

Aging Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5294

AN ACT CONCERNING A REGISTRY OF PERSONS CONVICTED OF

Title: FINANCIAL CRIMES AGAINST ELDERLY PERSONS.

Vote Date: 3/12/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/5/2024

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:

Aging Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would create a registry for individuals convicted of financial crimes against older adults. Its primary intent is to serve as a deterrent against potential offenders and a resource for monitoring individuals who have committed financial crimes against seniors.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

State of Connecticut Judicial Branch, External Affairs Division: The Judicial Branch takes **no position** on this bill but would like to request a technical change that would lay out in subsection (c) of Section 3 of the bill be separated into separate subdivisions so that violations would be easier to classify and track within their internal systems.

Connecticut Aging and Disability Services, Ms. Mairead Painter, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman The implementation of a registry presents several challenges and considerations, specifically that establishing and maintaining an up-to-date registry requires significant logistical, technical and financial resources. Ensuring the accuracy, managing access controls and updating to reflect changes in legal statuses can be complex and resource intensive. Implementation of the registry requires careful consideration of the operational, ethical and legal challenges involved.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

The Arc of Connecticut, Inc., Ms. Carol Scully, Director of Advocacy: Their testimony is in **support** of this proposal because it would create a registry of persons convicted of

financial crimes against elderly persons and provide a public searchable base on the Dept. of Social Services website.

CT Association for Healthcare at Home, Ms. Tracy Wodatch, President and CEO: They are in **support** of this bill indicating that a registry would serve as another tool to better screen persons who may seek employment providing care to clients in their homes. It would also give people who seek to directly hire in-home care providers an additional resource. They also suggest expanding the bill to include registration for financial crimes against children and disabled individuals.

Fairfield Senior Advocates, Mr. William Lenahan, Director State Issues: They presented testimony in **support** of this proposal. They believe it is a moral imperative to protect elderly and disabled citizens from financial crimes. Also, a registry would assist those seeking home care to vet and prevent those convicted of financial crimes from entering the residence and being alone with the senior resident. They offered several suggestions that might be used for improving the registry.

North Central Area Agency on Aging, Ms. Maureen McIntyre, CEO: They submitted testimony in **support** of this legislation. They participated on a task force in 2022 that provided a forum for conversations around elder financial fraud and abuse, Connecticut continues to make significant investments in the safety and support of older adults and this bill represents our state's continued intentions to ensure the future safety of our older adults and maintains the confidence in those who care for them.

Ms. Regina Stankaitis, Constituent: She offered her testimony in **support** of this bill. While there are laws in our state that are meant to protect older adults from fraud and exploitation, they believe we need to do more. Creating a registry would help older adults by giving them access to information about people who may pose a risk to their wellbeing, and it would allow older adults to check to see if someone has a history of committing financial crimes before they hire that person to provide them assistance and let them into their homes. She included in her testimony her own personal experience and details of what she was put through by a caregiver.

CT Statewide Family Council, Mr. Frederic Kaeser, Vice Chairperson: In his testimony he indicated his **support** for the measure.

Ms. Amy Badini: Supports this bill. They expressed meeting with Attorney General Tong and this issue. They recommend the bill give all resources needed for this to Attorney General Tong's office.

Ms. Jessica Hill: Supports this bill.

Ms. Irma Rappaport: Supports this bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

ACLU of Connecticut, Ms. Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel: They submitted testimony in **opposition** to this proposal. Public registries will limit the ability of people living with criminal records to contribute to society and build successful and fulfilling lives for themselves. They

believe out state should pursue solutions to elder abuse that do not rely on the failed policy of creating new public registries.

One Standard of Justice, Ms. Cindy Prizio, Executive Director: They are strongly **opposed** to the passage of this legislation. They say in their testimony that public registries do not prevent crime and they do not make communities safer. Enacting a registry reduces the chances of rehabilitation and may even increase recidivism. She suggests that the state consider alternatives that are demonstrated to work by providing education to seniors and their families on ways to protect finances.

Reported by:
Toni Lombardi, Clerk
Richard Ferrari, Assistant Clerk

Date: 3/15/24