

Government Administration and Elections Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-433

AN ACT REQUIRING PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR CERTAIN SPECIAL SESSION

Title: LEGISLATION.

Vote Date: 3/29/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/25/2022

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The Connecticut General Assembly (CGA) can hold a special session to vote on legislation, there are occasions this is to vote on a bill that was brought forth during the regular session and did not pass. SB433 will require that the CGA hold a public hearing during the special session if it is determined that the special session is for a proposed bill that didn't pass during the immediately preceding regular session. Public hearings are a time for the public to express their opinion on a bill, negative or positive. The bill would give the public the opportunity to participate in the state legislative process with confidence.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Colleen M. Murphy Ex. Director and General Council, The Freedom of the Information Commission SB 433 would protect the public's ability to participate in the legislative process. Public participation is cornerstone of our representative democracy. The FOI Commission welcomes this proposal as it increases transparency and accountability in government.

Senator, Rob Sampson, Senate, State of Connecticut This proposal would amend the general statutes to require a public hearing on any bill or concept raised in a special session that is substantially similar to a bill introduced during the immediately preceding regular session. The American system of government relies on the ability of its citizens to peacefully assemble and petition their government for grievances. If the legislature is planning to debate and vote on a bill proposed during special session, the public should have a right to testify on the bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Michele Jacklin, Vice President and Legislative Co-Chair, Connecticut Council on Freedom of Information

SB433 would enhance government transparency. This is a good-government protection against lawmakers doing an end-run around the legislative process. Public hearings are a vital part of the legislative process which allows the public first glance of proposals as well as reasons for the bill and the arguments for and against. By not having a public hearing and allowing the public's input, in effect, rendering it irrelevant and the legislative process a mockery. The provisions of the FOIA regarding public hearings must continue.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

David Godbout

Mr. Godbout is opposed to any bill presented to the General Assembly as he feels his fourth amendment right is being violated. For the assembly to act, they must allow public attendance, not allowing public attendance results in any action being unlawful and automatically void.

Reported by: Bonnie Gray

Date: 03/29/2022