

Committee on Children JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1047

AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE COMMISSIONER OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TO

Title: ENTER INTO CERTAIN CONTRACTS.

Vote Date: 2/28/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/21/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Committee on Children.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill serves to authorize the Commissioner of Early Childhood to allocate funds to Regional Educational Service Centers to allow certain services to be used for early childhood care and education providers.

This bill intends to return the previous protocols that were introduced during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Under the health emergency, allocation of funding between the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood and Regional Educational Service Centers. This allowed for quicker and more dynamic funding throughout the state. The contracting services in place now are slow and barred by "red tape laws," returning to the protocols of years past would benefit the children of our state and get them the support they need quicker.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, Commissioner, Beth Bye, comments that this would allow the commissioner to allocate funding to the Regional Educational Service Centers to provide better assistance. This bill would also allow OEC to continue its funding protocol that were less restricted during the COVID-19 public health emergency. OEC under these conditions was able to more quickly direct funds. Due to the emergency being lifted these procurement allowances are no longer in place.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Connecticut Alliance of Regional Educational Service Centers, LEARN, Executive Director, Kate Ericson, supports this bill and its goal of creating a more effective and efficient contracting process that benefits the population, more specifically, children, families, and early childhood educators.

Early Childhood Initiatives at EASTCONN, Director, Diane Gozemba, MS ED., MBA, supports this bill to provide a more effective contracting process with the six Regional Education Service Centers.

Connecticut Alliance of Regional Educational Service Centers, EdAdvance, Executive Director, Jeffrey Kitching, Ed.D., supports this bill and would allow RESCs to reach the intended population more dynamically. This bill would aid in removing "red tape" when needed to better serve a vulnerable population.

- CTAMFT, Chair, Rebecca Ruitto, LMFT
- CTAMFT, Advocacy Chair, Jaime Rodriguez, LMFT

Supports this bill with emphasis on contracts with mental health professionals. More specifically, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists who are well tasked due to systemic training to collaborate with both the family and early education system.

Special Education Equity for Kids of Connecticut, Vice-President, John Flanders, supports the bill, However, informs that such contracts would divert Regional Education Service Centers from their primary goal of supporting K-12 education, unless substantial resources are allotted to the RESCs. Already, the RESCs lack resources and staff to provide for their own school districts. They warn of OEC bidding against local school district for RESC services.

CREC, Chief Program Officer, Heather Tartaglia, supports this bill to expedite the much-needed network of services to children from birth to grade school. This bill will allow CREC to streamline their partnership with RESC Alliance more effectively. They can also improve collaboration with OEC to provide more intentional and dynamic service. These partnerships supported by this bill will expedite collections of data to identify what services a child and family may need.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Christian Talarski

Date: 3/8/23