

Committee on Children JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5262

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING A SEXUAL ABUSE AND ASSAULT SURVEY.

Vote Date: 3/5/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/29/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Committee on Children

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would include a sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention survey as part of the state-wide sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program implemented by school districts.

A survey would allow for the collection of information about child sexual assault and abuse and would then allow for the sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program to be run more effectively by revealing areas of concern and how to address those areas.

The S language gives clarification on when the survey should be administered and by whom. (7/1/24, DPH & DCF)

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

NOTE: TESTIMONY MAY NOT REFLECT CURRENT LANGUAGE OF THE BILL

[State of Connecticut, Office of the Child Advocate, Child Advocate, Sarah Healy Eagan:](#)

supports this bill because it will enhance the existing statutory requirement for statewide prevention efforts regarding child sexual abuse. They have conducted multiple school-based investigations examining the adequacy of local frameworks for prevention and response to adult sexual misconduct, and repeatedly found systemic deficiencies.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Connecticut Children's, Research Scientist, Susie DiVietro, Ph.D:](#) supports this bill because it would help drive decision-making and target resources to address sexual violence more

quickly and accurately. Information from this survey would empower researchers to measure the impact of current interventions and identify areas of concern.

[Ledyard High School, Sophomore Student, Leena Egbert](#): supports this bill because it will help students feel safer about speaking out and gain knowledge on how to protect themselves. It would also help to destigmatize sexual abuse and assault in the eyes of other students by elevating their understanding of the situation.

[Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence, Executive Director, Beth Hamilton](#): supports this bill and states that sexual violence is a preventable public health epidemic. Public health data is critical to inform not just future policy efforts, but to identify where and how to use the resources available. They state that in 2019 there was a similar survey that could not end up being disseminated because of the Covid-19 pandemic. They suggest adding a requirement for the survey to be completed at regular intervals and for the information gathered by this survey to be publicly available.

[Kerrie Allise, Bill Dudley, Donna Farland, Jerry Kepple, Todd Plank](#): supports this bill and suggest that the Committee on Children hold a special screening of the movie "Sound of Freedom".

[Karla Ann](#): supports this bill and recommends that Connecticut craft significantly harsher laws to punish child sexual abuse and assault more severely and create a sexual abuse task force headed by Tim Ballard. They also suggest stationing the national guard at the southern border.

[Grandparent, Kathy Hawkins DuBose](#): supports this bill.

[Emily Peterson](#): supports this bill and states that stronger laws to prevent child sexual abuse of children at youth camps are needed.

[Love146, Chief Programs and Strategy Officer, LCSW, MPA, Erin Williamson](#): supports this bill because this survey is the only way to get an accurate assessment of the scope of child trafficking and exploitation in Connecticut. They state that child sex trafficking and exploitation are a form of child sexual abuse and assault and questions about it should be included in the survey.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Ledyard High School, Student, Loreli A.](#): opposes this bill because it is not proactive and does not stop sexual abuse. They state that this survey is geared toward children who may not have any education on the subject and may be influenced by the survey. They suggest making this survey for college and high school students instead of middle and elementary school students.

Reported by: Patrick Buckley

Date: 3/13/2024