

Housing Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6590
AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN PROTECTIONS FOR GROUP AND FAMILY
Title: CHILD CARE HOMES.
Vote Date: 3/2/2023
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 2/7/2023
File No.: 181

***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:

The Housing Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Access to childcare has been increasingly limited over the years, especially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. To address the lack of childcare, this bill would streamline the licensing processed for those seeking to operate a group or family childcare home.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language makes changes to any rental agreement of a single-family home entered or renewed on or after October 1, 2023, is prohibited in operating a licensed group childcare home. The substitute language has added definitions for additional clarity. The language also adds numerous provisions that a landlord can set including not allowing structural changes, requiring the renter to reverse any approved structural changes, an additional security deposit not exceeding one month's rent, a utility surcharge that can't exceed 10% of the average cost of any water or electricity bill for the prior 12-month period or a reasonable equivalent, as well as other minor changes. It also sets out restrictions that employees and customers must follow. A tenant must pay the difference if a landlord's homeowner's or liability insurance increases. The language goes out to state that condo associations or common interest communities can prohibit licensed group childcare homes. It also creates an exception that a landlord can demand a security deposit which exceeds two months' rent for individuals who plan to operate a licensed group childcare home or family childcare home.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Office of Early Childhood, Commissioner, Beth Bye; Supports the intent of the bill, stating that licensed family childcare homes make up 10% of the supply but have the potential to address 50% of the shortage in infant/toddler care. Notes that zoning can be a barrier to

expansion. Mentions how family childcare homes are regulated by OEC and that the requirements are robust in ensuring the safety of children.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Advancing Connecticut Together-CT Association of Human Services, Policy Director, Liz Fraser; Supports this bill stating how this will streamline and simplify the process to start a group family childcare home. Testifier observes the lack of childcare in Connecticut, and states that this bill will help curb that issue. Testifier explains the importance of having access to childcare for the economy as well.

All Our Kin, Vice President of Policy, Christie Balka; Supports this bill stating that this will help expand licensed group family childcare. The testifier notes that the demand for childcare is very high, and that these programs have the capacity to fill 50% of the supply gap. The testifier notes that the lack of toddler care is estimated to cost Connecticut \$1.5 billion a year until it is fixed.

All Our Kin, Co-Founder, Jessica Sager; Supports this bill stating their own personal experience with childcare and how it helped her be able to work and provide for their children. States that most people who lost their job during the pandemic were women because they couldn't work in childcare. Supports the bill because they believe it will not only expand childcare but will increase the job market for women.

Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance, Executive Director, Merrill Gay; Supports this bill stating the significant shortage in childcare and believes that this bill will address that shortage. States that according to the OEC, 44% of individuals live in a "childcare desert" in Connecticut. Believes that this bill addressed concerns that landlord had in the past.

Connecticut Legal Services, Attorney and Policy Advocate, Raphael Podolsky; Supports this bill stating the importance of access to quality and affordable childcare, and how the pandemic exacerbated a supply problem. Believes that this bill would help employ childcare workers, who tend to be women.

Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund, Policy Practice Intern, Ariana Gonzalez; Supports this bill stating the importance of access to quality and affordable childcare. Cites that 44% of individuals, according to OEC, live in a "childcare desert" made worse by the pandemic. The testifier states that these deserts are more likely to appear in rural, low-income, African American, and Hispanic communities. States that the streamlining of licensed childcare facilities will help with the lack of childcare.

Connecticut Voices For Children, Legislative Coordinator, Eli Sabin; Supports this bill stating that Connecticut's economy can't fully recover until we address the lack of childcare and believes this will empower parents to get back to work. Notes that home-based childcare can help alleviate the access and affordability crisis Connecticut is facing.

Child Care Center Director, Emmanuella Lature; Supports this bill and shares the difficulty they faced when trying to expand her family childcare home to a group childcare home. They note that the supply for childcare isn't keeping up with the demand and believe this bill will help that.

Fairfield Center For Housing Opportunity, Director, Aicha Woods; Supports this bill stating that there needs to be a variety of childcare options, and having those options provides parents with financial stability because the parents can go and work. Believes this bill will continue to expand access to childcare

Jerome N. Frank Legal Services Organization, Attorney, Adam Cowing; Supports this bill stating this will address the childcare crisis which was exacerbated by the pandemic. They

note that landlords can discriminate against those looking to start a group family childcare facility and that zoning laws can make it onerous.

New Haven Legal Assistance, Attorney, Amy Eppler-Epstein; Supports this bill stating how they have represented two clients who faced eviction for running licensed group family childcare homes, and how this eviction had a serious impact not only on the owners but the families and children. The testifier believes this bill will help address these issues.

Partnership For Strong Communities, Senior Policy Advisor, Sean Ghio; Supports this bill stating that parents need childcare closer to where they live. Believes that this bill will help that, by allowing parents to find childcare in all types of buildings and will increase job opportunities.

Shiny Rock Daycare, Owner, Gladys Contreras; Supports this bill and shares a personal experience of the difficulties in trying to obtain a license. The testifier believes that this bill will help expand access to childcare for parents in need and help tame the significant demand for childcare.

Falasha Campbell; Supports this bill stating how difficult it was to get licensed to start a group childcare home. The testifier shares that during the 8-month process, they received numerous calls from families who were desperately waiting for childcare.

Michelle Gagliardi; Supports this bill however would like changes to include individuals who belong to homeowner associations.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

CCM, Senior Legislative Associate, Zachary McKeown; Opposes this bill stating it's an unfunded mandate and places restrictions on local zoning.

CTAA, Jessica Doll; Opposes this bill.

CTAA, Lauren Tagliatela; Opposes this bill stating it will disturb other tenants and add stress to the building and plumbing. Has concerns with what the daycare owners will do.

CT Coalition of Property Owners, President, John Souza; Opposes this bill stating property owners have a fundamental right to decide how their property is used. Believes disturbance and wear and tear are significant problems and a burden to tenants and property owners. Additional costs will be transferred to the tenant at some point.

Connecticut Council of Small Towns, Executive Director, Betsy Gara; Opposes this bill stating it restricts local zoning laws. Opposes Section 2d(1)(a) stating it prohibits a town requiring a special zoning permit or exception to run these facilities. Opposes lines 223-227 stating it prohibits municipalities from imposing conditions on the operation of these facilities other than those imposed by the Commissioner. Testifier believes that the municipality is in a better position to decide whether a home is qualified to be a group childcare home. Finally, the testifier has concerns with Section 1(b) stating it would require the municipality to submit a sworn statement to OPM each year certifying compliance.

CT Property Owners Alliance, President, Bob De Cosmo; Opposes this bill stating it overrides local zoning and mandates childcare homes to have an inspection for lead paint but fails to specify what actions would be taken if there was lead paint found. The testifier also has concerns on the licensing process. Finally, the testifier believes that landlords should be aware of what is about to occur on their property as these businesses add additional wear and tear to the property.

Franklin Communities, Member, Louis Tagliatela; Opposes this bill stating apartment systems will be stressed by daycares

FAAIA, Geddis, Barbara; Opposes this bill stating it permits group childcare homes on residential zoning. Opposes the removal of Sec. 9e.

Home Builders & Remolders Association of CT, CEO, Jim Perras; Opposes this bill stating it erodes a property owner's rights. Has concerns about additional maintenance costs which will be passed down to tenants.

Long Hill Partners LLC, Owner, Adam Bonoff; Opposes this bill stating group homes can be disruptive in a multifamily building

Santini Villa Apartments, Owner, Kevin Santini; Opposes this bill stating landlords aren't insured for this type of activity on their property. States that landlords are concerned about all their tenants and believes this will drive away tenants because of the noise, traffic, and lack of parking.

Town of Greenwich, First Selectmen, Fred Camillo; Opposes this bill stating it takes away control of local zoning and municipalities right to opt out

Woodbury Planning Commission, Member, Mary Connolly; Opposes this bill stating it would be a statewide zoning mandate.

Anonymous, Anonymous; Opposes this bill stating they believe the license requirements are too broad.

Christopher Dahm; Opposes this bill stating it gets rid of local control on zoning.

Enfield Resident, AnnMarie Galdenzi; Opposes this bill stating it takes away individual rights and local government rights.

Paula Gallo; Opposes this bill stating they're against the removal of Section E, and thinks the bill is a one size fits all policy that only hurts municipalities.

William Garbati; Opposes this bill stating it isn't detailed enough

Steven Georgeou; Opposes this bill stating it infringes upon local zoning and municipalities.

Housing Provider, Joseph Mollica; Opposes this bill stating that these facilities will increase traffic, noise, liability, and safety issues. Believes it's a mandate on local zoning laws. Believes it could lead to the loss of the "New England small town" character. Believes that a landlord shouldn't be required to permit a business in a residential rental without their permission.

Judy & Paul Januszewski; Opposes this bill stating it would allow someone to run a business out of a home they don't own, and a landlord can't restrict it. Also opposes the lead exposure test stating it isn't clear who is responsible for the testing as well as additional wear and tear from running a group childcare home.

Landlord, Helen; Opposes this bill stating it removes property rights of a property owner

Andrzej Lipskij; Opposes this bill stating it's a statewide mandate on local zoning. Doesn't specify who would be responsible for the presence of lead paint. Would cause a disturbance to neighbors as well as additional wear and tear on the property. Believes the licensing requirements are too vague.

Lorraine Potvin; Opposes this bill stating concerns with who is going to pay for the upkeep of the property and is worried about the increased traffic and noise from the children.

Property Manager, Justin Gaboury; Opposes this bill stating it will make it more difficult to operate a well maintained and comfortable housing option.

Property Manager, Katrina Mattern; Opposes this bill stating landlords should have the right to restrict commercial operations in a residential property. Also believes there will be additional wear and tear on the property.

Reported by: Richard E. O'Neil

Date: March 28, 2023

