

Committee on Children JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-872

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISIONS TO THE STATUTES CONCERNING

Title: CHILDREN.

Vote Date: 3/11/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/18/2021

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Committee on Children

REASONS FOR BILL:

Consolidation of reporting requirements to the Department of Children and Families, this bill aims minor revisions to the department's statutes as well as the addition of a new member to the already existing, State Advisory Council on Children and Families.

On line 8 language is removed because the only department who will host detention and confinement of juveniles is the Judicial Department.

From line 13 to line 52 language is deleted and, in its place,, language is added on line 52 in order to explain that certain plans, explained in the subsection, should be reported to the State Advisory Council for Children and Families.

On line 79 language is deleted because the Governor and the Commissioner of Children and Families will no longer develop strategic plans.

On line 80 language is replaced because the agencies will no longer have a strategic plan, they will have reports instead.

On line 81 language is added for organizational purposes of the document.

On line 82 language is removed because the report received in the future will not be pertaining to a strategic plan.

On lines 85 and 87 language is replaced because strategic plans will no longer be used, instead reports will take their place.

On line 184 language is deleted because the Department of Children and Families, the Judicial Branch and the Department of Correction will no longer submit a plan to prevent or reduce the negative impact of mental, emotional and behavioral health issues on youth twenty years of age or younger who are held in secure detention or correctional confinement.

On line 206 language is deleted because the Department of Children and Families and the Children's Mental, Emotional and Behavioral Health Plan Implementation Advisory Board will no longer submit recommendations for addressing any unmet mental, emotional and behavioral health needs of children that are attributed to an increased risk of involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

On line 242 language is deleted because the commissioner no longer will submit an annual report to the General Assembly regarding children and the judiciary, on the number of case plans in which children have identified adults with whom they have a significant relationship and who may serve as a permanency resource.

On line 252 language is added for organizational purposes of the document.

On line 317 language is added in order to better define "qualified residential treatment program".

On line 320 language is added in order to better define "qualified individual".

On lines 421 and 423 language is replaced in order to correct the number of members on the State Advisory Council on Children and Families.

On line 427 language is added in order to explain what qualifications the person who will fill the new seat on the State Advisory Council on Children and Families must have.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Vannessa Dorantes, Commissioner for the Department of Children and Families: The commissioner testified in support of this bill but proposed many changes and adjustments to it. The changes are:

- Section 1: "Consistent with the transfer of jurisdiction over committed youth engaged in delinquent behaviors from DCF to the Judicial Branch, effective July 1, 2018, the Department does not detain or confine juveniles."
- Sections 2-5, 10: Currently, DCF is statutorily mandated to submit approximately thirty reports annually to the General Assembly, many which are obsolete due to their longevity and repetition. These sections would either repeal or combine several of these reports. Sections 2 and 3 mention reports on the department's strategic plan, but the DCF is already mandated to report to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through several federal reports including:

- Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP)
- Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR)
- Child and Family Service Review (CFSR)
- Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

In order to not duplicate efforts for the same goal, the General Assembly would have access to the federal reports submitted.

In order to properly carry out the intent of the bill, the commissioner requests the following substitute language:

- In line 59, before “the” insert “and obtained approval of”
- In line 68, strike “submission to” and replace with “approval by”.

Section 5 repeals a provision under C.G.S. Sec. 46b-129 requiring the Department to report on the number of cases in which an adult with a significant relationship with a child has been identified as a permanency resource. The Department’s aspirational goal is to have 70% of children in care living with relatives, which are directly impacted by this report.

Section 10 repeals a report required under C.G.S. Sec. 17a-63 regarding administrative case reviews. The Department’s data tracking systems would need significant and costly upgrades in order to capture the information being sought in this report.

- Sections 6, 7, and 8: Connecticut must adopt a QRTP protocol in order to continue to claim federal Title IV-E reimbursement for the cost of a child’s stay in a congregate care facility, once implemented in CT only facilities that meet the federal requirement will be eligible for federal reimbursement. Without this legislation, the state stands to lose over \$6 million annually in reimbursement to the General Fund.
- The commissioner requests that “lines 392 through 400 be amended to more clearly state that court approval is solely for the purpose of claiming Title IV-E reimbursement for the treatment of the child.”
- Section 9: The COVID-19 experience led to the realization that there was a lack of expert professional advice to the Council and the Department regarding health issues and appropriate medical protocols. Therefore, a licensed health care professional was added to the State Advisory Council (SAC) on Children and Families. The commissioner requests this amendment and supports the proposal.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

No Support to this bill offered

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

No opposition to this bill offered

Reported by: Gabriela Dos Santos

Date: March 24th 2021