

Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5234

AN ACT CONCERNING THE AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER ADVISORY

Title: COUNCIL.

Vote Date: 3/5/2020

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/25/2020

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:

Human Services

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill amends the current membership of the Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council. It adds new leadership to the council. One person must be an individual diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. The other is a parent or guardian of a child who has an autism spectrum disorder. They will act as Chairpersons of the council, alongside the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services. This brings those who have autism and those who experience it in their households, leadership representation on the council. This legislation supports bringing new and underrepresented voices to the table.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Diedre Gifford, Commissioner, Department of Social Services – recognizes the council wants a family member of somebody who has autism to act as a chairperson for the council. The agency supports this bill.

Steven Hernandez, Executive Director, Commission Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity – Supports this bill. The agency acknowledges that persons with autism are underrepresented and should have a voice at the table. The CWCSEO promotes self-advocacy for individuals with autism, as it is vital for their well-being.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Dr. Robert Keder, MD, Connecticut Children's Medical Center – Supports this bill as it exemplifies disability inclusion. Having those with autism spectrum disorder at the table can guide policymaking decisions geared to helping the autism community.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Stephen Mendelsohn- is opposed to this bill in its current form. He would like to see the parent/guardian acting as a third chairperson removed from the bill. Furthermore, he wants to see a higher percentage of persons with autism on the council. The disorder portion of the autism council should be taken out to promote a more positive term for the autism community. He believes the bill should also promote English-identity first language rather than person-first language (autistic person vs. person with autism).

Reported by: Michael Rider

Date: 3/9/2020