

# Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-396

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE

**Title:** ELDERLY NUTRITION PROGRAM.

**Vote Date:** 3/19/2024

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Change of Reference to Appropriations

**PH Date:** 3/14/2024

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Human Services Committee

## **CO-SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Rep. Eleni Kavros DeGraw  
Rep. Kerry S. Wood  
Rep. Michelle L. Cook  
Rep. Anne M. Hughes  
Rep. Jane M. Garibay

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

Elderly residents of Connecticut need access to nutritionally balanced meals to ensure their health and well-being. Connecticut's most vulnerable elderly residents are facing food insecurity and isolation as well as being removed from their homes to receive care in institutionalized settings. The Elderly Nutrition Program allows vulnerable elderly populations in Connecticut to remain in their homes or preferred communities while improving their health and well-being and decreasing rates of food insecurity and isolation. The purpose of this bill is to implement task force recommendations for the elderly nutrition program. The Elderly Nutrition Program gives aging residents the choice to stay in their homes while still receiving the nutritionally balanced meals and socialization they need to maintain their health and well-being.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

**Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity (CWCSEO), Lead AAPI Policy Analyst, Megan Baker;** supports this bill stating a suggestion for Section 4 to be broadened to include the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), a federal

program that distributes monthly food packages to people who are 60 and above or makes under 130% of the Federal Poverty Line. It is stated that they suggest that the program is underutilized in Connecticut.

**Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS), Commissioner, Amy Porter;** takes no position on this bill stating the annual reporting requirement is not necessary because if they implement the recommendation to lower the threshold to 25% for contract funding, an audit will trigger. It is also stated that they would prefer to work with the committee on these goals rather than be required by law and requested clarification on the classification of “significant increase in service levels or demand.” It is also stated many times throughout their testimony, concerns about the unnecessary use of time and resources. It is stated that if this bill requires a secondary database or tool or switching the primary database, they will not support it.

**Department of Social Services (DSS), Commissioner, Andrea Barton Reeves;** stands neutral on the bill stating a suggestion that ADS takes up the responsibility of distributing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to the Elderly Nutrition Program (ENP), though is willing to collaborate with ADS to develop an outreach plan and engage with the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to explore permissible uses of SNAP for meals for seniors, disabled individuals, and their households.

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

**Agency on Aging CT, Executive Director of Senior Resources, Alison Dvorak;** supports this bill stating the most significant impact the Connecticut legislature can have on this issue is in line 174. Sec. 5 allows the Office of Policy Management to allocate funds from the state budget to the fiscal budget, particularly when the fiscal budget is delayed. It is also stated that line 3 regarding the disbursement of funds from the Department of Aging and Disability Services to the Agency on Aging when fifty percent of funds have been expended has been started but is only as helpful as the funds are available. It is also stated that funding for additional education related to the ways to access SNAP benefits would be most helpful.

**Community Renewal Team, Director of Nutrition, Nancy Isa;** supports this bill stating the demand for the ENP has gone up, while resources have gone down. It is stated that the senior population is projected to rise significantly in the upcoming years, meanwhile, the state budget is being cut and ARPA funds are being slashed. It is also stated that because of this, funding disbursement and execution of contracts has been delayed.

**New Opportunities Inc., President/CEO, William Rybczyk;** supports this bill stating if enacted, these recommendations will maximize the efficiency of agencies involved and will increase funding sources for ENP.

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

None expressed.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF GENERAL COMMENTS:**

**The North Central Area Agency on Aging, CEO, Maureen McIntyre;** takes no position on this bill stating certain elements provided in testimony during the public hearing are untrue specifically, that a lack of transparency on the part of NCAAA has caused cost over-runs for CRT, and that a mitigation plan, a cost-saving measure that reduces meals available in the community, has come out suddenly and without warning. The reasons for why these statements are untrue are written in this [testimony](#). It also stated that funding is the true solution to the dilemma of increased community needs along with reduced federal funding.

**Reported by: Thomas Gilbertie and Carley Van Buiten      Date: April 10, 2024**