

# Committee on Children JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5159

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE RESPONSIVENESS  
**Title:** OF STATE AGENCIES TO ISSUES CONCERNING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE.

**Vote Date:** 2/29/2024

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 2/22/2024

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Committee on Children

## **CO-SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Rep. Travis Simms, 140<sup>th</sup> District

Rep. Kerry Wood, 29<sup>th</sup> District

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill would establish a task force to study the responsiveness of state agencies to issues concerning child sexual abuse and submit a report on its findings to the Committee on Children not later than January 1, 2025.

This task force would allow for the gathering of information in order to assess agency response and response time in the interest of more efficiently and effectively dealing with the issue of child sexual abuse.

The S language clarifies who would be appointed to said taskforce.

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

**NOTE: TESTIMONY MAY NOT REFLECT CURRENT LANGUAGE OF THE BILL**

[Office of the Victim Advocate, State Victim Advocate, Natasha M. Pierre, Esq.](#) supports this bill and proposes an amendment to this bill to include the Office of the Victim Advocate, or the Office of the Victim Advocate's designee as a recommended member of the task force.

[Connecticut Childrens](#) supports this bill and offered to have their subject matter experts collaborate with policymakers on this task force.

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

[Dr. Linda Dalessio](#) supports this bill as written but does not support all the commissioners on this committee. They state that the committee members should be more transparent about how they measure their responses. They state that the situation that happened at the D.C.F. contracted Star Facility was likely known about by committee members prior to it being revealed via the press and being investigated by state police. They suggest appointing some members to the committee that have experience in Law Enforcement or Victim Advocacy.

[Connecticut Childrens Alliance, Executive Director, Krystal Rich](#) supports this bill and states that they feel the state would benefit greatly from developing a statewide prevention plan. They also request to add or ensure that there is representation from their statewide membership organization on top of the representation from a child advocacy center, as already listed in the bill, to ensure proper representation of all their child advocacy centers and children.

[Love146, Chief Programs and Strategy Officer, Erin Williamson](#) supports this bill and requests that the task force be expanded to include a member who is a licensed clinical social worker with expertise in identifying and working with children who have experienced child sex trafficking. They state that trafficked children often get left out of task forces, councils, and coalitions. Without intentionally including this population, the needs of trafficked children will go unmet. They go on to cite [General Statute § 46b-120](#), [Public Act 14-186](#), [the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act](#), and [the Trafficking Victims Protection Act](#) to support their testimony.

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

None expressed.

**Reported by: Patrick Buckley**

**Date: 3/8/2024**