

Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5765

AN ACT CONCERNING COMPENSATION OF FAMILY CAREGIVERS IN
MEDICAID WAIVER PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF

Title: DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES.

Vote Date: 3/2/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Change of Reference to Appropriations

PH Date: 2/7/2023

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:

Human Service Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Many families who have children or family members with disabilities are providing full-time care for them at home. Because of this, they may be struggling to meet certain financial needs as they are unable to work to provide the care needed for their family. This bill will allow the definitions of both legally responsible relatives to include spouses, parents, or legal guardians and Medicaid waiver program, while also calling for Medicaid waiver programs to be amended to authorize compensation for family caregivers.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Health Management Administrator, Krista Ostazewski; opposes this bill stating, in the past, paying legal guardians for supports reimbursed through a Medicaid waiver was highly scrutinized by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). It is stated that national interest in paying legal guardians has increased during the height of the pandemic. It is stated this bill would require additional costs not anticipated in DDS' budget.

Department of Social Services (DSS), Commissioner-Designate, Andrea Barton Reeves; opposes this bill stating that amending the DDS waivers would change existing policies, which ensure safety and health requirements. It is stated DDS waivers require a prior approval process before making payment to the family caregiver and/or legal guardian for the provision of waiver services to ensure all other options have been explored. It is stated this process is used on a case-by-case basis for staffing circumstances that prove to be extenuating or challenging. It is stated, this bill would result in additional costs to the state that have not been budgeted.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Center for Disability Rights, CEO, Chief Advocate, Marc Anthony Gallucci; supports this bill as best policy for the state is for individuals to remain at home within their community and not in an institution.

CWCSEO, Policy Analysts, Megan Baker and Michael Werner; supports this bill stating that family caregivers will speak the same language and understand the cultural sensitivities of program participants, addressing the issue of language accessibility and making care more personalized.

Connecticut Residents, the Nugent family; supports this bill sharing their family's experience being a full-time caregiver for a member of their family who has severe autism, epilepsy, PICA, and is non-verbal. It is stated their family supports this bill sharing the hardship and struggles it has on their family both financially and mentally. It is stated this bill would help ease some of the financial struggles families face in similar situations like theirs.

Mother, Monika Nugent

Father, Dave Nugent

Grandmother, Marie Nugent

Brother, David Nugent Jr.

Sister, Miranda Nugent

The following individuals submitted testimony in support of this bill:

Joyce Boucino

Sambo Chamreun

Marlene Hernandez

Veronica Hock

Penny Inferrera

Eva Inness

Kathi Kozo

Stefanie Mendez

Tracy Ribeiro

Diane Ridgeway

Mindi Sarko

Ruben Guevarez Sr.

Ruben Guevarez Jr.

Two people submitted testimony anonymously in support of this bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None stated.

Reported by: Kelly Houston

Date: 3/10/2023