

Public Safety and Security Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6908

AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS USED BY
PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL AND ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP TO

Title: STUDY THE CONSOLIDATION OF PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINTS.

Vote Date: 3/18/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/11/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

None

REASONS FOR BILL:

There are 107 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) in Connecticut. Many of them are duplicative and costly, thus consolidation would increase efficiency and efficacy. The proposed working group would address this issue by observing prior research and establishing communication between stakeholders to ensure that PSAPs are being used in an intentional manner

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Ronnell A. Higgins, Commissioner, Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection -- Supports](#)

Higgins notes that the Division of State-wide Emergency Telecommunications may not be an adequate leader for the proposed working group as it lacks HIPAA expertise. The testifier strongly supports section 2 of the bill as the working group it proposes is comprehensive in scope and reflects challenges associated with the consolidation of PSAPs. While Higgins supports the consolidation of PSAPs, there are several obstacles to consolidation that must be addressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Betsy Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Council of Small Towns](#)

Gara supports the establishment of a working group as consolidation of PSAPs could result in improved quality of service, increased coordination of emergency services, and long-term savings. However, the testifier requests that a representative of small towns be included in the working group. Gara also notes that there are several barriers to consolidation that must be discussed in the working group. These include labor contracting, software compatibility, liability, dark stations, funding, and community opposition.

Mike Muszynski, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

The testifier largely supports the bill but requests amendments to the working group that specifies three members from municipalities of various sizes to sit on the working group. This would ensure that towns of varying sizes are equally represented. Furthermore, the group should focus on encouraging rather than mandating consolidation, relevant labor issues, and rules of governance for new PSAPs.

Zak Leavy, Lobbyist, AFSCME Council 4

The testifier is largely in support of the bill but asks that there be two representatives of labor issues, one from both municipal and state government, that are affiliates of the Connecticut AFL-CIO.

Francis R. Pickering, Executive Director, WestCOG

The testifier notes a study their organization had completed in 2020 that observes PSAP modernization and consolidation in Connecticut. The study identified the current environment on the issue and formed recommendations for improvement that don't require all dispatch operations to be centralized. However, they noted that PSAPs face challenges that regional collaboration could address.

Jason Rojas, House Majority Leader, Connecticut General Assembly

The testifier is in strong support of consolidating PSAPs and believes that the proposed bill would be a step in doing so. The group would review previous research on the subject and issue recommendations on how to consolidate PSAP operations where necessary. However, this must be done in a way that ensures public safety is the priority.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Samuel S. Gold, Executive Director, Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments

Gold notes that most of the Council of Government's member municipalities participate in shared PSAPs. Gold is concerned with the costs associated with regionalizing PSAPs and believes the study will not result in novel information. Furthermore, the cost issue is notable as it may cause police stations to be closed at night as they will no longer be able to be staffed with PSAP staff.

Reported by: Jack Stein

Date: 3/24/25