

# Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-1173

**Title:** AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES.

**Vote Date:** 3/22/2023

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/16/2023

**File No.:**

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## SPONSORS OF BILL:

Human Services Committee

## REASONS FOR BILL:

The Department of Social Services is currently under high demand, with a surge in cases from expiring COVID waivers, as well as a backlog of cases built up over the past several years. Customer service is severely limited; the phone lines have closed before midday when demand is particularly high. This bill seeks to institute a study with the objective of locating which department programs are currently unable to cope with their demand, with increased efficiency being one of the objectives of the study.

## RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None stated.

## NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

**Disability Rights Connecticut, Litigation Attorney, Sheldon Toubman;** supports the bill and the idea of a study into the staffing at DSS, however, they would like the study to explicitly investigate the "sufficiency of current and planned staffing levels", as it is their belief that the issue isn't allocation but the actual quantity.

**Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Attorney, Lucy Potter;** supports this bill stating that conducting a study to locate the gaps in service and staffing will be helpful given the strains the DSS has felt since October 2020, with office closures occurring as early as 11:45AM. It is stated that DSS will face additional strains with the unwinding of the Medicaid extension.

**Health Equity Solutions, Director of Policy, Karen Siegel, MPH;** supports this bill stating administrative coverage losses results in a number of people moving on and off HUSKY because of income changes or difficulty filing paperwork.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None stated.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF GENERAL COMMENTS:**

**SWAA CT & NOW CT, Coordinating Committee & Board Member, Margaret Goodwin;**

took no position stating DSS should have measures that would streamline the Medicaid process, as well as having a phone and online support at least 8 hours a day Monday to Friday.

**Columbia University, Student Reporter, Olivia Montes;** does not support nor oppose this bill and questions the programs the study in this bill would focus on and which problems they are likely to find.

**Reported by: James McNealey**

**Date: March 28, 2023**