

# Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-7093

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT

**Title:** OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.

**Vote Date:** 3/7/2019

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 2/19/2019

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Human Services Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

The reason of this bill is to develop more employment opportunities for people with developmental or intellectual disabilities due to their currently low employment rate in comparison to people without these disabilities.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner, Department of Developmental Services; is concerned that this legislation would duplicate a current standing committee. Mr. Scheff expresses, the FY 2019 budget appropriated \$1.5 million to the Intellectual Disability (ID) Partnership. This partnership includes DSS, OPM and community partners in order to encourage and support the employment of individuals with intellectual disability with this funding.

The Epilepsy Foundation of Connecticut (EFCT); is in support of this legislation. They address the importance of this legislation is because people living with epilepsy consistently have higher levels of unemployment compared to the general population. The foundation also specifies, "Employment is also a critically important aspect of quality of life for the epilepsy community because of access to health insurance through an employer".

Ben Shaiken, Manager of Advocacy & Public Policy, The Alliance; encourages the legislature to enact policies expanding the employment assistance program and to establish financial incentives for businesses to employ more people with disabilities.

Win Evarts, Executive Director, The Arc Connecticut; suggests the state should develop a plan and set of resources to increase employment for persons with disabilities that will result in a clearer path toward choice and independence, stronger economic growth, and more inclusive and cohesive communities.

Shelagh McClure, Vice Chair, Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities; is in support of this legislation. She promotes capacity building and system change and believes disability employment is an issue that will require an ongoing dedication of State resources.

Stan Soby, Vice President, Public Policy and External Affairs for Oak Hill; is in support of this legislation. This establishment believes this bill gives a significant opportunity to grow employment of people with disabilities so that they might fully participate.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

Republican State Representative, Christie M. Carpino, 32nd District, Connecticut General Assembly; is in support of this legislation. She suggests for an adjustment to the proposed makeup of the task force by including nonprofits with proven track records of success as well as local and statewide business organizations that has expressed a desire to assist.

Michelle Rakebrand, Assistant Counsel, Connecticut Business and Industry Association; supports this legislation. Ms. Rakebrand provides a recent study that was performed by Accenture which revealed the U.S GDP would boost \$25 million dollars if more persons with disabilities joined the labor force.

Special Olympics Connecticut; is in support of this legislation.

Michelle Brown; supports this legislation.

Susan Lucek- Hughes and Annlee Hughes; supports this legislation.

Joe Duffy; supports this legislation.

Karl Mitchell; supports this legislation.

Francis Traceski; supports this legislation.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

No sources of opposition.

**Reported by: Noemi Hammonds**

**Date: March 20, 2019**