

Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5558 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES' ABUSE AND NEGLECT INVESTIGATIONS.

Vote Date: 3/19/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/17/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Human Services Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Proponents of the legislation have stated their concern with the availability of abuse and neglect reporting procedures, and protections for vulnerable individuals in state systems. The committee hopes this bill will alleviate those concerns, increasing access, transparency, and accountability of the state regarding reported incidents of neglect and abuse in our systems.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Department of Developmental Services, Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner: opposes. written. Section 1, and states that the current process produces approximately 150 reports per year, while the Department investigates and reviews over 4,200 reports per year. DDS does not have the staff or the resources within their available budget to provide these reports to all parents of other legal representatives, and the bill neglects an individual's right to choose not to share their information with their parent or legal representation. Section 2: DDS is checking if they are able implement subsection (a)'s requirements, they do not have the existing resources to comply with subsection (b)'s reports, and that the language in subsection (c) is redundant, as the Department already requires criminal backgrounds checks as part of the hiring process and DDS staff are trained annually in abuse and neglect training. DDS urges the committee to not move forward with the bill as written.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

House Republican Caucus, Vincent Candelora, Minority Leader: submitted testimony in support of the bill. His testimony consists of a detailed story of a constituent who was

seriously injured and hospitalized due to an incident of abuse from a group home worker. He states that this bill will help prevent other instances such as this from occurring in the future.

CT Profound Autism Alliance, Lynn Arezzini, Parent: submitted testimony in support of the bill. She provided a detailed experience that occurred with her autistic son, Karl, in her written testimony. She states that the bill will help strengthen protections for people that DDS serves.

Disability Rights CT, Tom Cosker, Advocate: submitted testimony on behalf of DRCT in support of the legislation to continue to improve transparency of abuse and neglect allegations and investigations. They provide some points/concerns about each section. In section 1, they recommend a minor language change to ensure parents/guardians receive more complete information from DDS. In section 2(a), they recommend adding the number of investigations with certain lengths of time, as well as adding some additional requirements to the report. They also request that investigations be conducted by independent, third-party investigators to produce impartial findings. DRCT includes additional concerns in their written testimony.

Center for Children's Advocacy, Sarah Egan, Executive Director: submitted testimony on behalf of CCA. CCA strongly supports this legislation as they state it will bring transparency and accountability to address abuse and neglect of persons with intellectual disabilities in state-licensed programs. The organization specifically noted the federal and state audits that found deficiencies in DDS and DSS neglect and abuse prevention systems. CCA requests additional language to require an annual report of DDS and DSS' compliance with federal Medicaid requirements, how the agency is addressing audit findings and recommendations, and additional report requirements.

Janice Favreau, Parent: submitted testimony in support of the legislation. Favreau describes a personal experience of her son, who experienced abuse, and her experience of receiving the report from the DDS.

CT Profound Autism Alliance, Beth Lambert, Parent: submitted testimony in support of HB 5558. They believe that there must be better background checks, independent investigators, better pay for staff who work with individuals who have experienced abuse and neglect, use of cameras in homes, centers, and other locations, and finally quarterly reports about the status of reported allegations of abuse and neglect.

The Arc Connecticut, Danielle Middlebrooks, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy: submitted testimony on behalf of The Arc in support of the bill. They state that the bill would provide structured oversight, communication, and effective investigation procedures to further prevent instances of abuse and neglect.

Susan Prihar, Parent: submitted testimony in support of the bill. They ask that there be some clarifications in the bill's language, including a specific timeframe for the parent/guardian to receive a copy of the report, requirements for the investigation reports, and cameras used to monitor public spaces of group homes and programs.

CT Adapt DRCT, Carol Scully, Disability Advocate: submitted testimony in support of the bill. Scully states their support for ensuring that family members, guardians, conservators,

and other legally recognized people have access to abuse and neglect reports. Scully also supports the recommendations of the Office of the Child Advocate, which can be found in the written testimony.

Rosanne Shea, Parent: supports the bill. As a parent of a son with profound autism, she believes that the bill will help increase safety and accountability. Additionally, Shea supports putting cameras in homes.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed.

General Comments:

Anonymous: submitted general comments on the bill. They state there should be background checks for every worker and they should be paid decent wages, so they stay in their position.

Reported by: Mike Flynn

Date: April 2, 2026