Committee on Children

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7001

AN ACT CONCERNING THE NOTIFICATION OF CERTAIN EMPLOYERS OF THE PLACEMENT OF AN EMPLOYEE ON THE CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REGISTRY.

Title:

Vote Date: 3/7/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/7/2019

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Committee on Children

REASONS FOR BILL:

To require the Commissioner of Children and Families to make a reasonable effort to determine whether an individual with a substantiated claim of abuse or neglect against them is employed in a capacity that requires the individual to have regular contact with children and provide services to or on behalf of children. This bill would also require the Commissioner of Children and Families to make a reasonable effort to notify the employer of an individual who has been placed on the child abuse and neglect registry if the individual has regular contact with children and provides services to or on behalf of children.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Vanness Dorantes, Commissioner-Designate, Department of Children and Families:

The commissioner testified in support of this bill. Currently, the Department is responsible for notifying the superintendent of schools and the State Department of Education when a report of abuse or neglect by a school employee is substantiated through a DCF investigation. If the employee is working at a private school, the employer would be informed. Furthermore, DCF must notify the Office of the Child Advocate of an investigation concerning a child care provider. If a report is substantiated through investigation, the Department of Children and Families is responsible for notifying the Chief State’s Attorney, or the state’s attorney for the judicial district in which the child lives or the abuse occurred, as well as local law enforcement. In addition, DCF is responsible for notifying the state agency tasked with licensure of child caring institutions of a substantiated report of abuse and neglect. Finally, the Department of Children and Families shares information with the parents or guardians of
the child victim related to the corroborated claim of abuse or neglect. The commissioner also mentioned that this bill would not mandate the disclosure of employment information by individuals placed on the abuse and neglect registry and this information is not uniformly collected.

**Sarah Eagan, State Child Advocate, The Office of the Child Advocate:**
Sarah Eagan testified in support of this bill since DCF does not currently have the authority or obligation to notify employers that an employee with regular contact with children through his/her employment continues to pose a risk to these children. Furthermore, the OCA would like the language of this bill to extend to volunteers with regular access to children. With this being said, the OCA recommends that if an allegation of abuse and neglect is substantiated by DCF, the host organization of a volunteer should be notified of the placement on the Child Abuse Registry.

**Steven Hernandez, Executive Director, Commission on Women, Children & Seniors:**
The executive director testified in support of this bill due to the fact that individuals placed on the abuse and neglect registry have a confirmed case(s) of imposing risk to a child’s health, safety and well-being. Additionally, the executive director mentioned that although an employer may conduct a background check on a prospective employee prior to hire, the checks are not often continued throughout their employment. This bill would bring the statute into up to date with current requirements for individuals in regularly interacting with children during the course of their employment.

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

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Lisa Levy, Attorney, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc.:**
Lisa Levy testified in opposition to this bill because it “contains unreasonably broad language that jeopardizes the employment of low wage workers by requiring DCF, in many circumstances, to notify employers whose workers have a finding of abuse or neglect upheld against them.” Furthermore, attorney Levy asked that the committee adopt the language provided by Greater Hartford Legal Aid that strengthens the employment types that would require a notification.

Reported by: Mikhela Hull
Date: 3/12/19