

Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-198

AN ACT CONCERNING THE ADVISORY BOARD FOR PERSONS WHO ARE

Title: DEAF, HARD OF HEARING OR DEAFBLIND.

Vote Date: 3/17/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/10/2022

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Human Services Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This legislation seeks to make a revision to the position of the commissioner of the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) as one of the chairpersons in The Advisory Board for Person Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind. In addition to this, two chairs will be appointed rather than three which have proven to work better. This change will allow more input from advocacy groups that will give more meaningful contributions in decision making.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Commissioner Amy Porter, Department of Aging and Disability Services:

The Department of Aging and Disability Services supports this bill as it allows only two chairpersons which has proven to work better. Also, it removes the position of the Commissioner from the Department of Aging and Disability. The DSS states that this will give more privilege to advocacy groups whose voice should be heard.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Rep. Robin Comey 102nd District:

Rep. Comey gives strong support for this legislation. While serving as co-chair to Work Group Concerning Issues Affecting Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind Persons, Rep. Comey became familiar with stakeholders who shared their experiences while navigating a fragmented system due to years of neglect. Having these voices improved the resources and knowledge of the agencies serving the deaf, deafblind and hard-of-hearing community. Other

important issues were brought forward such as interpreters who specialize in medical appointments, mental health settings and emergency room visits who could better help these communities. Moreover, there are interpreters who are knowledgeable about judicial and legal systems. Rep. Comey supports this bill because the input of these stakeholder groups will improve the deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing community.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Advocate Marissa Rivera, Disability Rights Connecticut:

Ms. Rivera understands the reason for revision of the membership of the Advisory Board for Persons Who Are Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, or DeafBlind, however, does not support removing the direct link to the Governor's office. Ms. Rivera believes that to improve accessibility for services to these individuals, appoint a person from the Governor's office, or at least appoint the State ADA coordinator to be on the Advisory board.

Reported by: Natoya Graham

Date: 3/18/2022