

Appropriations Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-397

AN ACT CONCERNING LIBRARY SERVICE FOR PERSONS WHO ARE BLIND,

Title: VISUALLY IMPAIRED OR HAVE OTHER DISABILITIES.

Vote Date: 4/7/2022

Vote Action: JOINT FAVORABLE Substitute

PH Date: 3/25/2022

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Appropriations Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill was proposed to mitigate decisions that were made by the State Library Board that have, at times, adversely affected the visually impaired community. The bill encourages collaboration with the advisory committee to maintain and enhance services of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH).

Substitute Language:

This bill was amended to require the State Library Board to consult with blind and physically disabled advisory board and the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) before taking action that could alter certain library services to maintain, and accessibility to, services.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Amy Potter](#), **Commissioner, Department of Aging and Disability Services** – ADS testified in favor of maintaining the library service for those who are blind, visually impaired or have other disabilities. The agency is prepared to join in discussions to explore how they can best service the patrons of the Library for the Blind.

[Deborah Schandler](#), **State Librarian, Office of the State Librarian** – Ms. Schandler provided testimony in opposition of this bill and specifically to the transfer of LBPH oversight to DAS. Ms. Schandler expressed that LBPH partnership is between the Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) and the State Library. She explained that under federal law, it is the Librarian of Congress who has the legal authority to

decide with whom to partner. Additionally, she testified that the bill would impair LBPH's current staffing model and cause severe disruptions to services provided.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

None Expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

The following people/organizations submitted testimony in opposition of moving the administration of library service from the State Library to the Department of Aging and Disability as it may fully eliminate service and cause interruptions in services to patrons:

[Elizabeth Rival](#), Vice President, National Federation of the Blind of CT
[Nathaneal T. Wales](#), Treasurer, National Federation of the Blind of CT
[Colleen Bailie](#), President, CT Library Association

Reported by: Taylor Hyde

Date: April 8, 2022