

Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7359

AN ACT CONCERNING A LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND

Title: QUEER HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES NETWORK.

Vote Date: 3/26/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/21/2019

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Human Services Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The intent of this bill would require funds awarded by the Department of Public Health to build healthier and safer environments for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer individuals of Connecticut with the establishment of a health and human services network dedicated to their critical needs.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Raul Pino, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner, Department of Public Health; is in support of the concept of this legislation in order to build a healthier and safer environment for the LGBTQ population, however, the department believes the mission of the network is unclear as to what the department's role and responsibility will be in conducting analysis, what the needs analysis will consist of, and what activities the funds awarded by the DPH will support.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Lauren Ruth, Ph.D., Advocacy Director, Connecticut Voices for Children; is in support of this legislation because this bill will represent the LGBTQ youth which are a vulnerable population and are over-represented in systems that serve at-risk youth. However, the agency suggests "creating a mechanism to involve state agencies within the purview of the work done by this network and adding the Children's Committee to the committee of cognizance within this piece of legislation".

Gretchen Raffa, Director of Public Policy, Advocacy & Strategic Engagement at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England; supports this legislation to enable the necessary resources to address and conduct a needs assessment of the underfunded and underserved LGBTQ+ population. She explains by creating an LGBTQ+ health and human services network, those of this population will have better access in receiving services that best meets their immediate needs.

Madeline Granato, Policy Manager, Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF); is in support of this legislation on behalf of the LGBTQ+ individuals consistent economic experience of insecurity at higher rates than non-LGBTQ+ individuals. The development of this bill has the capability in creating a health, safety, and economic security of Connecticut's LGBTQ+ community.

Patrick Dunn, Executive Director, New Haven Pride Center; believes this legislation will assist in putting forward a network that will enhance the LGBTQ+ community needs to elevate conversations, expand programmatic offerings and make advancements that will be helpful to members of The LGBTQ+ community.

Conor Pfeifer, Triangle Community Center; emphasizes on the immediate needs members of the LGBTQ+ community have due to increasing percentages of homelessness, mental health issues and food insecurity that are in relation the discrimination and societal stigma because of their identity.

Bethany Hamilton, Associate Director, Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence; explains, "This legislation would also elevate Connecticut as a leader in allocating resources to specifically address the needs of its LGBTQ citizens and increase much needed support to agencies providing care and support to this vulnerable community".

NAWSW/CT Diversity Committee; explanation on behalf of this legislation addresses the difficulty individuals and families of the LGBTQ+ community face when finding healthcare providers that understand and are fully knowledgeable of their unique health needs. The establishment of LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network comprised of organizational leaders will be a key element in addressing the gaps in healthcare and social services for the LGBTQ+ community.

Connecticut Latina/Os Achieving Rights & Opportunities; is in full support of this legislation. The organization believes the intent of this bill will assist with addressing the LGBTQ+ community of color in both racism and homophobia health disparities.

Diana Lombardi, Executive Director, Connecticut TransAdvocacy Coalition; is in support of this legislation due to the immediate need of proper healthcare for the LGBTQ+ community. She expresses the importance of this bill due to these populations that face widespread stigma and discrimination and are more likely to report poor overall health and are more vulnerable to a variety of physical and medical health conditions.

Robin McHaelen, Executive Director, True Colors; is in support of this legislation for the development of reliable resources to assist in the overall well-being for the LGBTQ+ population.

Nora Duncann, State Director, AARP; supports the legislation with recommendations. AARP requests that a “designee of AARP CT” and an organization providing direct services to older adults in community be included in the Network to ensure adequate representation.

Dianne Stone, Director, Newington Senior and Disabled Center; is in support of this legislation.

Anne Stanback, Avon, CT; is in support of this legislation.

Kia A. Baird, Vice President and Founding Board Member of OutCT; is in support of this legislation.

Edwin Ivey, OutCt; is in support of this legislation.

Crissy Douchette, OutCT; is in support of this legislation.

Polly Sioux, OutCt; is in support of this legislation.

Britta Shute, Family Nurse Practitioner, Uconn Health Center; is in support of this legislation.

John Board, Chairman of New Britain; is in support of this legislation.

Kelsey A. O’Neil, Director, Connecticut’s Rainbow Center; is in support of this legislation.

Julia Anderson, Program Coordinator, Connecticut’s Rainbow Center; is in support of this legislation.

Steven Feldman, Connecticut’s Rainbow Center; is in support of this legislation.

Ryan Watson, PhD, Faculty at University of Connecticut; is in support of this legislation.

Annastasia Martineau, University of Connecticut; is in support of this legislation.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

No opposing testimony was submitted, with the exception of the Department of Public Health.

Reported by: Noemi Hammonds

Date: March 27, 2019