

Insurance and Real Estate Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7069

AN ACT CONCERNING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS OF POLICE

Title: OFFICERS.

Vote Date: 3/13/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/6/2025

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:

Insurance and Real Estate Committee

Rep. Tammy Nuccio, 53rd District

Rep. Kerry S. Wood, 29th District

REASONS FOR BILL:

Both the Proposed Substitute Bill 7069 (LCO 6102) and the Raised Senate Bill 7069 intend to allow police officers to choose their own psychiatrist, psychologist, or clinical social worker to conduct and complete each respective police officer's behavioral health assessment. This is to increase police officer accessibility and personal choice regarding their personal assessments. The bill additionally provides increased protections for police officer's medical records by restricting access for the health assessment conductor; the legislature's intent is to provide more confidentiality for police officers in the state of Connecticut. Finally, the bill ensures that written results of behavioral health assessment do not include evaluations of police officer's physical fitness for duty, so as to not discriminate.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

Proposed Substitute Bill No. 7069 (LCO 6102) (1) adds that the chosen psychiatrist, psychologist, or clinical social worker must be approved by the police officer's respective union (2) adds additional language to subsection (e) that more clearly states that the chosen psychiatrist, psychologist, or clinical social workers cannot require or access police officer medical records and (3) clarifies language to make it clear that the behavioral health assessment shall not be included in the police officer's medical records.

The first addition allows for the unions to ensure that the professional is vetted, and that the mental health professional understands the police officer's privacy and disclosure rights. Both the second and third additions are to further protect police officer medical confidentiality.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Brian Anderson, Legislative Associate Director, AFSCME](#) submitted testimony in strong support of HB 7069. He expressed the necessity for protections to be put in place to protect police officer health records. He believes that this legislation could help police officers reduce their stress and increase their confidence regarding their required behavioral health examinations.

[James Rutkauskis, President, Hartford Police Union](#) supports passage of this bill. He describes his disapproval with the current system, specifically with the access to medical records. He calls for legislative action in these areas:

1. Reform the oversight and implementation process to ensure local input on matters.
2. Ensure strict protections on medical records
3. No rights to disclose medical information or information stated to the chosen psychiatrist, psychologist, or clinical social worker.
4. Ensure the professional is required to explain the officer their rights regarding privacy and disclosure.
5. Mandate financial responsibility for assessments so officers do not have to pay to remain compliant.

Item 1 is addressed in the substitute language through union approval of the chosen psychiatrist, psychologist, or clinical social worker. Item 2 is addressed in the substitute language by the addition of clear and clarifying language to outline confidential medical rights for police officers. Item 3 is addressed in the original bill and proposed substitute bill, in subsection (e)(2), lines 71-73, with the addition of the word "only."

[Gary Karr, Citizen](#)

[Patti Walter Edgar, Citizen](#)

Both individuals expressed general support for the bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[The Connecticut Police Chief's Association](#) submitted testimony in opposition to HB 7069. They state their belief that allowing officers to choose their own mental health professionals outside of the department would allow issues such as incompetency. They continue, stating that their interdepartmental professionals already have a familiarity with officers, allowing them to perform their jobs more efficiently and effectively.

[Daniel Hallson, Citizen](#)

[Julie Mitchell, Citizen](#)

[Nancy Tashash, Bookkeeper](#)

These individuals provided general opposition to the bill.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

[The Connecticut Hospital Association](#) submitted testimony about their concern with subsection (f), stating that in the proposed bill, the language can be misinterpreted as to create limitations in use or exchange of any police officer's medical record. The proposed language addresses this issue, and the changes fall in line with this testimony's recommendation.

[Kim Novak, Trauma Therapist, CORE Healing Trauma Center](#) submitted written testimony with recommendations regarding some of her concerns with the proposed bill. Her nine recommendations can be found in the linked testimony. Items one, three, seven, and eight are addressed in the substitute language.

[Jocelyn Novella, Co-Chair of Public Policy and Legislation Committee, Connecticut Counseling Association](#) urges the committee to consider adding Licensed Profession Counselors (LPCs) to the list of clinicians who can provide behavioral health assessments.

[Laura Prior, Health Policy Chair, CTAPRNS](#) recommends the committee include advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) to the list of clinicians who can provide behavioral health assessments.

Reported by: Michael Flynn

Date: 03/27/2025