

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-954

AN ACT REQUIRING THE REPORTING OF ACCIDENTAL DEATHS AT

Title: INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

Vote Date: 3/11/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/2/2021

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:

Senator Haskell and Senator Hwang.

REASONS FOR BILL:

To include the number of accidental deaths that occurred on property in annual uniform campus crime reports.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

- Lines 5-7: conforming change to show report is annual; removes obsolete language requiring the CSCU president to determine the manner of all reports
- Line 27-28: specifies that “accidental death” is determined by the cause/manner of death on a death certificate
- Lines 28-29: requires the report to also include incidents of serious physical injury
- Lines 34-37: defines “accidental death” as an unintended, unforeseeable, or unexpected death or death from an accidental drug overdose
- Lines 37-38: “serious physical injury” as physical injury which creates a substantial risk of death, or which causes serious disfigurement, serious impairment of health or serious loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Hans Rhyhart, Associate Vice President and Chief of Police \(UCONN\):](#)

Submitted written testimony in support. Chief Rhyhart believes the bill "enhances accountability and transparency as well as reassures stakeholders that campus communities consider every angle of safety a priority." It will also enhance prevention efforts through data. This change will assist school choice and may save lives.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Emerson Anvari:

Submitted written testimony in support. Emerson is a friend of Corey Hausman, and wants to reduce the chance that tragedies like this could happen to anyone else, allowing parents and students to focus on the good experiences of college.

Elizabeth Brenner:

Submitted written testimony in support. Elizabeth's son, Thomas, died accidentally while studying abroad. She and a fellow bereaved mother learned that there was no data available with which to understand the scope of or improve this problem. They founded Protect Students Abroad (PSA) and have since learned of over 400 deceased students with preventable accidents as the leading cause. She later met Nanette Hausman whose loss paralleled her own. She believes better information is a "solid first step" to making colleges and universities safer.

Catherine DiDonato:

Submitted written testimony in support. Catherine is a close friend of the Hausman family and believes that publicly reporting accidental death data will make colleges and universities safer. Colleges already release a "safety report card" under the Clery Act, but "accidental deaths" is a significant omission.

Ellie:

Submitted written testimony in support. Ellie believes that accidental death reporting is needed to "save as many college student lives as possible." She wonders if universities know accidents are the leading cause of death on campus, why aren't they required to report critical safety events, or even 911 calls resulting in medical care. She argues this bill requires schools to take accountability for accidents for the sake of prevention, and that her beloved Corey Hausman would feel the same way.

Lynn Gonsor:

Submitted written testimony in support. Lynn is a friend of the Hausman family and believes that reporting accidental death data will help students and parents make better decisions about and save lives.

Ira Gorelick

Submitted written testimony in support. Ira is a friend of the Hausman family and Ira believes "publicly reporting Accidental College Student deaths will improve Campus Safety."

Joel Hausman:

Submitted written testimony in support. Joel is the father of Corey Hausman, who died accidentally 15 days after the start of his freshman year at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Over the last few years, Joel learned that there is no data available to perform

statistical analyses on these accidents. He believes if data is tracked, we can develop appropriate prevention measures based on statistical results.

Lucas Hausman:

Submitted written testimony in support. Lucas's brother, Corey, died accidentally at the beginning of his freshman year. He shares a letter from the UCB police in response to Corey's death assuring the family they would investigate infrastructure changes. These changes never materialized, and Lucas feels his brother's death was swept under the rug over an expense that would have been made up by the total price of one student's education. Lucas believes that required reporting of serious accidents will make CT students safer.

Nanette Hausman:

Submitted written testimony in support. Nanette's son, Corey, died accidentally at the beginning of his freshman year. Her objective supporting this bill is to provide safety information to institutions, parents, and students, to prevent every future college student from tragedy. Since her son's death, she has learned:

- Preventable accidents are estimated to be the leading cause of college student death, by far
- Colleges are not required to publicly report all serious accidents and student deaths
- The 18-24 year old group continue to be prone to take risks more than other groups
- Most students and families don't think about available 911 Medical Care when making their College Checklists

Mariellen Jacobs:

Submitted written testimony in support. Mariellen's son, Clark, nearly died after falling from a loft bed. She began an investigation into other falls on campus and found that students accidents and deaths were not reported to any state or national database she could access, but she was able to find a study on ER visits due to bed falls. She met with the state university system in GA, where her son's injury occurred, and found that no reporting occurred for data which did not fall within the confines of the Clery Act. Since young college students' prefrontal cortex, the decision-making center of the brain, is not fully developed, we need to plan more for their expected risk taking in order to make campuses safer.

Nicki Keers:

Submitted testimony in support. Nicki's son, Robbie, died after consuming a combination of drugs and alcohol in response to expulsion from UCONN following an off-campus car accident in September 2015. The school also did not notify Robbie's family. She believes the school handled neither response appropriately, and that "available emergency medical care should be part of publicized offering for the selection/preparation process."

Gina Landis:

Submitted written testimony in support. Gina's son Jonny nearly lost his life two years ago after falling from a 32' balcony onto concrete. After enduring the rehabilitation process, today he is reenrolled in classes and practices CrossFit. She believes without nearby medical care, this could have been much worse, and that "this story could happen at any college campus." However, there is no reporting of accidental deaths on college campuses and that this information will improve school choice and safety.

Linda Lewis Bruce:

Submitted written testimony in support. Linda is a hospital chaplain and her son died after falling from a dorm window on the first day of classes. She believes that schools should report deaths much in the same way her hospital does, and that this information will lead to improved safety and more informed school choice.

Lauren LoFrisco:

Submitted written testimony in support. Lauren is a mother of two and has spent the last few years learning that campus safety information is not as readily available as she expected, especially where her daughter's safety is concerned. She believes that if a student is lucky, they get to visit a campus once before committing, and that the information from that visit alone is insufficient to truly determine campus safety. By reporting student deaths data and access to medical care, student safety and school choice will improve.

Keith & Peggy Stephan:

Submitted written testimony in support. The Stephans believe that reporting accidental student deaths "is an important first step" that provides "transparency into accidents and student physical safety," which enables parents and students to make more informed school choices. They believe knowledge of access to medical facilities near campus will also improve school choice.

Michael F. Vallerie:

Submitted written testimony in support. Michael is a Neuroscience premed student at Wheaton College. His friend, Corey Hausman, died accidentally on campus. Michael believes "reporting Accidental College Student deaths will expand the focus of how safety is measured and accounted for in order to save lives." He spent recent weeks finding out what deaths are and are not reported on CT campuses and found that he had to rely only on what could be found on the Internet, which limited results to only sensationalized cases. If more data is available, he says, then we can make more evidence based decisions about students deaths on campuses.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed

Reported by: Jeremy Salyer

Date: 03/16/2021