

Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5364

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE TOBACCO SETTLEMENT TRUST FUND.

Vote Date: 3/16/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/14/2022

File No.: 154

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Public Health Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Currently, all monies from the Tobacco Settlement Fund are deposited into the state's General Fund. This bill will change this practice by depositing only the first \$4 Million in annual disbursements from the Tobacco Settlement Fund to the General Fund. Any remaining funds would be directed to the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund. These funds would be used to support and encourage development of programs to reduce tobacco abuse, substance abuse, and to address other unmet physical and mental health needs.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

No administration/agency response was provided for this bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Victoria Adams, M. Ed, NCTTP, Tobacco Program Coordinator, Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU):

As an educator involved with tobacco cessation programs, I can see that students are clearly unaware of the risks associated with vaping and other nicotine products. Providing funding for education programs in this area which will have a positive impact not only on the health of our young people, but also positively impact the cost of healthcare in this country and, certainly, the state.

Linda Alderman, CT State Lead Ambassador, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network:

Connecticut has spent zero dollars on tobacco cessation and prevention programs since 2016, despite recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that \$32 million should be spent annually on these programs. The impact on CT residents is significant. Child smoking is up, high school students are increasingly turning to nicotine products and the cost to our health care system to treat conditions related to smoking is two billion annually. This is occurring while not one dollar of Tobacco Settlement Funds is spent on programs for which the funds were intended. This bill addresses this oversight and will provide the state with the opportunity to reverse this trend.

Jim Williams, Government Relations Director, American Heart Association, CT:

According to the CDC, cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the US. While the CDC recommends \$32 Million be spent annually on cessation and prevention programs, CT has chosen to divert the money from the Tobacco Settlement Fund to the General Fund. For too long, CT has ignored the negative health impact associated with nicotine products, but this bill is a chance to reverse those trends. Mr. Williams strongly recommends that the minimum annual funding be increased to \$12 Million.

Others in Support:

Bryte Johnson, CT GR Director, ACS Cancer Action Network
Donna Rogers, Higganum
Geraldyn Laut, Glastonbury
Ingrid Gillespie, Director of Prevention, Liberation Programs, Inc

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

There was no written testimony in opposition

Reported by: David Rackliffe

Date: March 29, 2022