

Committee on Children JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6717

AN ACT CONCERNING GUIDELINES AND BEST PRACTICES FOR SCHOOL

Title: FOOD SERVICE EMPLOYEES.

Vote Date: 2/28/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/21/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Committee on Children.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill requires that the Department of Public Health to develop certain guidelines for school food service employees and additionally provide guidelines to school food service employees annually.

Often food service employees make off-handed comments that can unintentionally affect a child's eating habits. School children today often experience some level of eating disorders, especially regarding those who may have a negative association with eating. This bill hopes to relieve some of these negative interactions by giving best practice and guidelines to cafeteria service workers so that they can better understand more inclusive language.

The S language of this bill lays out the timeline as to how local and regional boards of education shall provide copies of these trainings as described in Section 1 of this bill to each food service employee.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Connecticut State Department of Education, Division Director, John D. Frassinelli, supports this bill as it aligns with current guidance standards that are provided to food service directors. This includes anti-shaming against low-income students. This bill also aides in their continued action to encourage positive nutrition education. They add once the guidance is completed, they will incorporate them into a series of trainings for food service directors so that they may provide training to their staff. They add that previous conversations with directors find that this would be a positive addition.

State of Connecticut State Department of Education, Commissioner, Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, opposes this bill they add that eating disorders are serious and misunderstood *but* treatable. They add the food service staff are not trained mental health workers and are unaware what happens with students outside of the cafeteria. *[NOTE: the S language of bill adequately addressed concern of testimony.]*

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

School Nutrition Association of CT Public Policy & Legislation Committee, Co-Chair, Jeff Sidewater, opposes this bill because they feel that current trainings of food service staff are adequate to make this bill unneeded. They also say that they are not aware of widespread issues of insensitivity that constitutes a problem on food service employees.

Reported by: Christian Talarski

Date: UPDATED ON 5/8/23