

Appropriations Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 21, 2021

10:00 AM in Zoom and YouTube Live

The meeting was called to order at 10:08 AM by Chairman, Rep. Walker T. 093.

The following committee members were present:

Senators: Anwar S. S03; Cicarella P. S34; Daugherty Abrams M. S13; Flexer M. S29; Hartley J. S15; Kushner J. S24; Lesser M. S09; Lopes R. S06; McCrory D. S02; Miner C. S30; Osten C. S19; Somers H. S18; Winfield G. S10

Representatives: Abercrombie C. 083; Baker A. 124; Betts W. 078; Bolinsky M. 106; Candelaria J. 095; Currey J. 011; Dathan L. 142; Dillon P. 092; DiMassa M. 116; Felipe A. 130; Ferraro C. 117; France M. 042; Gibson B. 015; Gilchrest J. 018; Haddad G. 054; Hall C. 059; Hall J. 007; Harrison C. 069; Hayes R. 051; Howard G. 043; Johnson S. 049; Kennedy K. 119; McCarty K. 038; McGee B. 005; Nolan A. 039; Pavalock-D'Amato C. 077; Porter R. 094; Reyes G. 075; Rosario C. 128; Ryan K. 139; Sanchez E. 024; Simms T. 140; Tercyak P. 026; Turco G. 027; Walker T. 093; Wilson D. 066; Zawistowski T. 061

Absent were:

Senators:

Representatives: Gonzalez M. 003

Note: Rep. Gonzalez was absent due to family business.

Rep. Walker called the meeting to order at 10:08 AM and immediately recessed the meeting for caucus until 12:00 PM. At 11:58 AM Sen. Osten informed the Committee

that the Republican members had requested an additional 30 minute delay. Rep. Walker announced that the Committee would reconvene at 12:30 PM.

At 12:30 PM, Rep. Walker called the meeting back to order. Rep. Walker and Sen. Osten welcomed the Committee. Rep. France and Sen. Miner, observing that this has been a different and difficult year, thanked the Chairs for their efforts to create an inclusive and thorough process.

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable motion for [H.B. No. 6438](#) (COMM) AN ACT MAKING DEFICIENCY APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2021. (APP) The motion was made by Rep. Abercrombie and seconded by Sen. Anwar. Sen. Osten offered LCO 7175 as a substitute amendment and briefly described the changes contained therein. Sen. Miner commented that the deficiency bill was an unusual vehicle for some of the funding proposed. Rep. France received clarification from Neil Ayers from the Office of Fiscal Analysis on Sections 1 and 3 and noted that the numbers could change further before the bill was considered in the House. With that, Rep. France offered the bill for the consent calendar. The amendment, LCO 7175, was passed with a voice vote and the bill was placed on the consent calendar.

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable Substitute motion for [S.B. No. 705](#) (COMM) AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE OF PANDEMIC AND PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS. (APP) The motion was made by Rep. Dathan and seconded by Rep. Abercrombie. Sen. Osten summarized the bill for the Committee. Sen. Miner said that he felt the bill was well intentioned. Because there was generally a positive perception of the response by the Executive Branch he didn't feel that we needed to hire more people to prepare a plan for moving forward. Rep. France said that he didn't believe an office needed to be created with personnel from outside of current State government. He said that he thought that the Governor and state agency heads could better perform an assessment and formulate a strategy for the future. Sen. Osten pointed out that the scope of the charge was broader than infectious human pathogens, as it also included animal diseases. Sen. Anwar said that the past year had shown that better future preparation was need, noting "fail to prepare, prepare to fail". Rep. Dillon said that the bill was important and visionary, praising the zoonotic aspects. Sen. Abrams said that as the Chair of the Public Health committee she strongly supported the bill. Rep. McCarty commended on the intent and the inclusion of the agricultural component but stated that she does not feel that a new agency was necessary. Rep. Betts said that he felt the Executive Branch should be taking the lead. Rep. Turco stated his support and the need for a full time focus. Rep. Bolinsky offered that a multi-state compact might be considered. Rep. Reyes, speaking as the chair of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus, supported a more proactive approach with a focus on the delivery of supports and services to communities of color. Rep. Johnson expressed strong support and a need to look to the future. Rep. Dathan reminded the Committee how difficult last year had been at the beginning of the pandemic. Rep. Walker commented how difficult it had been to understand the path forward and to co-ordinate responses. Rep. Ferraro thanked Sen. Osten for bringing the topic forward and noted that the differences appeared to be based on the form to take and not the function. Sen. Osten explained that the Office would be focusing on not just zoonotics, but also impacts on different groups, how best to involve non-profits, economic development structures, determining what resources the state had and needed to develop to be prepared. Rep. Ferraro asked what the costs would be and if that cost was sustainable. He asked if the Office was envisioned to be permanent. Sen. Osten said that \$300,000 would cover the cost to bring the components together and that it would be a permanent function due to

the changing nature of potential threats. A roll call vote was taken with 34 voting yea, 16 voting nay, 0 abstaining and 1 absent and not voting. The Joint Favorable Substitute motion passed

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable Substitute motion for [S.B. No. 885](#) (COMM) AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GENERAL GOVERNMENT. (APP). The motion was made by Rep. Abercrombie and seconded by Rep. Candelaria. Rep. France expressed concern regarding the provisions of Section 5 for the issuance of bonds to be repaid by the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program, stating that the fund was said to be designed to be self-sustaining. Sen. Osten asked for support as a concrete plan to repay the funds. Rep. Walker noted that many previous plans have needed modification due to the pandemic. The Joint Favorable Substitute motion passed on a roll call vote with 33 voting yea, 17 voting nay, 0 abstaining and 1 absent and not voting.

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable Substitute motion for [H.B. No. 5607](#) (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDS TO REPLENISH THE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION TRUST FUND. (APP) The motion was made by Rep. Simms and seconded by Rep. Dathan. Rep. France said all available funds should be used. Rep. Walker agreed. Rep. France asked to move the bill to the consent calendar and there was no objection.

Rep. Walker asked for a Joint Favorable Substitute motion for [H.B. No. 5742](#) (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, MENTAL HEALTH, SUICIDE PREVENTION AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICE PROVIDERS. (APP) The motion was made by Rep. Dillon and seconded by Rep. Dathan. Rep. France offered the bill for the consent calendar and there was no objection.

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable Substitute motion for [H.B. No. 6659](#) (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONNECTICUT BABY BOND TRUST. (APP) The motion was made by Sen. Osten and seconded by Rep. Reyes. Rep. France asked for detail of the annual cost and the program's sustainability. Sen. Osten said that the bill was being negotiated between the Governor and the Treasurer. She said she would support it out of Committee and that there would be further detail when it reached the floor. Rep. France noted that there are 16,000 children per year born on HUSKY and an anticipate deposit of \$5,000 each. He said he would be voting no to flag the vote for later. Rep. Wilson said that a cost of 80 million dollars per year would not be covered by growth of the fund. Rep. Bolinsky said he could not support "blank check" approval. Rep. Nolan said he was strongly in support of the bill and believed that its implementation could help to shrink the wealth gap. Rep. Gibson strongly supported the bill saying it could help break the poverty cycle by investing in children. Rep. McCarty said that she looked forward to the details but could not support today. Rep. Simms added his support and Rep. Walker stated that education was key to helping children. A roll call vote was taken passing the Joint Favorable Substitute motion with 34 voting yea, 16 voting nay, 0 abstaining and 1 absent and not voting.

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable motion for [S.B. No. 1080](#) (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM. (APP) The motion was made by Sen. Osten and seconded by Rep. Tercyak. With no objection the bill was moved to the consent calendar.

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable motion for [S.B. No. 1081](#) (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE INTEREST RATE RELATING TO TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM COST-OF-LIVING ALLOWANCES AND RESERVING CERTAIN LOTTERY

FUND REVENUE FOR THE CONNECTICUT TEACHERS' RETIREMENT FUND BONDS SPECIAL CAPITAL RESERVE FUND. (APP) The motion was made by Sen. Osten and seconded by Rep. Abercrombie. Sen. Miner asked for clarification on which lottery funds would be used. Sen. Osten said that the "regular" lottery funds would be used. Responding to a question from Rep. McCarty, Neil Ayers from OFA explained that the funds were off budget and said that he would provide an accounting of those off budget costs for the Administrator to distribute to the Committee. With no objection, Sen. Miner offered the bill to be placed on the consent calendar.

Rep. Walker asked for a Joint Favorable motion for [H.B. No. 5088](#) (COMM) AN ACT REQUIRING THE PAYMENT OF A REWARD TO PATRICIA "PIDGIE" D'ALLESSIO. (APP) The motion was made by Sen. Miner and seconded by Sen. Osten. Rep. France asked that with no object the bill be placed on the consent calendar.

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable Substitute motion for [H.B. No. 6662](#) (RAISED) AN ACT DECLARING RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS AND ESTABLISHING THE COMMISSION ON RACIAL EQUITY IN PUBLIC HEALTH. (APP) The motion was made by Rep. Tercyak and seconded by Sen. Anwar. Rep. McGee introduced the bill and spoke to its importance. He said that the Commission would be housed in Legislative Management and that the associated cost would cover staffing to do the work and co-ordinate efforts. He called the bill a "work in progress" and welcomed questions. Sen. Anwar thanked all who had worked on the bill. He said that it provided a framework to tackle disparities and now was the time for action. Rep. Nolan remarked that the past years had showed the racial disparities in the state and that this Commission was a first step. Rep. Reyes expressed strong support and the support of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus. Sen. Daugherty Abrams said that the Public Health Committee had heard a great deal of testimony for similar bills and that it was "our responsibility to do something". Sen. Miner said that the Sheff decision had sensitized him to these issues and that he would support the bill to keep working towards solutions to inequity. Rep. France allied himself with Sen. Miner's remarks. He stressed the need for objective criteria and data to target the root causes and thereby target the resources. He was looking forward to a better understanding of the issue. Rep. Pavalock-D'Amato spoke to efforts that had been made in the Insurance Committee to begin to address health disparities. She expressed concern that the make-up of the Commission does not appear to include representatives from the insurance and hospital industries or local health districts. Rep. McGee stressed that the Commission would be producing plans and strategies to address racial disparities across a spectrum of contributing elements, and he would be happy to work with Rep. Pavalock-D'Amato and others on who should be at the table. Rep. Howard said that he would be supporting the bill, but he spoke to accountability. He noted that there were many State boards, commissions and agencies whose job it is to see that the people of Connecticut receive the services that they are entitled to and the disparity problems still exist. He said that they should be demanding quantifiable accountings on a regular basis. He said that "we need to start making sure we are getting what we are paying for". Sen. Winfield said that they had reduced, combined and crippled the current Commissions. He said for the State to move forward we need to look systematic racism squarely in the face, identify the impediments and craft strategies and solutions. Sen. Anwar noted that some members may be looking at an older version of the bill. He said that the Commission would be free to call on all manner of expertise in various fields in understanding the issues. Rep. Dathan stated her strong support for the bill. She said that the pandemic had spotlighted problems that had long existed. Rep. Dillon said that she had been working on these issues for years and that it shouldn't be a partisan divide. Sen. Hartley gave kudos to the proponents and to leadership for ushering the legislation through. She emphasized the lack of a

current disparity study to draw on for economic development purposes and what a handicap that was. Rep. McGee said that there would be a new disparity study created. Sen. Lesser thanked Rep. McGee and Sen. Anwar for their work. He said there was a clear sense of urgency and that it was time to act and not just study disparity issues. Rep. Betts said that he would like to be more involved in coming to a better understanding of these issues. He was looking forward to a thorough, positive and open-minded process that unified and built relationships. Rep. McCarty asked if there would be opportunities for the Commission to work with non-profits and other community groups. Rep. McGee said that those opportunities to partner were available and that while acting with urgency, they were committed to getting the right people at the table. Sen. Cicarella said it was important to work together. Rep. Howard sought clarification on the goal of a "70% reduction by scientific measure". Rep. McGee said that that was the current benchmark. Rep. Bolinsky said that he had an improved understanding after discussions with Rep. McGee and that he looked forward to learning more. The Joint Favorable Substitute passed with a roll call vote of 46 voting yea, 3 voting nay, 0 abstaining and 2 absent and not voting.

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable motion for [Substitute for S.B. No. 241](#) (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING OVERSIGHT AND TRANSPARENCY AT THE CONNECTICUT PORT AUTHORITY. (TRA,APP) The motion was made by Sen. Osten and seconded by Rep. Abercrombie. Sen. Osten summarized the bill for the Committee. Rep. Nolan asked about the permanency of New London's seat on the Authorities' board. Sen. Osten confirmed that the seat was permanent. Without objection, Sen. Miner offered the bill for the consent calendar.

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable Substitute motion for [S.B. No. 818](#) (RAISED) AN ACT PERMITTING THE COMMUNITY SPOUSE OF AN INSTITUTIONALIZED MEDICAID RECIPIENT TO RETAIN THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF ALLOWABLE ASSETS. (AGE,APP) The motion was made by Rep. Abercrombie and seconded by Rep. Simms. Without objection, Rep. France offered the bill for the consent calendar.

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable Substitute motion for [S.B. No. 948](#) (RAISED) AN ACT ADDRESSING EDUCATION FUNDING AND RACIAL EQUITY IN CONNECTICUT. (ED) The motion was made by Rep. Currey and seconded by Rep. Dathan. Without objection, Rep. France offered the bill for the consent calendar.

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable motion for [Substitute for S.B. No. 1034](#) (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION. (ED,APP) Rep. Gilchrest made the motion that was seconded by Rep. McCarty. Without objection, Rep. France offered the bill for the consent calendar.

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable Substitute motion for [Substitute for H.B. No. 6558](#) (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING ISSUES RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT. (ED,APP) The motion was made by Rep. Abercrombie and seconded by Rep. Dathan. Rep. McCarty confirmed with Rep. Walker that the childcare "incubator" spaces were still in the bill. She confirmed with Nick Bombace from the Legislative Commissioners' Office that the provisions to expand the Care4Kids program had been eliminated, which she regretted. The bill passed with a roll call vote with 50 voting yea, 0 voting nay, 0 abstaining and 1 absent and not voting.

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable Substitute motion for [Substitute for H.B. No. 6618](#) (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING ISSUES RELATED TO PUBLIC EDUCATION IN CONNECTICUT. (ED,APP) Rep. Gilchrest made the motion that was seconded by Rep. Simms. Rep. McCarty confirmed with Nick Bombace that the portions

dealing with the charter school approval grant account had been eliminated. With no objection, Rep. France offered the bill for the consent calendar.

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable motion for [Substitute for H.B. No. 6619](#) (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A KINDERGARTEN TO EIGHT GRADE MODEL CURRICULUM. (ED,APP) The motion was made by Rep. McCarty and seconded by Rep. Abercrombie. Rep. McCarty spoke to the importance of the bill to the Education Committee and determined that no changes had been made. Sen. Cicarella and Rep. Howard questioned who determined "age appropriate" and expressed concern about the right of parents. Sen. McCrory stressed that this was a model curriculum, and not a mandate, rather the curriculum was for local boards of education to use if they so choose. Rep. Nolan remarked on the need for the schools to address some issues that were not addressed at home. Sen. Miner and Rep. France expressed concern that, while not mandated, local boards often felt pressured. Rep. Wilson asked what 'digital citizenship' was, and Rep. McCrory replied that it was the dos and don'ts of social media. Rep. Currey addressed the components of LGBTQ+ in the sex education portion. Rep. Felipe said he felt it was important for children towards "learning who they are". Sen. Cicarella stated that he believed that the decision as to what was 'age appropriate' was up to parents to determine and that there were concerns with other areas such as "media literacy". Sen. Kushner spoke in support of local school districts and the State Department of Education and their ability to present materials in an age appropriate fashion and to teach inclusion. Rep. Reyes said that he was very glad to see that the bill had been expanded to include Native American and Asian Pacific American studies. Rep. Dathan echoed Sen. Kushner in expressing confidence in the school's ability to do a good job. The bill passed with a roll call vote with 37 voting yea, 13 voting nay, 0 abstaining and 1 absent and not voting.

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable motion for [H.B. No. 6620](#) (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE RIGHT TO READ AND ADDRESSING OPPORTUNITY GAPS AND EQUITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS. (ED,APP) The motion was made by Rep. Simms and seconded by Rep. Dathan. Rep. McCarty confirmed with Sen. McCrory that districts with high literacy level could apply for a waiver and that the Literacy Center would be working in conjunction with the Reading Research Center. Sen. McCrory said that the specific language would be added before a floor vote. Rep. France asked if the 16 million dollars were in the budget. Rep. Walker replied that it was not. Rep. France asked if there were qualified applicants to fill the positions of literacy coach, reading teachers etc. created in the bill. Sen. McCrory replied that there were. Rep. France commented that this was a "substantial ask" for local districts. Sen. McCrory responded that it was and that it should have been done long ago. He emphasized that reading ability was critical for success. Rep. France agreed. Rep. Wilson asked about the change of "achievement gap" to "opportunity gap" in the text. Sen. McCrory explained that all students can "achieve", what was missing were the opportunities to receive the types of instruction necessary to achieve. Rep. France said that he would be voting no because the money was not in the budget. Rep. Walker told the Committee that there were negotiations taking place concerning funding. Sen. McCrory observed that it was an ideal time to take advantage of Federal funding, that this really was an investment. Rep. McCarty highlighted that these programs would be evidence based and that literacy is a real part of the disparity discussion. Rep. Walker concurred that it was fundamental to equity issues. Rep. Kennedy said that she was looking forward to being able to vote yes on the bill when the funding issues were addressed. The bill passed with a roll call vote with 40 voting yea, 10 voting nay, 0 abstaining and 1 absent and not voting.

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable motion for [H.B. No. 6383](#) (RAISED) (File No. 29) AN ACT CONCERNING CALL CENTERS AND NOTICE OF CLOSURES. (LAB,APP)The motion was made by Rep. Porter and seconded by Sen. Kushner. There being no discussion, the bill passed with a roll call vote with 33 voting yea, 17 voting nay, 0 abstaining and 1 absent and not voting.

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable motion for [H.B. No. 6469](#) (RAISED) (File No. 122) AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT HOME-CARE PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY. (HS,APP) The motion was made by Rep. Abercrombie and seconded by Rep. Dathan. There being no discussion, the bill passed with a roll call vote with 41 voting yea, 8 voting nay, 0 abstaining and 1 absent and not voting.

Rep. Walker called for a motion to vote on the consent calendar. The motion was made by Rep. Candelaria and seconded by Sen. Lesser. The Consent Calendar consisted of the following:

[H.B. No. 6438](#) (COMM) AN ACT MAKING DEFICIENCY APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2021. (APP)

[S.B. No. 1080](#) (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM. (APP)

[S.B. No. 1081](#) (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE INTEREST RATE RELATING TO TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM COST-OF-LIVING ALLOWANCES AND RESERVING CERTAIN LOTTERY FUND REVENUE FOR THE CONNECTICUT TEACHERS' RETIREMENT FUND BONDS SPECIAL CAPITAL RESERVE FUND. (APP)

[H.B. No. 5088](#) (COMM) AN ACT REQUIRING THE PAYMENT OF A REWARD TO PATRICIA "PIDGIE" D'ALLESSIO. (APP)

[H.B. No. 5607](#) (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDS TO REPLENISH THE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION TRUST FUND. (APP)

[H.B. No. 5742](#) (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, MENTAL HEALTH, SUICIDE PREVENTION AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICE PROVIDERS. (APP)

[Substitute for S.B. No. 241](#) (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING OVERSIGHT AND TRANSPARENCY AT THE CONNECTICUT PORT AUTHORITY. (TRA,APP)

[S.B. No. 818](#) (RAISED) AN ACT PERMITTING THE COMMUNITY SPOUSE OF AN INSTITUTIONALIZED MEDICAID RECIPIENT TO RETAIN THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF ALLOWABLE ASSETS. (AGE,APP)

[S.B. No. 948](#) (RAISED) AN ACT ADDRESSING EDUCATION FUNDING AND RACIAL EQUITY IN CONNECTICUT. (ED)

[Substitute for S.B. No. 1034](#) (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION. (ED,APP)

[Substitute for H.B. No. 6618](#) (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING ISSUES RELATED TO PUBLIC EDUCATION IN CONNECTICUT. (ED,APP)

A roll call vote was taken with 50 voting yea, 0 voting nay, 0 abstaining and 1 absent and not voting.

Rep. Walker called for a Joint Favorable Substitute motion for [H.B. No. 6439](#) (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE

THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR. (APP) The motion was made by Rep. Abercrombie and seconded by Rep. Candelaria. Rep. Walker asked the Appropriations Committee Subcommittee chairs to briefly outline for the Committee what changes from the Governor's budget were made in the substitute bill. Rep. Walker and Sen. Osten thanked the Committee for their bipartisan work on ECS, the Probate Courts, nonprofits and other elements.

Rep. Zawistowski asked about the reduction of train and bus subsidies. Sen. Lopes said that the reduction was not based on Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI) funding but on reduce ridership. Sen. Osten said that TCI was not intended for current expenditures but for other projects. Rep. Zawistowski questioned using bonding for 'pay as you go' projects with nonqualifying life assumptions. Sen. Osten replied that short term General Obligation bonds were going to be used and that the decision to bond "pay as you go" was not related to the Spending Cap.

Rep. Turco praised the inclusion of funds for the PACT Program, which will allow students to attend Community College without acquiring debt, and he hoped it would continue past the biennium.

Rep. Betts asked what had happened to the proposal to use lottery revenues for this purpose. Rep. Haddad said that when the tuition free college legislation had been written, the ilottery revenues had been identified as a potential funding source. He further explained that as a result of the shortened 2020 session due to COVID-19, the ilottery has not yet been implemented. He stated that the hope is to use carry forward monies, as well as ilottery monies, to fund the program. Rep. Betts was concerned that promises were being made that could not be kept. Rep. Betts stated that, to his knowledge, for twelve years there had been large subsidies to the University of Connecticut Health Center with no systemic plan to eliminate the deficits. Sen. Osten said that negotiations with the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Tribes on ilottery were moving forward and that with a little time to allow the program to get up and running, those funds would become available. She noted that the UConn Health Center had been close to not needing subsidies before the pandemic and that the work that had been done on the pension issues by members on both sides of the aisle had provided a good start to a good plan. Rep. Betts asked about the costs that would be incurred if the Public Option healthcare proposal passed. Sen. Osten said that the projected costs were eight to nine hundred thousand dollars for the State Comptroller to move the program forward. Sen. Lesser confirmed that the cost is \$450,000 each fiscal year. Rep. Betts repeated his concerns for the passage of the Public Option and the unfunded pension obligations. He asked if we knew what federal funds were coming and where they would be spent. Rep. Walker said that the Governor would be presenting his plan to the leaders, who will in turn forward the plan to the Appropriations Committee for its response. Rep. Betts said he worried about short term funding for programs.

Sen. Anwar expressed his support for the budget's community investments. He highlighted the parity in rates to midwives as positive.

Rep. France asked for clarification for several elements in the proposed budget, including the anticipated Cannabis Account. Rep. Walker said that the programs to support the legalization of recreational cannabis would have to be paid for out of the revenues generated and that it would fall in large part under the Department of Consumer Protection.

Neil Ayers from OFA responded to Rep. France's question about the Municipal Transition Grant referenced on page 50 and stated that he would get the detail to the

Committee Administrator for the Committee members. Anthony Naples from OFA confirmed that this was related to the cap on the car tax.

Rep. France said that it had been his understanding that the Family and Medical Leave program was to be funded by withholdings and not out of the General Fund. Sen. Osten pointed out there were in fact two programs and that the unpaid leave program did not fall under the same restrictions as the paid leave program.

Rep. France asked about the increase in the Judicial Branch's youth violence outreach programs. Rep. Walker explained that the Manson Youth facility had been moved to the Court Support division.

Sen. Miner asked about Section 18 and the apparent moving of monies through the FAC process between agencies. Nick Bombace from LCO said that it gave authority to the Governor to move funds with FAC approval to maximize Federal funds. Sen. Miner said that the Appropriations Committee had seen this before and had not liked it as it undercut legislative oversight.

Sen. Miner asked how far under the Spending Cap the budget was. Rep. Walker said the budget was under the cap in FY22 by 2.2 million dollars and 15.6 million dollars in FY23. Sen. Miner said he was concerned that many items were being moved off budget to avoid the cap and that the budget was undermining the hard work and discipline of past years. He said that the budget did not reflect the true costs of current spending and that the reliance on the Rainy Day Fund and the American Rescue Program monies were setting the State up for future "cliffs". He felt that this budget was a relapse to bad practices. Rep. Walker said she agreed with him, however the pandemic had been a huge setback to the progress being made. She cited the negative impacts on education, food banks, unemployment and many other areas and programs. She said that State can't begin to rebuild without these kinds of investments in our populations. She said that we were dismantling past practices, but taking a little turn, a few steps back, to support people in need. Sen. Miner said that we were pledging programs and levels of programs that we could not support in two years. He said that unlike the recession of 2008, we needed to concentrate on getting people back to work.

Rep. McCarty said that she was concerned about the sustainability of the budget.

Rep. Abercrombie said that she saw the budget as an opportunity and that one time monies were also an opportunity. She said that many of the Human Services programs were based on lapses, not federal dollars. She said that the Safety Net was in jeopardy without these increases. She said that not all enhancements were relying on one time funds, but that it would be a shame to not spend those onetime funds.

Sen. Hartley praised what she said was an amazing effort on a budget the likes of which has never been seen or probably ever will be seen again due to the pandemic. She said she would vote yes but was also concerned with issues of sustainability and "cliffs". She noted that the document would change through negotiations with the Executive Branch before it reached the floor.

Rep. Walker asked if there were any further questions. Being none, the Joint Favorable Substitute passed with a roll call vote with 34 voting yea, 16 voting nay, 0 abstaining and 1 absent and not voting.

Rep. Walker thanked the Committee and the staff of OFA and LCO and the Committee staff, as did Sen. Osten, who added that Rep. Walker had been a "great team mate" throughout the process. Sen. Miner and Rep. France echoed Sen. Osten's remarks.

The meeting recessed at 7:11 PM for one half hour to leave the voting open for missed votes.

A motion was duly made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:41 PM.

Susan Keane
Administrator

Elizabeth Gillette
Committee Clerk