

## **Aging Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT**

**Bill No.:** HB-6987

AN ACT CONCERNING CLOSURES AND EVACUATIONS OF RESIDENTIAL

**Title:** CARE HOMES AND NURSING HOMES.

**Vote Date:** 3/6/2025

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 2/28/2025

**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:**

The purpose of this bill is centered around ensuring that nursing home, nursing facility, and residential care come residents are protected and given the highest quality of life possible by enabling them to live where they want without fear of being kicked out or left without a place to live. Closures and evacuations of the above listed facilities can leave residents scared and without anywhere to live. This bill seeks to make sure that our most vulnerable citizens are not put in a position where they are scrambling to find a place to live. Additionally, many of these residents require frequent or constant medical attention, and being without that service for even a short period of time could be catastrophic for them. More specifically, the bill requires these homes to consider resident proximity to family and other support networks when transferring or discharging a resident, the Department of Public Health study nursing home and residential care home evacuation procedures relating to transportation, these homes maintain insurance for residents' personal property lost or damaged because of an evacuation, establishment of a database that provides real-time bed availability tracking, establishment of an automated benefits transfer system, and the Department of Public Health to study methods to employ alternative housing solutions to provide living arrangements to residential care home resident impacted by mandated bed reductions.

JFS language (LCO 5994) removes Sections 3, 6 and 7 of the initial bill and replaces them with a Department of Social Services working group to examine residential care home evacuation procedures (in a new Section 3) and requires nursing home to admit residents from nursing homes that have filed for a certificate of need that could significantly impact its residents (in a new Section 6).

## RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Dept. of Social Services, Ms. Andrea Barton Reeves, Commissioner](#): They submitted testimony in **opposition** to this proposal suggesting that Section 6 of this bill is duplicative of the current process that is currently in use. The bill references studying the Connecticut Housing Engagement and Support Services (CHESS) program as a potential source of rental assistance program certificates for discharged residential care homes residents and nursing homes. They note that a recently released joint study by the DSS, the Dept. of Housing and the Dept. of Mental and Addiction Services recommended sunsetting the CHESS Program as it is currently operated, and they recommend removing any reference to this program as part of any study that might move forward.

[Dept. of Public Health, Dr. Manisha Juthani, Commissioner](#): Sections 1 and 2 will not substantially change current procedures already require nursing homes to develop a discharge plan in coordination with each resident and their care team. They point out that that Section 3 is an unnecessary requirement as they have information on the emergency plans that facilities are required to develop pursuant to federal regulations. Section 4 which requires insurance coverage for damages associated with the closure or evacuation of a long-term care facility is well intentioned, but it does not address how compliance would be assessed or what would be the enforcement consequences for failure to comply. Section 5 requires the Dept. to develop and maintain a real-time database of bed availability in nursing homes and residential care facilities but this will likely be a significant cost that is not included in the Governor's budget. They cannot support this section given the anticipated cost.

[Aging and Disability Services, Ms. Mairead Painter, Long-Term Care Ombudsman](#): Her testimony **supports** this bill in its entirety but believes that it would need to be a coordinated effort between the Dept. Of Social Services, the Dept. of Public health and the Ombudsman Program. A collaborative approach would allow for the most effective implementation, monitoring, and oversight of this process.

## NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[LeadingAge, Connecticut, Ms. Mag Morelli, President](#): While they **support** efforts to improve on practices and procedures surrounding closures and evacuations of long-term care facilities, they do have concerns regarding proposals in this bill. In Section 3 they note that nursing homes are currently required to have an emergency plan which would include planning for the evacuation of the facility. They suggest that in Section 4, if it were to move forward, a reasonable upper limit on the amount of coverage per resident would be required. In Section 5, the status of bed availability fluctuates on a daily and sometimes hourly basis. Transfers, discharges, bed holds, waiting lists, insurance coverage all impact the status of bed availability and to maintain a real time data base would be costly for the Dept. of Public Health and nursing home providers. Because of this they oppose this Section.

## NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities, Mr. Matt Barrett, President and CEO](#): They are in **opposition** to this proposal. They believe that Section 1 is confusing and

unnecessary, and that Section 4, would have significant additional costs to nursing care facilities.

**Blessed House, Mr. Sanjeev Powari, Owner:** His testimony is in **opposition** to this bill. One of their largest uncontrollable cost centers is the cost of insurance and they can't keep up with their current requirements let alone insuring personal property. If a resident feels the need to protect personal items, then they have the option to purchase renter's insurance.

**Connecticut Association of Residential Care Homes, Mr. Kal Patel, Board Member:** They offered their comments in **opposition** to this legislation. Specifically, his comments are directed to Section 4, and suggest that residential care home are continuing to see increasing costs for liability and home insurance. They are supportive of efforts to study transportation, database tracking of available, and the use of automated benefits to assist our residents and prospective residents.

**Tracy Manor, Mr. Steve Richheimer, Owner and Administrator:** Their testimony was in **opposition** to this bill. Specifically, they mention Section 4, and the fact that the state continues to impose additional responsibilities and demands upon residential care homes while they are unable to keep up with the costs of operating the business.

**Reported by: Richard Ferrari, Assistant Clerk,  
Alexander Mercier, Clerk**

**Date: 3/11/2025**