

Labor and Public Employees Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1220

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTH BENEFITS FOR STATE MARSHALS.

Vote Date: 3/6/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/6/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor & Public Employees Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The reason for this bill is to provide State Marshals with healthcare benefits. Marshals often perform dangerous tasks on behalf of the Court system, but receive no healthcare, which has resulted in difficulty recruiting and retaining Marshals within the system. Many Marshals have to rely on spouses or second jobs to receive health benefits.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None provided.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Lisa Stevenson, CT State Marshal, State Marshal Commissioner: Supports the bill, talks about work experiences as a High Sheriff to a State Marshal. Mentions working with the Attorney General and Support Enforcement in regards to Post certified training and access to state vehicles so they can increase the number of child support payments, helped write exam for new recruits, was part of the team that prepared a new handbook with rules and regulations, worked with a team to find a fair and equitable distribution for all Restraining Orders, and worked on finding a new path for working and distributing orders from Support enforcement. The goal for taking the Commissioner role was to change the dynamics of the new system that was the result of Public Act 00-99, which was to racially balance an unbalanced system. The goal has not been met because people do not want to work dangerous jobs without health insurance. Believes that having affordable health insurance is the fix to having a racial balanced team.

Brian Mezick, President, AFSCME Local 2193: Supports the bill and adds in that not having health insurance has made the job less and less attractive for applicants. He provided statistics on the composition of the Marshal workforce, reiterating his belief that the lack of healthcare has disproportionately resulted in a workforce that is older, white, and male. He further stressed the need to remove the barriers to entry for the future of the State Marshals.

Ed Hawthorne, President, CT AFL-CIO: Supports the bill and describes how State Marshals encounter dangerous and unsafe situations daily with the risk of physical harm. He states that the lack of health benefits have had a significant impact on recruitment and retention of Marshals, as shown in the study conducted under Special Act 23-6.

Madison Beggs, CT State Marshal: Supports the bill, talks about work experiences, spent countless hours serving many hundreds of restraining orders to protect those who have been affected by domestic violence. Was serving the orders late at night and found herself in dangerous places and was concerned about personal safety and wellbeing. Executed numerous Capias Warrants for the Superior Court Support Enforcement Offices, which require the requires the physical arrest and transport certain individuals to the courthouse and reiterates that the job is very dangerous. As a husband and father of four children, his children are currently receiving Husky Health Insurance. States that there is a problem, and something must change.

Suzann Corbett, CT State Marshal: Supports the bill and discusses that she has been a Marshal for 24 years. She states that being a marshal and a mother is incredibly difficult. She states that rather than a flexible position, this job is "full-time plus", and requires working on short notice in high-pressure situations. She states that the lack of health benefits is a major impediment to recruitment for marshals, especially recruitment of women.

Julianne Ingham, CT State Marshal: Supports the bill, and states that she has been a Marshal for over 30 years. She states that that fewer qualified candidates have applied for these positions, and it is at an all-time low. States that in Fairfield County is in dire need of more State Marshals, especially in populated counties.

Kevin McNeill, CT State Marshal: Supports the bill and states that he has been a State Marshal since 1991, and adds that there is a big need for more state marshals in Fairfield County, especially in Stamford and Danbury areas. He stated that in 2022, only 2 State Marshals have been hired in Fairfield County. He stated that he developed Chron's disease and medical bills were so great and was forced to file bankruptcy, which he says should not happen to someone working in service to the state full time.

Tim Poloski, CT State Marshal: Supports the bill and states that when he stated as a Marshal in 1990, the lack of health insurance was not a significant factor, as health insurance was available for a few hundred dollars a month. However, today, he would not be able to take on this job without health insurance.

Kevin Wakely, CT State Marshal: Supports the bill and states that other officers in different communities are telling him that he is crazy for taking a job with no health benefits. He states that as one of the four Marshals for Windham County, he is responsible in part for the service of legal processes, court orders, restraining orders, evictions, emergency custody motions

and civil arrest warrants. In order to strengthen the Marshal system, the state should provide health benefits.

Robert P. Bradley, CT State Marshal: Supports the bill and comments that it is a burden to not have health coverage. He states that he knows two prospective candidates interested in possibly becoming states marshals, and one of the candidates will not accept an appointment without medical coverage for him and his family.

Richard Fry, CT State Marshal: Supports the bill and shares a personal anecdote about how, while his wife was pregnant, he had to pick up additional work in order to access health insurance. While he has access to state health insurance plans as a Marshal, he would have to pay for them out of pocket. He states that his instinct is to not seek the medical care even when needed, because the financial burden would be too great. He further describes that most prospective applicants to the Marshal service dismiss the opportunity when informed that there are no health benefits.

Connor C. Lilley, CT State Marshal: Supports the bills and states that he continued to work another full-time job to secure health insurance for his young family. As one of only 13 Marshals out of 162 under the age of 40, he states that the issue of healthcare continues to be a significant barrier for recruitment. He further states that of the 7 Marshals appointed in Hartford County in 2022, all but one have had to maintain a second full-time job in order to receive health benefits.

Arthur Quinn III, CT State Marshal: Supports the bill and states that in 2009 he was shot twice, was out of work for six months and unable to provide for family, and 15 years later is still suffering from medical issues and almost had to file for bankruptcy. He further states that this bill is needed badly and to ensure no other Connecticut State Marshal must face massive medical bills, and that the lack of healthcare is a significant barrier to recruitment.

Louis Sullivan, CT State Marshal: Supports the bill and adds in that this job is dangerous, and provide some examples of a single day that he faced which entailed numerous dangerous and life-threatening scenarios. He states that health benefits should come with these important jobs, and that being a Marshal is a full-time commitment.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None provided.

**Reported by: Matthew Domejczyk
and Cameron Clarke**

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