

# Committee on Children JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6719

AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY SERVICES AND INDIVIDUALS WITH  
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER, COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENTS AND

**Title:** NONVERBAL LEARNING DISORDERS.

**Vote Date:** 3/2/2023

**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:**

The bill requires the Dept. of Developmental Services and the Dept of Emergency Services and Public Protection to develop sensory kits for distribution to certain municipalities. These kits will allow those in certain circumstances to better deal with those with autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairments, and nonverbal learning disorders.

JFS Language (LCO 5305 – Section 1 – the bill changes the lead agency to the Dept. of Developmental Services, Children and Families.

Section 2 – the bill changes the lead agency to the Dept. of Emergency from the Dept of Developmental Services and Children and Families.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

Dept. of Developmental Services, Mr. Jordan Scheff, Commissioner, The Dept is not able to support this bill as it is currently written. They believe that public safety departments and their employees should have the best information on how to respond to persons but there are several requirements of DDS in the bill where the agency does not have the authority or expertise to effectively administer. In particular, the creation of guidelines and best practices when it involves children with developmental disabilities and adults who have other developmental disabilities. Another concern they have is that they are being directed to create and distribute "sensory kits" to municipalities and they point out that they do not have the capacity or resources that would enable to accomplish this. They also suggest that the

collecting and sharing of personal information of persons with disabilities on a public safety data base may have HIPAA or other privacy issues.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

The ARC of Connecticut, Ms. Carol Scully, Director of Advocacy, are in support of this legislation since people with disabilities are more likely than those without disabilities to encounter police either as a victim or perpetrator of a crime. Studies show that people with disabilities account for one-third to one-half of all people killed by law enforcement. The data on violence including injury and death against people with intellectual developmental disabilities is scarce because type of disability is not identified or documented. This bill provides an opportunity to collect data on persons with disabilities that would be available in a searchable data base to assist the person with a disability and the first responder. They are also supportive of the "sensory kits" to be utilized by first responders who interact with children and adults with autism spectrum disorders.

Special Education Equity for Kids of Connecticut, Mr. John Flanders, Vice President, are supportive of this proposal and have several suggestions that they hope will improve it. Because many schools have School Resource Officers that have frequent contact with children with developmental disabilities it is important that they receive additional training to be better able to respond to the needs of these students and the bill should not be limited to the three disabilities mentioned in the title.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

Connecticut Conference of Municipalities: Mr. Zachary McKeown, Senior Legislative Assoc., do not endorse or oppose this bill they do express some reservations with the language. They do welcome additional resources and information regarding persons with intellectual disabilities but have concerns with the provision that requires municipal police department to record information in searchable databases used by police and public safety answering point dispatchers. They mention that resources vary greatly between police departments throughout the state and that some communities have only resident state troopers and not their own police force.

**Reported by: Richard Ferrari, Assist Clerk**

**Date: 3/10/23**