

# Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5228

AN ACT CONCERNING THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

**Title:** DISORDER ADVISORY COUNCIL.

**Vote Date:** 3/8/2022

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/1/2022

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Human Services Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill seeks to change the structure of the chairs of the Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council. Per the current law, the DSS Commissioner is assigned as one of the three chairs of the Council. This bill will eliminate the Commissioner's designation in favor of a structure by which all council chairs will be elected by a vote of the Council members.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

**Deidre S. Gifford, Commissioner of the Department of Social Services (DSS):** The Department supports the bill because it seeks to encourage a better partnership within the Council. According to the DSS, this change will create an atmosphere of empowerment within the Council and its members to advocate for those with autism in the state as well as those who need autism waiver services or who are on the autism waiver waiting list. The restructuring of the Council will encourage members to be more effective advocates for this population.

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

No other testimony was submitted in favor.

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

**Andrew Komarow, ASD Council Member and Autistic Individual:** The ADS Council cannot support the bill as it is currently written. This is because in the bill, as it is now, has no

requirement that an adult with ASD will required as co-chair. Mr. Komarow further states that this is a requirement by statute and a key part of the formation of the committee. As he states, the representation that an adult with autism is always a chair is paramount to the importance and spirit of the committee.

**Reported by: Isaac Agyemang-Duah**

**Date: 03/15/2022**