

# Aging Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-7099

AN ACT INCREASING THE MINIMUM RATIO OF DIRECT CARE STAFF IN

**Title:** NURSING HOMES.

**Vote Date:** 2/26/2019

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

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

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Aging Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

The bill would require nursing home facilities to have sufficient nursing staff available to maintain a daily minimum staffing ratio of no less than three direct care nursing staff hours per resident per day. According to testimony, currently, nursing homes have been experiencing serious concerns in regards to staffing, and direct care staff, and by increasing the staffing ratio, issues regarding prolonged wait times, nutrition and hydration, and abuse and neglect prevention can be properly addressed, and will improve the quality of care residents receive.

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

**Mairead Painter, State Long Term Care Ombudsman, State of Connecticut Department of Rehabilitation Services:** The Agency is in support of this bill. Ms. Painter testified that increasing direct care hours will help address long wait times concerning falls and call bells to be answered. Increasing staff will also deal with concerns related to nutrition and hydration issues. Ms. Painter cited the agency's 2018 Forum, where staffing was identified as one of biggest issues, particularly the amount of Direct Care staff in nursing homes. Ms. Painter stated that increasing the direct care staff ratio is needed and will improve the quality and dignity of care that residents receive.

**Department of Social Services:** The Agency submitted testimony of concern to the accuracy of data that would be used to calculate nursing home rate increases to support additional staffing requirements. A well-defined measurement of current staffing levels would

be required to estimate the fiscal impact of change. Due to the concern of accuracy and stability of data, the Department of Social Services is not able to support this bill.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Melissa Marshall, Coordinator, CT Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance:** Ms. Marshall testified in support of the bill, citing the Americans with Disabilities Act, and testifying that abuse and neglect rates are often high in nursing homes, and stated that increasing staff could help mitigate and prevent such abuse and neglect.

**Matthew V. Barrett, President and CEO, Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities:** Mr. Barrett testified in support of the bill, with recommended revisions, including that the bill include a provision that the Department of Social Services provide Medicaid reimbursement for nursing home facilities for nursing homes that experience increased costs as a result of the new standards.

**Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut:** Ms. Morelli testified in support of the concept of the bill, but request that the bill include a provision to require adjustments of Medicaid rates, for facilities to meet the compliances. Ms. Morelli also requested that the committee support efforts to enhance the workforce for the state's long term services and supports, through new training opportunities, and efforts that will help attract and retain workforce talent in the field of Aging Services.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None Expressed for Proposed Bill No. 7099

**Reported by: Gaia McDermott, Clerk  
Avarice Jacovino, Assistant Clerk**

**Date: 3/5/2019**