

Appropriations Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6555

AN ACT CONCERNING LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT AND APPROVAL OF

Title: COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDS.

Vote Date: 3/8/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/8/2021

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:

The Appropriations Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The intention of the bill is to provide a framework for the disbursement of COVID-19 relief funds that involves the legislative branch in the allocation of those funds.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Office of Policy and Management, Secretary Melissa McCaw](#) urged rejection of the bill. She stated that the approval of the Appropriations Committee and the full General Assembly would deny the Executive Branch the flexibility to allocate and reallocate funds in an efficient and targeted fashion to meet, not only current, but emerging needs. She cited the complex and changing requirements that regulate the disbursement of the funds, the short timelines for use and the penalties for non-compliance as reasons to not encumber the process. It was also noted that, as currently written, there is no provision for the General Assembly's adopted bill to move to the Governor's desk for signature, a departure from legislative practice, an allocation plan for which the Federal Government would hold the state's Executive Branch accountable for compliance.

Secretary McCaw also presented an [Agency and Item Spreadsheet](#) detailing all disbursements thus far, an account of [COVID-19 Grants](#) received and [COVID-19 relief Funds Pie Charts](#) illustrating allocations thus far.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Emily Byrne, CT Voices for Children](#), presented an overview of the regulations and limits of the anticipated funds. She expressed support of legislative involvement in allocation to facilitate the disbursement to underserved communities.

[Kathleen Flaherty, CT Legal Rights Project](#), asked that both branches be involved with the allocation decisions.

[Merrill Gay, CT Early Childhood Alliance](#), noted that the State would be receiving funds earmarked for childcare. He advocated using those funds to equalize and enhance child care programs and opportunities and to adjust child care workers' salaries.

[Jeff Leake, CT Education Association](#), supported more public input through the legislative process and highlighted the needs of the public schools for supports in both infrastructure and mental health.

[Doris Maldonado](#) address her testimony to the needs of the disability community who's needs have gone unrecognized.

[Karen Siegel, Health Equity Solutions](#), spoke to the need for equity to be incorporated into the allocations of COVID-19 relief funds to address disproportionate impact.

The [House Republican Caucus](#) supports the Legislative Branch taking it's place in the allocation process going forward.

[Rep. Bill Buckbee](#), [Rep. Jay Case](#), [Rep Nicole Klarides-Ditra](#), [Rep. David Labriola](#), and [Rep. David Rutigliano](#) testified to a need to return to the regular legislative process and the need for the people of Connecticut to be represented in the decision making.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed

Reported by: Elizabeth Gillette

Date: March 11, 2021