

Government Administration and Elections Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5221 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT REESTABLISHING THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW AND
Title: INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE.

Vote Date: 3/11/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/23/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee was a committee that was part of the Connecticut General Assembly that was repealed. It would enhance transparency by reviewing and investigating state agencies and the programs they administer. It was a highly responsive body that dealt with issues that were recommended to them when the programs have already erred for a while. Reestablishing the committee would give the legislature another avenue to ensure that programs that are being administered by the executive branch are not acting in bad faith.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Paul Amarone, Senior Policy Director, CBIA

Mr. Amarone argues that reestablishing the structured, bipartisan Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee would improve government efficiency and accountability. The committee would evaluate state agencies and programs to identify inefficiencies, outdated practices, and needed reforms. A predictable, efficient, and accountable state government is essential to maintaining a competitive business climate. Employers make long-term decisions about capital investment, hiring, expansion, and relocation based in part on how effectively state government operates. When programs are outdated, duplicative, inefficient, or misaligned with their intended purpose, it makes doing

business much more difficult for businesses of all sizes. From a business perspective, this oversight could reduce delays, lower costs, and improve consistency in areas like permitting and regulation. It would also help ensure responsible use of taxpayer funds, strengthen fiscal accountability, and increase transparency—particularly for quasi-public agencies. Overall, the bill is presented to continually modernize state operations and improve service delivery without adding new burdens on businesses.

Paul Cicarella, Senator, CT General Assembly

Senator Cicarella supports this legislation to reestablish the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee to enhance accountability, transparency, and responsible governance. It emphasizes the committee's role in evaluating state agencies, reviewing programs, and identifying efficiencies. Hardworking taxpayers deserve to know exactly how their dollars are being spent. The bill would provide a structured, bipartisan mechanism for oversight, helping ensure taxpayer funds are used effectively. Overall, it is presented as a way to strengthen government performance, increase public confidence, and build trust through greater transparency.

Senator Jeff Gordon, Senator, CT General Assembly

Senator Gordon supports reestablishing the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee to improve government transparency and accountability. He argues that stronger oversight is needed, citing audit findings that state agencies sometimes fail to follow laws, properly track funds, or correct repeated issues. Currently, when state agencies are found to be noncompliant during auditing, even repeated violations, there are no consequences. This needs to change. The proposal would restore a bipartisan oversight body to review audit reports, investigate agency performance, and take corrective action when problems are identified. Overall, the goal is to ensure better management of taxpayer dollars and hold state agencies accountable for ongoing deficiencies.

Stephen Harding, Senator, CT General Assembly

Connecticut once had a powerful, bipartisan watchdog committee that held state government accountable — independently investigating agency performance and uncovering waste and mismanagement. In 2017, the legislature disbanded it. To this day, while Connecticut still has the well-respected bipartisan Auditors of Public Accounts, the state legislature has no vehicle for reviewing the audits or acting on their findings of waste, fraud and abuse of taxpayer money. Reestablishing the bipartisan Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee would shine much needed light on how taxpayer dollars are spent.

Alex Knopp, Former GAE House Chair, CT General Assembly

Mr. Knopp argues that decision-making power in the U.S. has shifted significantly from the federal government to the states, increasing the importance of state legislatures in addressing major policy issues while being denied replacement resources. As a result, Connecticut must strengthen its ability to evaluate programs and make informed policy decisions, assuring that the state is spending its limited resources wisely. I support reestablishing the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee (PR&I), which previously provided independent, bipartisan oversight, in-depth research, and investigative authority over state agencies. The committee produced hundreds of impactful studies before being eliminated in 2017. I believe that existing legislative resources are insufficient, and that restoring PR&I is essential to ensure effective governance, accountability, and sound policymaking in this more state-driven era.

C. Marcella Kurowski

Ms. Kurowski supports the bill because the use of taxpayer dollars must be beneficial to CT's citizens.

Renee Lamark Muir, Representative, CT General Assembly

His support for this bill is informed by both professional and personal experience. He worked for 20 years (1987-2007) as a Principal Analyst II for PRI. Prior to that, he worked as a special investigator for the Inspector General at the New York City Department of Investigation. Transparency, accountability, and oversight are essential to effective government. Reviewing programs and policies helps prevent fraud and mismanagement, improve efficiency, and ensure taxpayer funds are used properly, ultimately building public trust. He supports reestablishing the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee (PRI), a bipartisan body that historically conducted in-depth evaluations, investigations, and audits of state agencies, leading to significant reforms and cost savings. In its absence, the legislature relies on temporary groups that lack authority and investigative power. Restoring PRI would provide a permanent, independent structure for rigorous oversight, better decision-making, and stronger government accountability.

Ben Shaiken, Director of Public Policy & Advocacy, CT Community Nonprofit Alliance

The Connecticut Community Nonprofit Alliance supports HB 5221 and argues that reestablishing the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee (PRI) would strengthen oversight and accountability. Nonprofits, which serve hundreds of thousands of residents and rely on state programs, depend on effective government administration. The PRI previously produced extensive research and insights into state services before being eliminated in 2017. While current task forces and working groups provide some value, the PRI would offer more consistent, in-depth evaluations. It would help identify gaps in state programs, improve efficiency, and ensure resources are used effectively to better serve vulnerable populations.

Haley Stafford, Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Stafford supports reinstating a critical committee that has played a key role in reviewing state programs and agencies and conducting investigations into state government operations. This committee previously played an important role in reviewing state programs and identifying issues before being disbanded in 2017. Its restoration would provide a dedicated, objective body with research staff to evaluate policies and operations. Overall, the bill is seen as a way to identify improvements, achieve potential cost savings, and enhance the effectiveness of state services.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Anonymous 20, 21, 22 & 23

Opposes due to generic reasons

Reported by: Cindy Panioto

Date: 3/24/26