Committee on Children
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-883
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE THREATENING OF CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES WORKERS.
Vote Date: 3/7/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 2/28/2019

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Committee on Children

REASONS FOR BILL:
To implement strengthened punishments for threatening a child protective services worker.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:
Vannessa Dorantes, Commissioner, Department of Children and Families:
The commissioner testified in support of this bill. DCF brought this important issue to the attention of the children’s committee co-chairs. The Department does know “that singling one series of job classifications in state service for specific criminal penalties is somewhat unusual, but events in Connecticut and throughout the country have forced DCF to examine the extraordinary challenges that our child protective service workers, and those who perform similar duties under contract with the Department, face on a daily basis.” DCF also included that Massachusetts, Michigan, Illinois, Vermont and West Virginia have enacted legislation addressing child protective services worker safety.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:
Marybeth Kaczynski-Hill, President, Council 4 AFSCME Local 2663:
The president of AFSCME testified in favor of this bill. She mentioned that this is a great first step, but further legislation should be introduced in the future to continue to address this important matter. There have been several members of the council subjected to harassment, assault, stalking and more while working in the community. It is believed that there is no one solution to preventing threats to child protective service workers, but legislation is recommended.
Stephen Karp, LMSW, National Association of Social Workers/Connecticut Chapter:
Testimony was submitted in support of this bill by the National Association of Social Workers. It is believed this would be the first step to create a system to reduce threats and harm to social workers and other relevant staff, especially those who practice mostly in the community. The association recommends an amendment to add “all state employees who work as social worker trainee, social worker or clinical social worker, and to those social workers who work, under state contract, for private agencies, such as the Illinois statute, Public Act 098-0529 (2013).”

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:
None expressed.

Reported by: Mikhela Hull                  Date: 3/15/19