

Judiciary Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-359

AN ACT CONCERNING SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO RELATIVES OF A PERSON WHOSE DEATH

Title: WAS CAUSED BY INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE.

Vote Date: 4/1/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/11/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Judiciary Committee

CO-SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Craig C. Fishbein, 90th Dist.

Rep. Donna Veach, 30th Dist.

Sen. Rob Sampson, 16th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

Intimate partner violence not only impacts the spouses but can impact the children as well. This bill requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to provide certain resources to relatives of a parent whose death results from intimate partner violence.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language removes a provision preventing DCF from initiating actions in Superior Court for juvenile matters and removes references in section one related to providing needed resources to the relative of the deceased parent.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Jodi Hill-Lilly, Commissioner-Designate, Department of Children and Families: She testified in opposition to this bill as it's currently drafted even though she recognizes that families need assistance and support when a child is left without a caregiver due to IPV (intimate partner violence). She stated that the bill requires a specialist to contact all adult

relatives of the child within seven days, but DCF currently does not have the resources to do that, particularly in such a short amount of time. She furthered that the bill would also require the Department to contact relatives regardless of their child protection history or failed background checks. She expressed concern regarding the requirement of the Department to provide needed resources to families, however the language does not define “needed resources”. She also expressed concern with the thirty day prohibition of any court action being pursued by DCF, which would make it impossible to get the legal authority to place a child with a foster parent.

Natasha Pierre, State Victim Advocate, Office of the Victim Advocate: She testified in support of the bill, stating that it will ensure the well-being of the surviving minor children.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Meghan Scanlon, President, Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence: She testified in support of the bill, which assigns an IPV Specialist within DCF to relatives of deceased parents to provide needed resources. She believes it is important that all potential caregivers in the family are given information on the paths available to them to fulfill a new role as caregiver.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Hillary Desideraggio

Date: 3-26-24