

# Committee on Children

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5260

AN ACT REQUIRING AN EVALUATION OF SHORT-TERM ASSESSMENT AND

**Title:** RESPITE GROUP HOMES FOR CHILDREN.

**Vote Date:** 3/13/2024

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 2/29/2024

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Committee on Children

### CO-SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Travis Simms, 140th Dist.

### REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill is a significant tool to determine the effectiveness and success of these specialized institutions in satisfying the different requirements of children in crisis. By providing comprehensive information into these group homes' operations, services, and outcomes, the report allows participants to identify areas of strength and areas for change, encouraging a culture of continuous improvement in child welfare services.

This bill keeps the public and legislators informed about the quality of care provided to vulnerable children. Transparency not only builds trust in the child welfare system, but it allows people to push for reforms and resources to fix any recognized flaws. Furthermore, this bill is a step toward promoting the well-being and stability of children in short-term assessment and relief group homes. This bill demonstrates a commitment to protecting the rights and dignity of children in need, as well as working for ongoing improvement in the child welfare system.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[State of Connecticut's Office of the Child Advocate, Advocate, Sarah Eagan](#) supports this bill as part of its legislative agenda this session. The testimony focuses on the history of abuse, trauma, and mental health concerns among children put in unstable families, as well as how

youth shelters are going to have significant influence. This testimony emphasizes the need of all child care institutions following federal requirements and receiving appropriate financing to address the needs of the children under their care.

[The State of Connecticut's Department of Children and Families, Commissioner-Designate, Jodi-Hill Lilly](#), supports this bill as part of its legislative agenda this session. The testimony focuses on Short-Term Assessment and Respite Homes and how important they must be in making sure adolescents receive required evaluations and assistance, as well as their well-being, while they continue to discover the most appropriate treatment and enhance facility operations.

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

[State of Connecticut, House Republican Minority Leader, Rep. Vin Candelora](#), supports this bill and its purpose of fixing imperfections in the current system of DCF-managed group homes. They think that the current system lacks the necessary emotional and professional support, putting kids at risk in temporary shelters with minimal supervision. They highlight current failures and shortcomings in Short-Term Assessment and Respite Homes, such as cases where girls engaged in dangerous behaviors and crimes and were abused. They address safety concerns and advocate for action to provide the assistance and resources needed to properly care for these children.

[Dr. Linda Dalessio](#) supports this bill and the need to repair a faulty system. They illustrate all the flaws in the DCF organization that need to be addressed and corrected. They emphasize how effectively addressing these flaws involves genuine reflecting on workers, policies, and institutions. They advocate for additional staff inside DCF who value sincerity and doing the right thing.

[State of Connecticut Community Nonprofit Alliance, Senior Public Policy Advisor, Jeff Shaw](#), supports this bill and its attempt to examine Short-Term Assessment and Respite Homes. They feel that STAR homes are vital and can serve as a step toward being permanently placed in foster care or family care. They believe residential therapy may have a life-changing influence on children, particularly those who have had many placements, were wrongly put in hospitals, or have returned from an out-of-state program. The Alliance is opposed to any policy changes that might reduce the capacity of the STAR program.

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

None expressed.

**Reported by: Mickaelah Joseph**

**Date: 3/18/2024**