

Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7094

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING TEMPORARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE.

Vote Date: 3/5/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/19/2019

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Human Services Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would require the Department of Social Services to provide families that receive TANF additional funds to cover diaper expenses for children the age of 36 months or younger.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Kathleen Brennan, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Social Services; opposes this bill due to additional expenditures; estimating \$1.37 million. Although the Department of Social Services applauds the effort on the intention of the bill and acknowledges the “diaper scarcity on the mental health of young mothers”, DSS is unable to support this legislation.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Shannon Yearwood, Executive Director, End Hunger Connecticut !; supports this bill and expresses this legislation would provide critical support for low income families receiving TANF and contribute to the well being and quality of health for young children. She provides the cost of diapers, ranging from sixty to seventy dollars per month. Yearwood proclaims health consequences are far more expensive and stressful to treat than they are to prevent.

Sheryl S. McNamee, Esq., Director of Public Affairs, Clifford Beers; supports this legislation and addresses the basic needs for families to ensure daycare and quality of health for

children are diapers. McNamee claims, "According to the National Diaper Bank, 47% of low income children 0-3 need diapers".

William J. Hass, Ph.D., President & CEO, Connecticut Council of Family Service Agencies; supports this bill due to adverse health consequences, toxic stress on low-income mothers and families, adverse effects on early childhood development and loss of career opportunities.

Linda Bronstein, Senior Case Manager, Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services; Supports this legislation due to the requirements of diapers in licensed day care centers. Due to the lack of diapers, Bronstein also explains, "Ongoing illness, discomfort, and family stress negatively affect the development of children".

Allison Logan, Executive Director, Bridgeport Prospers; addresses the scarcity of clean diapers can disrupt the physical attachment of children and their caregivers. Logan supports this bill, pointing to the need for innovative public health promotion efforts to reduce mental illness for mothers.

Lynn Comer, Policy Coordinator, National Diaper Bank Network; explains access to diapers is not universal. Addresses that nonprofit diaper banks are experienced at providing clean diapers for those in the community, but also indicates that these supplies of diapers are not enough to end the diaper need for low-income families in Connecticut.

Janet Stolfi Alfano, Executive Director, The Diaper Bank of Connecticut; applauds the effort by the state to help reduce diaper need. She asserts diaper need is a significant stressor to mothers based of research conducted by Dr. Megan Smith of the Yale New Haven Moms Partnership.

Lucy Potter, Attorney, Greater Hartford Legal Aid; supports this legislation on behalf of women who rely on Temporary Family Assistance (TFA). Potter claims this bill would provide an essential and targeted investment in the next generation of kids in TFA families.

Jeff Shaw, Senior Director of Public Policy & Advocacy, The Alliance; supports this legislation on behalf of families on the brink of poverty that cannot afford diapers. Shaw explains an estimate of diapers can be about 14% of a parent's annual income.

Alice Rosenthal, J.D and Rita Gilles, Law Intern, Medical-Legal Partnership Project; supports this legislation for diaper assistance for families to maintain dignity and hygiene for their children, reducing parents stress and the overall health and well-being for children. This testimony was submitted by five other proponents in support of this bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Kathleen Brennan, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Social Services; opposes this bill due to the lack of available appropriations.

Reported by: Noemi Hammonds

Date: March 11, 2019