

Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1053

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY AND MAKE

Title: RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE ELDERLY NUTRITION PROGRAM.

Vote Date: 3/28/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference to Appropriations

PH Date: 3/7/2023

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 Services Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The Elderly Nutrition Program provides nutritionally balanced meals for senior citizens and allows them to live independently in their communities. Throughout the years, the need has increased as the aging population grows, and more seniors want to age in place. Moreover, the costs of food gas, and wages have increased. Funding for the Elderly Nutrition Program has not gone up, leading to some organizations to reduce their meal delivery operations. Creating a task force will highlight what steps need to be taken to ensure the program is meeting the needs of seniors throughout the state. The bill establishes a task force to study and make recommendations concerning the Elderly Nutrition Program administered by the Department of Aging and Disability Services.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language adds the Human Services Chairs and Ranking Members or designees to the elderly nutrition task force, along with elderly nutrition providers representing community action networks and the state association of nutrition and aging services providers. It requires the Human Services Chairs to chair the task force and convene by August 1, reporting to the Aging and Human Services Committees no later than Jan. 15. Additionally, Section 2 adds appropriations of \$2 million for elderly nutrition in each of the next two fiscal years

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Department of Aging and Disability Services, Commissioner, Amy Porter; opposes this bill stating 82% of the funding for the Elderly Nutrition program comes from federal funding. It

is stated the state contributes \$3.4 million in match dollars for this program as well, but state law requires the funding be distributed in the same proportion as the federal allocations to ensure equitable distribution.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Connecticut Association for Community Action, Inc. (CAFCA): Deb Polun, Executive Director: supports this bill stating a task force will determine how to proceed with the Elderly Nutrition program in the short and long term. It is suggested that the state appropriate and annualize over the next two years \$750,000 to restore the programs back to two meals per day and remove the enrollment caps to serve the needs in the communities.

Connecticut Association of Nutrition and Aging Service Providers (CANASP), President, Joel Sekorski: supports this bill stating having two elderly nutrition providers be part of the task force will be beneficial, however, suggests the bill is not necessary. It is stated the legislature passed a bill last year which would continue the assessment surrounding the Elderly Nutrition Program. It is suggested that this bill either replaces the Department of Aging and Disability's Nutrition Services Stakeholders meetings or improve the goals and policies of the existing meeting.

New Opportunities, Inc, President & CEO, William Rybczyk: supports this bill stating there is currently a funding gap, and this has resulted in a reduction in services. It is suggested the way resources are allocated should be looked into to ensure there is an equitable distribution based on demand and volume of meals served.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None stated.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF GENERAL COMMENTS:

Connecticut Resident, Stephen Levitt: took no position on this bill stating there are massive cutbacks Western Area Aging on Aging and New Opportunities which provide home delivered meals to seniors. It is stated there is no alternative to this program in the private sector and the government should continue to provide these crucial services to the elderly population.

Reported by: Maureen O'Reilly

Date: March 31, 2023