The meeting was called to order at 10:30 AM by Chairwoman, Rep. Steinberg J. 136.

The following committee members were present:

Senators: Anwar S. S03; Daugherty Abrams M. S13; Lesser M. S09; Somers H. S18

Representatives: Arnone T. 058; Borer D. 115; Candelora V. 086; Carpino C. 032; Comey R. 102; Cook M. 065; Demicco M. 021; Genga H. 010; Hennessy J. 127; Kennedy K. 119; Klarides-Ditria N. 105; McCarty K. 038; Michel D. 146; Petit W. 022; Ryan K. 139; Scanlon S. 098; Steinberg J. 136; Tercyak P. 026; Young P. 120; Zupkus L. 089

Absent were:

Senators:

Representatives: Betts W. 078

Sen. Abrams convened the meeting at 10:30 AM and recessed it until 11:15 AM.

Rep. Steinberg reconvened the meeting at 11:15 AM.

Rep. Steinberg asked if there were any remarks from committee leadership to which there were none.

Rep. Steinberg proceeded to Section III of the agenda, **Bills to be Considered for JF/JFS Action**.

Rep. Steinberg noted that items #2 and #3 would be put on hold.
2. **S.B. No. 966** (RAISED) An Act Concerning the Prescriptive Authority of Psychologists. *Proposed Action: JFS-Floor*


Rep. Steinberg asked for a motion to **JFS to the Floor** item #1.


Sen. Anwar offered the motion and it was seconded by Rep. Young.

Rep. Steinberg noted that sections one and three of the bill remain mostly intact while section two has been changed. This section will create a task force to study the complex and necessary medical procedures facing intersex persons.

Sen. Somers stated that she has concerns with the task force appointment requirements because the bill does not require any appointee to have a medical background. She stated that in moving forward with the bill, we must make sure appointees have the appropriate background.

Rep. Steinberg thanked Sen. Somers for making an excellent point. He stated that he is interested in working with her and other proponents in determining the right selection of people to appoint to the task force.

Rep. Petit concurred with Sen. Somers' comments. He noted that experts from all over the state testified on this bill so it is critical that we have their expertise available.

Rep. Steinberg said that should we come to terms on making such a determination, he imagines it will be a friendly amendment on the floor.

Rep. Steinberg asked for a roll call vote on item #1.

Total voting = 24, Yea = 24, Nay = 0, Abstain = 0, Absent and Not Voting = 1.

Rep. Steinberg asked for a motion to **JFS to the Floor** item #4


Sen. Lesser offered the motion and it was seconded by Sen. Somers.

Rep. Steinberg noted that the bill has gone through changes and the JFS language no longer includes a food packaging component. It is something that many committee members would like to see occur but we are not there yet. Perhaps we will consider it in the future. With reference to the use of polyfluoroalkyl in firefighter training exercises, the intention is to phase out the use of this chemical and to make sure the product is
used safely. Rep. Steinberg noted that the bill may still undergo some language change, but asked that the committee support moving it forward in its current form.

Rep. Petit said that it is his understanding that compounds containing perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) will still be allowed in certain industrial hydraulic fires. He asked if the bill requires explicit language for such usage, or if that is implied in the bill’s current form.

Rep. Steinberg answered that the bill only addresses usage in testing during training, therefore it could still be utilized if it is needed in specific fire emergencies.

Sen. Somers said that she has spoken to many fire chiefs and has been informed that PFAS is only used if it is absolutely necessary and not at any other time. She said that the bill has gone through good changes and hopes members will support it.

Rep. Steinberg said that testimony heard on the subject indicated that the industry has recognized PFAS as a problem and hopes that innovation will find an alternative product to allay environmental concerns.

Rep. Steinberg asked for a roll call vote on item #4.

Total voting = 24, Yea =24, Nay = 0, Abstain = 0, Absent and Not Voting = 1.

Rep. Steinberg asked for a motion to JF to the Floor item #5.


Sen. Anwar offered the motion and it was seconded by Sen. Somers.

Rep. Steinberg explained that this is a simple study bill which empowers three entities, the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), and the State Medical Society (SMS) to look at issues relating to telehealth. The study must be completed by January, 2020. This bill does not take a position one way or another but only recognizes that there is a need to study this issue further. Telehealth is a rapidly evolving way in which we are dealing with access issues. A study is important in order to get more information as telehealth will be a recurring issue in the committee. He also noted that the committee had extremely limited testimony regarding veterinarian needs therefore they are not included in this bill, but perhaps it is something the committee can explore further.

Rep. Steinberg asked for a roll call vote on item #5.

Total voting = 24, Yea =24, Nay = 0, Abstain = 0, Absent and Not Voting = 1.

Rep. Steinberg asked for a motion to JFS to the Floor item #6.

Sen. Somers offered the motion and it was seconded by Rep. Michel.

Rep. Steinberg acknowledged that the bill represents significant work by committee members and stakeholders from the dental practitioner community. It has been amended to include items requested by the dentists and dental therapists. Most importantly, it creates a path for an Advanced Practice Dental Therapist role that would be able to operate under dentist supervision and only in public health settings such as a school based health setting. The bill requires that an individual must already be a dental hygienist in order to begin the process of acquiring an advanced therapy license. Also required is significant additional education and training. The bill places adequate restrictions and protections for someone who seeks this path to make sure that they have the requisite background and training to provide services in public settings. The bill represents an effective path that will address dental health needs for disadvantaged populations.

Rep. Zupkus asked for clarification on whether the bill would create a single path going forward from a hygienist to dental therapist in order to create an advanced dental therapist, or whether it creates a separate path. She noted that Tunxis Community College has a dental hygienist program that one can attend for two and a half years to receive their degree as opposed to receiving the same degree from a private college that would take four years to complete. She asked whether this path would allow community college students to advance their careers similar to those from private colleges.

Rep. Steinberg answered that the bill does not eliminate any current paths to certification, but it also does not allow those who only have dental hygienist training to take this route. Rep. Steinberg deferred to Sen. Somers for a more detailed answer.

Sen. Somers stated that the committee leadership met with representatives of dentists and dental therapists and concluded that a licensed dental hygienist can take additional courses and pass an exam to prove competency. Once successfully completed, and under the supervision of a dentist, they would be considered an Advanced Practice Dental Therapist. Additionally, the bill establishes a working group which will include dentists, dental therapists, community colleges, and individuals working in the field of higher education to look at a program that would go directly towards a dental therapist role rather than going through the dental hygiene role.

Rep. Steinberg added that the bill does not mean the committee will not consider a new path moving forward, but only that it is cognizant of the limitations of DPH to currently administer such programs. Rather, the bill today represents progress but not an end to the conversation.

Rep. Zupkus asked if the report will come before the legislature to approve the findings of the working group.

Sen. Somers answered that it will come before the legislature because the legislature has to implement the recommendations of DPH. The Department would have to identify if the program requires licensure or certification and consider costs associated with it. Sen. Somers reiterated that the bill provides a career opportunity for young people as well as expanding access to oral healthcare.
Rep. Zupkus stated that she is not certain how she will vote today but reserves the right to vote differently on the floor of the House.

Rep. Steinberg stated that he would not be surprised if the committee considered this issue further depending on the recommendations of the task force, but this bill is still an important step in providing a career path.

Rep. Steinberg asked for a roll call vote on item #6.

Total voting = 24, Yea =23, Nay = 1, Abstain = 0, Absent and Not Voting = 1.

Rep. Steinberg acknowledged the tremendous hard work of the committee for the quality initiatives they have advanced for consideration by the whole legislature and commended the members for their professionalism and diplomacy. He also thanked and acknowledged the hard work of the committee staff.

Sen. Abrams stated that she is impressed with everyone’s commitment to the people of Connecticut. She noted that the bar for professional disagreement has been set very high as the committee works very well together.

Rep. Steinberg announced that votes would remain open until 3:00 PM.

A motion was duly made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

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Beverley Henry               Valentina Mehmeti
Administrator                Committee Clerk