Public Health Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7195
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING MEMBERSHIP OF THE CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR PHYSICAL THERAPISTS.
Vote Date: 3/8/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 3/4/2019

Disclaimer: The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.

SPONSORS OF BILL:
The Public Health Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:
This bill removes the appointment of a physician to the Board of Examiners for Physical Therapists, which in practice has been vacant since 2014, and adds a third physical therapist to the five-member Board of Examiners. The remaining two members are from the public.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:
None submitted.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Michael Gans, PT, DPT, OCS, President of CT Physical Therapy Association (CTAPTA):
CTAPTA, which represents 1200 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants and PT and PTA students strongly, supports this legislation. The change requested in the bill makes the membership of the Physical Therapy Board consistent with other licensing boards recognized under the Department of Public Health. The members are licensed professionals, as well as members of the public, working together to hold professionals accountable in an effort to protect the public. Twelve years ago, the state removed the requirement of a referral from a physician to access the services of a physical therapist. Physical therapists collaborate with physicians however; the practice of physical therapy has evolved to provide more than just an extension of a physician’s care. Although there is currently a physician appointment to the Board, it has been vacant since 2014 making it clear that the Board is not a priority for the medical community. If this position is vacant- and there could be other vacancies such as the current one for a public member- this would create a challenge in attaining a quorum. CTAPTA urges you to support this bill.
NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Marium Hakim Zargar, MD, MPH President, Ct Orthopedic Society: Dr. Zargar opposes this legislation which would remove the appointment of a physician to the Board of Examiners for Physical Therapists. Orthopedic surgeons work closely with physical therapists as part of a medical team. Surgeons have the training and education to provide vital medical and clinical expertise to the Board. Patient safety is critical in all health professions and for this reason we urge the Committee to retain the physician position on the Board to protect the checks and balances currently in place.

Reported by: Kathleen Panazza Date: March 12, 2019.