Committee on Children

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-892
AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF YOUTHS PLACED IN OUT-OF-HOME SETTINGS LICENSED, ADMINISTERED AND INVESTIGATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

Vote Date: 3/7/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 2/28/2019
File No.: 

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Committee on Children

REASONS FOR BILL:
To require the Commissioner of Children and Families to report annually to the Children and Appropriations committees of the General Assembly regarding the safety and well-being of youths placed in out-of-home settings that are licensed, administered and investigated by the Department of Children and Families.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Sarah Eagan, State Child Advocate, Office of the Child Advocate:
The state child advocate testified in support of this bill. This bill encompasses a recommendation from the OCA following an investigation into Solnit South after a young woman and her child died by suicide while in custody of the state and being cared for at the facility. The child advocate also recommends the language be amended to require DCF to work with its partners in the provider community, families and advocates to develop a proper framework for publishing information pertaining to group homes run by the state. OCA appreciates the work that DCF has already done to address concerns and understands the complexity of the issue at hand, but the office believes that all state-funded or state-regulated/funded systems that serve consumers and vulnerable populations should publish certain information publicly.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:
See response from administration/agency.
NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Brunilda Ferraj, Director of Policy Research and Organizational Initiatives, CT Community Nonprofit Alliance:
The director of policy research and organizational initiatives testified in opposition to this bill as drafted because of her belief that this could be used as a vehicle for discrimination. Publishing information regarding children in group homes and other sensitive information may be helpful to children and families seeking a group home setting of care, but it could reinforce stereotypes and perpetuate stigma associated with the youth currently residing in a group home. The Alliance is willing to work with the children’s committee and DCF to ensure an adequate process and framework is created to address the issues at hand.

Reported by:  Mikhela Hull

Date: 3/14/19