

Judiciary Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1505

AN ACT ALLOWING COURT DISCRETION TO ADD A FAMILY VIOLENCE
COMPONENT TO THE PRETRIAL SUPERVISED DIVERSIONARY PROGRAM

Title: FOR PERSONS WITH PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES.

Vote Date: 4/7/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/17/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Judiciary Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Across Connecticut, advocates of domestic violence victims found that the Supervised Diversionary Program (SDP) was being used inconsistently (and possibly incorrectly) in courts throughout the state. In order to help address this problem, this bill requires the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) to determine if a person has the capacity to participate in domestic violence treatment, either in concurrence with or following the completion of mental health treatment in cases involving a family violence crime.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language makes a wording change in lines 46-47 and 50-51, for clarification purposes.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Judicial Branch, External Affairs Division: The Judicial Branch supports this legislation, though as written, the proposal would significantly impact Branch resources. They request a language change in lines 46-47, to require that treatment address program standards rather than comport with program standards.

Natasha Pierre, Esq., Office of the Victim Advocate: Natasha Pierre supports this legislation because it will permit the court to provide more resources to victims of domestic

violence. They found inconsistent usage of the pretrial supervised diversionary program in domestic violence cases and this bill seeks to improve that.

Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel Director, Office of Chief Public Defender:

Deborah Del Prete Sullivan *opposes* this legislation and asks that no action be taken because they have concerns about who is responsible for making decisions, what entails "domestic violence component to treatment", whether domestic violence counsellors are trained to deal with Axis 1 disorders, who determines mental health issues versus other issues, and who determines which programs apply.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Meghan Scanlon, CEO, Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence:

Meghan Scanlon supports this legislation because it encourages the court to use discretion when addressing victims of domestic violence, providing access to certain additional resources. Failure to address the core dynamics of abusive relationships through appropriate domestic violence treatment plans can lead to recidivism and increase a victim's risk of being subject to future violence.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Griffin Olshan

Date: April 15, 2025