

Committee on Children JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5779

AN ACT EXTENDING THE REPORTING DEADLINE OF THE TASK FORCE TO STUDY VOLUNTARY ADMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND

Title: FAMILIES.

Vote Date: 2/21/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/14/2019

File No.:

***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:

Rep. Rosa C. Rebimbas, 70th Dist.

Sen. George S. Logan, 17th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

To extend the reporting deadline of findings and recommendations from the Task Force to Study Voluntary Admission to the Department of Children and Families to no later than June 1, 2020.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Sarah Eagan, State Child Advocate, Office of the Child Advocate: The child advocate supports this bill, but stresses the importance of the task force to study Voluntary Admission and provide the report to the Department of Children and Families without having to extend the deadline further.

Steven Hernandez, Commissioner, Commission on Women, Children & Seniors: The commissioner supports this bill, but reiterated the importance of this bill considering this is will be the second time the deadline has been extend since it was established in 2017. Furthermore, the commission “looks forward to the recommendations of the task force, and hope that this is the last extension of its kind.”

Representative Rosa Rebimbas, Senator George Logan, Representative David Labriola, Naugatuck Delegation: The delegation is in strong support of the bill because it is believed that the current system in place does not follow best practice and is unintentionally hurting most families instead of helping them as voluntary admission was intended to do.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Peggy Borelli: Peggy submitted a Family Experience Testimonial from Family Forward Advocacy CT as her testimony in support of HB 5779.

Bet Gailor, Attorney, Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.: Attorney Gailor supports this bill because “the work of the task force is absolutely essential to the well-being of Connecticut families.” She urges the Committee to extend the deadline so members can be appointed and the crucial work of the task force begin.

Susan Kelley, Director of Advocacy and Policy, NAMI Connecticut: Susan submitted testimony in support of this bill because the issue that the task force will be studying is vitally important to children and families in Connecticut. In addition, it is recommended that the legislation also “provide a hard date when appointments of task force members must be completed since delay in appointments continues to undermine the ability of the task force to do its work.”

Stephanie Priestman: Stephanie submitted testimony in support of this bill as a parent of a special needs child currently suffering from complications of voluntary admission. She believed that giving up her rights to her non-verbal autistic daughter was the best way for her to receive the care she needed, but Stephanie feels DCF is still unable to help her daughter. Her hope is that this task force will help address this issue.

Lauren Ruth, Advocacy Director, Connecticut Voices for Children: Connecticut Voices for Children supports this bill to extend the reporting deadline for the task force. This would ensure that the task force has enough time for appointments and to provide a thorough report with findings and recommendations. Additionally, CT Voices for Children recommends providing the Department of Children and Families with the financial resources necessary to support the children in their care.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Mikhela Hull, Assistant Clerk

Date: 2/25/19