

Government Administration and Elections Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-355

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMISSION FOR REVISIONS TO THE FREEDOM OF

Title: INFORMATION ACT.

Vote Date: 3/26/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/8/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration & Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would make several revisions to the Freedom of Information Act based on recommendations from the Freedom of Information Commission. These revisions are mostly to clarify provisions of the Act as well as updating it to reflect changes in technology.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Colleen Murphy, Executive Director, FOI Commission: Supports this bill because it revises the training requirements of the FOI Commission, which is reasonable and straightforward. States that the bill would clarify the FERPA education rights and supports replacing the word "educational" with "education". Also states that they support expanding the definition of hand-held scanners to include mobile phones, cameras, and other portable devices to make the statute more reflective of modern technology.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Michele Jacklin, Legislative Co-Chair, CT Council on FOI: Supports this bill because it clarifies the language of a similar bill including the definition of "governmental function". States that this bill would also remove the FOIC's role in providing training for smoking and vaping in public buildings, which does not apply to the goals and purpose of the Commission. Also states that the bill addresses modern technology by referencing devices such as cell phones in the statute regarding hand-held devices.

Antoinette Spinelli, Co-Legislative Chair, CT Town Clerks Association: Supports this bill because it addresses the technological changes in our world by referencing mobile phones and an example of a hand-held device. States that one of the goals of the CTCA is to improve the technology in their offices while maintaining the integrity of important records which this bill helps to achieve.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Linda Dalessio, Dr: Opposes this bill because it does not address an important issue in voting transparency, specifically related to the ERIC system used for maintaining voter rolls. States that citizens should not have to go through unelected officials or the courts to find these records, but rather they should be able to go to the FOIA Commission. Also agrees with language in the bill that says quasi-public agencies should not be exempt from FOIA, but states that funding for these agencies should be decreased.

David Godbout: Opposes this bill because it establishes a \$20 fee for recording public agencies, even if an individual is not attempting to copy public records. States that he views these sorts of fees as an infringement of the first amendment because citizens have a right to video record meetings.

Reported by: Gabriel Marques, Assistant Clerk Date: 4/3/2024