record knowledge of communicable diseases.

Sen. Gerratana noted that H.B. 5169 comes from the Education Committee. The concerns posed by Rep. Petit have been discussed in the testimony provided by Mr. Wilkinson. In regards to families coming to Connecticut from Puerto Rico due to Hurricane Maria, section 19a-79 of the bill discusses the particularity of such circumstances.

Rep. Petit asked if lines 118 through 129 were the changes in the bill.

Sen. Gerratana confirmed that is correct.

Rep. Petit expressed concerns with the 90 day clause. As a Public Health Director of a small town, he noted that he would have done everything in his power to get a child could immunized within a week or 10 days, rather than 90 days.

Sen. Gerratana said she shares her concerns however the focus of the new language is on individuals or children who may be relocating to our area from Puerto Rico. Since Puerto Rico is part of the United States in terms of citizenship and records might've been destroyed during Hurricane Maria, the State of Connecticut is making such accommodations for the 90 day period. It may also be a recommendation based on experience since the commissioner decided this was an appropriate procedure.

Rep. Petit said he would vote no on the bill. He understands the issue however thinks it is unwise that a student could attend school for 90 days without being vaccinated.

Sen. Gerratana said that Connecticut must prioritize families who are experiencing homelessness, including giving them reasonable time to comply with the state's requirements. The grace period included in the language is consistent with OEC practices.

Rep. Betts said he was aware of the urgency to respond to the disaster in Puerto Rico, however, common sense would suggest that 90 days is too long to wait for a child to be immunized. Safety is a paramount concern and there need to be safeguards put in place for the parents and children who are already part of the childcare centers. Rep. Betts asked if there will be a potential cost associated with the bill.

Sen. Gerratana said she did not have that information but if it goes to the Appropriations Committee then they will decide on the fiscal note. OEC testimony also noted that if this language does not pass then Connecticut will be out of compliance with the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF).

Rep. Betts said he understood Sen. Gerratana's point however his concerns remain for the child care centers and the parents of the children who are already there and that is the reason he will be voting no today.

Rep. McCarty noted that she serves on the Education Committee and voted in favor of the bill for reasons pointed out in today's committee meeting discussion. There are many children who are homeless and do not have immediate access to their medical records. Her hopes are that the children who are already in the childcare centers have already been immunized and will be protected. Another point made by Rep. McCarty is that the 90 day clause is the maximum allowance to get immunized, but it does not necessarily mean that a parent will wait until the end to update their children's medical records. With passage of this bill, Connecticut would also be complying with federal requirements.

Sen. Gerratana said she concurred with Rep. McCarty's sentiments.

A roll call vote was taken. Total Voting = 26. Yea = 19. Nay = 7. Abstain = 0. Absent and Not Voting = 1.

A motion was duly made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Bev Henry
Administrator

Valentina Mehmeti
Committee Clerk