Committee on Children
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-288
AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE’S PROPOSED RULE CONCERNING THE NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH AND SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAMS.

Title: 

Vote Date: 3/10/2020
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 3/3/2020
File No.: 

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Committee on Children

REASONS FOR BILL:
The Bill establishes a task force to examine the impact of the United States Department of Agriculture’s Final Rule concerning simplifying meal service and monitoring requirements in the National School Lunch Program and National School Breakfast Program. This bill is needed because the USDA’s Final Rule could significantly change the health standards of school meals and influence the health of our students. Therefore, members of the General Assembly feel the rule should be studied.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:
Sarah Eagan, Office of the Child Advocate for the State of Connecticut
Supports this bill because the proposed rules have been cited as a rollback of regulations adopted under President Obama that sought to promote healthier food options, increased access to fruits and vegetables for children receiving their meals at school. She believes due to this rollback of regulations, further examination of the impact of such rule changes on Connecticut’s children’s health, particularly those dependent on school meals, will be important.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Ailish Farquhar
Supports this bill because improving the national school lunches and breakfast standards is important to her as a student athlete who tries to maintain a healthy balanced diet. She cites the CDC’s recommendation of how children 6-18 years old should be consuming less than 1,500mg of sodium per day, and how according to the USDA most children who eat school lunches consume about 3,400mg of sodium per day. She believes that if we can make Connecticut’s school lunch regulations healthier it has the potential to lower the obesity rate in the country, leading to a much healthier society.

Jim Williams; American Heart Association
Supports this bill because they believe it could ultimately result in healthier lives for Connecticut’s children. They believe that if enacted the proposed federal changes could be a major setback in the nutritional quality of school meals, competitive foods and foods served in early childcare settings as well as Head Start if there are no state protections to put in place. They believe this challenge necessitates a state strategy that will examine how the rule change will impact CT children, and to make recommendations to ensure that all CT children have healthy and nutritious foods available to them at school.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:
None expressed.

Reported by: Ed Ford                Date: 4/2/2020