

# Committee on Children JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-91

AN ACT CONCERNING A PROGRAM TO PROVIDE FREE SWIMMING  
**Title:** LESSONS TO INDIVIDUALS UNDER THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN.

**Vote Date:** 2/27/2020

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 2/18/2020

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Committee on Children

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

To establish a program to provide free swimming lessons to individuals under the age of eighteen. This program would be maintained by the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

### **Katie S. Dykes, Commissioner; Department of Energy & environmental Protection**

The Department is supportive of the bills mission, but most oppose it as written as they do not have sufficient staff or resources to run this program. Most state swimming areas include elements such as tides, river currents, occasional water quality concerns, sloping bottoms and limited visibility. They feel beginner swim lessons should be held in a more controlled environment.

### **Steven Hernández; Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity**

Supports this legislation and urges passage.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

### **Kevin Borrup, DrPH, JD, MPA; Connecticut Children's Medical Center**

Testifying in support of this bill because swimming lessons and water safety education can reduce the risk of child drowning deaths. Swimming lessons are an effective strategy in reducing drowning risks. In one multi-state study that looked to the effectiveness of swim

lessons, swim lessons were found to reduce the risk of drowning in 1 to 4-year olds by as much as 88%

**John Cattelan, Executive Director; Connecticut Alliance of YMCAs**

Urges passage of this legislation. Drowning is the leading cause of accident deaths for children between the ages of 1 and 4, and is the second leading cause of death in children between the ages of 5-14. Connecticut's cities are at a higher risk. National studies have shown that 60 percent of African Americans and 45 percent of Hispanic children can't swim.

**Marie B. Miszewski, Regional YMCA of Western CT**

Marie is testifying in support of this bill. Two children a day in this country die from drowning, and it is preventable.

**Connecticut Recreation & Parks Association, Inc.**

The Connecticut Recreation & Parks Association applauds the committee and urges passage with one change. They want the state to provide appropriations to municipalities to offer free lessons in their existing programs, allowing for greater efficiency and less duplication of services between both entities.

**Raymond J. Rescildo**

Supports this legislation.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None expressed.

**Reported by: Peter Murszewski**

**Date: 3/19/2020**