

Public Safety and Security Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1241

AN ACT CONCERNING THE EXPANSION OF THE CRISIS INITIATIVE PILOT
Title: PROGRAM THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

Vote Date: 3/18/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Change of Reference to Appropriations

PH Date: 2/11/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

[Rep. Brian Lanoue, 45th Dist.](#)

REASONS FOR BILL:

SB 1241 allows the police departments to provide their officers with education on de-escalation response techniques. When officers are called to a situation involving a person experiencing mental health or addition issues. Police officers trained in these advanced de-escalation techniques can calm a situation enough to collect relevant information to complete paperwork to refer those involved to mental health professionals. This Program has been a proactive measure to save lives by providing struggling members of the public a path to recovery. through joint efforts with the Department of Mental Health and Addition Services.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Commissioner Nancy Navarretta – Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services](#)

Commissioner Navarretta states that with over 3,400 employees and an almost \$1 billion annual budget DMHAS serves almost 100,000 clients a year. They operate two hospitals, manages a network of thirteen local mental health authorities, and partners with over 130 non-profit agencies that cover every region of the state.

The rapid response model offers individuals and families a continuum of clinical in-person services and post-intervention follow up care. In order to provide this care, MCT are made up of multidisciplinary personnel such as licensed clinical social workers, licensed professional counselors, psychologists, nurses, peer support specialists, and other mental health personnel. These personnel work in conjunction with first responders like emergency medical services, fire departments and law enforcement departments to help de-escalate individuals and families in crisis. The effectiveness of the program lies in its flexibility. There are several frameworks in which MCTs can function to assist law enforcement. For example, Local police

departments will connect with the Mobile Mental Health Teams in their areas to accompany the officers as they respond to a call. Other departments choose to have MCTs embedded in the department so that they are easily accessible. In some areas MTCs offer courses to teach officers de-escalation techniques.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

State Representative Vincent Candelora

SB 1241 was created by State Police Troop E in 2017, in conjunction with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to give state and local police officers advanced de-escalation tactics for calls involving persons experiencing mental health issues, substance abuse issues, and overdose. The process consists of an officer collecting information from so that they are able to refer the individuals to a CRISIS mental health professional. This ensures that the individuals are being appropriately assisted by mental health professionals. This also improves morale of the officers responding to these calls as they are assured that these individuals are not only assisted by mental health professionals but also encouraged to continue in recovery efforts by clinicians, likely leading to fewer incidents requiring police intervention in the future. Representative Candelora argues that this program has created a safer environment for individuals experiencing a crisis as well as for the officers called to assist.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Council American Civil Liberties Union

Jess Zaccagnino opposes SB 1241 because the ALCU of CT would prefer the role of the police reduced or eliminated in response to individuals experiencing mental health or substance use related issues.

Olivia Rinkes, Member of the public, student at the University of Connecticut

Olivia Rinkes recognizes SB 1241 the committee's effort to solve a problem and help the people of Connecticut who are suffering; however, she is opposed to this bill. Olivia Rinkes views this program as allocating funds and resources to police departments to conduct business that is unrelated to their regular duties and that they, as law enforcement, are unqualified for. Olivia Rinkes also points out that the money used to fund this effort could be allocated to towards more social and medical services that would better accommodate the needs of the public in these respects. She also points out that many calls involving individuals experiencing mental health or addiction crisis and the police has often resulted in the use of deadly force.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed

Reported by: Geva Tinker

Date: 3/28/25