

Committee on Children JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5335

AN ACT REQUIRING THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION CONCERNING

Title: CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE.

Vote Date: 3/10/2020

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/3/2020

File No.:

***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:

Committee on Children

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill requires that the Department of Children and Families develop education to distribute to coaches, youth, and parents or guardians on appropriate and inappropriate interactions, as well as signs of grooming between coaches of youth sports. It also requires that guidelines are established and updated as needed.

This bill requires, by December 1, 2020, the Department of Children and Families to collaborate with adult survivors of child abuse to develop documentation that provides direction and best ways about coaching youth sports, such as appropriately interacting with youth.

This bill requires that no later than January 1, 2021, the Department of Children and Families distribute these guidelines to coaches both paid and volunteer, as well as parents or guardians receive copies.

This bill requires, by December 1, 2020, the Department of Children and Families to collaborate with adult survivors of child abuse to develop documentation of the stages of grooming, behaviors that victims may engage in or exhibit, and how to tell parents they are being abused.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Fred Balsamo, CMAA, Connecticut Coaching Education Program

Supports this legislation but recommends the following revisions. The definition of “youth coach” in this bill contradicts the definition of past passed legislation. It is recommended that the definition be revised to allow for cohesion. Also, this bill is focus around athletes and could be implying that there is a higher rate of sexual abuse among the athletic realm. It is recommended that this be applied to all K-12 students and not just a small cohort.

John L. Cattelan, Executive Director, Connecticut Alliance of YMCAs

The mission of the Y is to create a safe environment for youth and with this comes along child protection. The Y continuously works to improve their abuse-prevention policies and procedures. YMCAs of CT support this bill with the following revisions. It is recommended that the addition of youth camps and activities to the list of organizations that must share the information laid out to provide the most amount of protection. Also, it is asked that there be an allowance or organizations the opportunity to post the information on their registration page to educate coaches and parents or guardians. Lastly, the following language is recommended to be placed in the literature of the bill, “No operator, or designee of such operator, shall be subject to civil liability for failing to make available the written or electronic statement regarding child sexual abuse.”

Sarah Eagan, Child Advocate, Office of the Child Advocate

Office of the Child Advocate supports this bill. OCA reports that a nationwide survey conducted in 2004 showed that nearly 7% of 8th to 11th graders have been recipients of physical sexual contact from an adult in their school. OCA believes that this bill provides a good foundation to ensure that information regarding sexual abuse prevention is made available to public and youth sports participants and coaches.

Glenn Lungarini, Executive Director, Connecticut Association of Schools

This bill is supported with the following revisions. Connecticut Association of Schools requests that an amendment be made in lines 4 through 9 for the identification of “youth coach.” CAS reports that the bill does not include interscholastic athletic activities which is governed by CAS or requires the coach to hold a permit issued by the Department of Education. It is recommended that the appropriate separate definition of “interscholastic coach” be added. CAS believes that without this change that this bill could conflict with existing legislature about the definition of a youth coach and a coach permitted by the Board of Education. Lastly, CAS believes that this bill gives the impression that child sexual abuse is more prevalent in athletics than any other youth activities. It is recommended that the language be reworded to address all kids K through 12.

Lucy Nolan, Director of Policy and Public Relations, CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence

This bill is supported. This agency has much experience with prevention and awareness of sexual abuse. This agency has offered to provide assistance and be included on any info-

sheets given their great background and currently have two campaigns going on centered around coaching.

Valerie Stolfi Collins, Executive Director, CT Parks & Recreation Association

The mission of CRPA is to support the recreation and park profession and aide in the future through opportunities in CT in order to promote active lifestyles, livable communities, and quality of life for all. This organization supports the bill with the following revisions. CRPA recommends that lines 8 and 9 be removed from the bill since these lines would make the requirement only to coaches for activities occurring on municipally owned and operated fields. CRPA that there be an allowance or organizations the opportunity to post the information on their registration page to educate coaches and parents or guardians. Lastly, the following language is recommended to be placed in the literature of the bill, "No operator, or designee of such operator, shall be subject to civil liability for failing to make available the written or electronic statement regarding child sexual abuse."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Peter Murszewski

Date: 3/20/2020