

Human Services Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1359

AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO STATUTES CONCERNING

Title: THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES.

Vote Date: 3/19/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/27/2025

File No.: 431

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Human Services Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill makes numerous changes to existing human services statutes, including updating child support orders from other states, modifying child support orders, inflationary rate adjustments for residential facilities, increased communication via reports of SNAP benefit distributions and information on Medicaid coverage of custom-made breast prosthesis.

Fiscally, the bill clarifies how inflation is to be applied for community living arrangements in line with how statutory inflation is applied to other government entities, and the bill also potentially may result in an increased expense for DSS as they would need to create an outreach program for breast cancer survivors.

These changes will help bring the state's human services statutes up to date and provide for greater efficiency for the distribution of benefits and services involving interstate cooperation.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE

Adds section concerning DSS public, provider awareness duty for Medicaid coverage for custom-made breast prostheses.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Connecticut Department of Social Services, Commissioner, Andrea Barton Reeves](#), has various remarks on the bill. Regarding section one, they say it represents a legislative change that will remove the present statutory barrier to allowing OCSS and SES to provide AEI supports to other states when the support order is not registered in Connecticut, clarifying the process for implementation into the state's new child support enforcement computer system

and aligning with federal requirements. Regarding section two, they say it represents a clerical change that would conform our state policy on downward modifications of existing child support orders due to incarceration, with federal law. Regarding section three, they say the proposal would require the posting of a residents bill of rights in state assisted living facilities, to include information on how to report cases of suspected elder abuse to DSS. Regarding section four, the DSS respectfully suggests that upon the implementation of the staggering of SNAP benefits the legislation proposes, there will be no new information to report to the legislature beyond the initial report, and requests the statute be revised to repeal the annual reporting requirement, while maintaining the requirement for the initial report after implementation. Regarding section five, they say the proposal to base inflationary rate adjustments for residential facilities on the GDP deflator metric makes sense. Regarding section six, DSS urgently supports the passage of this legislation, because it would ensure that DSS providers are enabled to consult the DDS Abuse and Neglect Registry prior to hiring staff for their facilities and agencies.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[LeadingAge Connecticut, President, Mag Morelli](#), supports the proposal to add into the managed residential community (MRC) resident bill of rights, the contact information for the Department of Social Services Protective Services for the Elderly. However, they urge the committee and the legislature to consider increasing the resources provided to DSS Protective Services for the Elderly to enable them to meet the growing services call volume. Due to legislative changes in the last few years, the volume of reports to DSS for suspected maltreatment of our older residents, has significantly increased and without additional resources, LeadingAge fears DSS's ability to respond in a timely manner will be negatively impacted.

[Reliance Health, Residential Assistant, Timothy MacDonald](#), supports the bill because they have firsthand knowledge of how funding affects agencies like Reliance Health and their prior employer, Easter Seals, in many ways. They say it makes it hard to keep the best people working for nonprofits as it directly impacts the services, we provide to those in need nonprofits help. They say COLA is essential to their people. They ask the committee to please consider their situation when deciding on this issue and help us continue to provide the best care and assistance to those in need and our staff.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Alex Sferrazza

Date: April 9, 2025