

# Government Administration and Elections Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6444

**Title:** AN ACT CONCERNING THE MODERNIZATION OF STATE SERVICES.

**Vote Date:** 3/31/2021

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/19/2021

**File No.:** 501

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Government Administration and Elections Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill was requested by the Governor, pursuant to Joint Rule 9. The bill seeks to implement various budgetary recommendations made by the Governor, and it consists of 25 sections. Generally speaking, this bill is geared towards improving efficiency and efficacy of government by incorporating modern technologies and better business practices.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

**Josh Geballe, Commissioner, Department of Administrative Services:** Commissioner Geballe thanked the Government Administration and Elections Committee for raising the Governor's bill. Commissioner Geballe described this bill as another mechanism to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of state government, as well as a means to help support Connecticut businesses. This bill seeks to implement modern technology and business practices that will help to eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy and improve the operations of government. Several of the changes that the bill proposes are based on lessons learned from the pandemic experience, particularly allowing for less paperwork in the contracting and procurement process, enhancing electronic communication and payments, as well as authorizing digital identity proofing for notarization and affidavits. Commissioner Geballe's testimony went on further to cover specific sections of this bill that would take steps to improve the overall efficiency of Connecticut state government.

**Jeffrey Berger, Member, State Properties Review Board (SPRB):** The State Properties Review Board testified in opposition to Section 22 of the bill. The language in Section 22 would eliminate the requirement for the Commissioner of Administrative Services to submit an annual report to the SPRB. Upon review, SPRB would forward the Administrative Services report to the Governor and the General Assembly. Citing lines 929 to 937, which detail the

removal of the annual report requirement, SPRB believes that this action goes against the intent of the legislature when they established the SPRB in 1975. SPRB identified this report as critical in terms of obtaining information relating to real estate acquisitions and the projected needs of the state. This information helps the SPRB to ensure that real estate acquisitions are made in good faith and at fair market value.

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

**Matt McCooe, Chief Executive Officer, Connecticut Innovations (CI)**: Mr. McCooe described Connecticut Innovations as the leading provider of flexible financing for Connecticut's growing companies. CI's testimony references provisions in the bill that would facilitate increased cooperation between Connecticut technology companies and the various agencies in Connecticut's state government. CI believes that this bill will provide an opportunity for collaboration between agencies like the Department of Administrative Services and Connecticut Innovations. CI contends that increased collaboration would allow for technology to be showcased as a mechanism to help solve healthcare, insurance, payments and information technology problems in Connecticut's state government. CI expressed their willingness to work with DAS and the Office of Policy & Management on establishing an "Innovation Lab" for Connecticut technology companies to display their products and expertise. The Innovation Lab would result in the growth of partnerships between government and technology companies, more efficient government, a growing technology industry in the state, as well as more jobs.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Michael Bloom, Executive Director, Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut (JFACT)**: The Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut opposes Section 3 of the bill. JFACT describes Section 3 as amending the Iran Divestment law by changing the word "certification" to "representation." Since Section 3 fails to provide a definition for the word "representation," JFACT expressed concern and believes that the lack of a definition serves to weaken the legislation. Ultimately, JFACT opposes any changes that would weaken the Iran Divestment law.

**Reported by: Trevor Hoffman**

**Date: 3-31-21**