

Public Safety and Security Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-374 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

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

Vote Date: 3/17/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/5/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Public Safety and Security Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The Connection to Recover Through Intervention, Support, and Initiating Service (CRISIS) program was launched in the state of Connecticut in 2017 as a means of better equipping police personnel with tactics of de-escalating situations in which someone is having a mental health episode. This bill was raised in order to expand this program, in order to continue to better equip officers when faced with a mental health related situation and address those in crisis, giving them the mental health services they need.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Ronnell Higgins, Commissioner, DESPP](#): Commissioner Higgins is in opposition of the bill. He believes that the bill, seeking to expand the CRISIS Initiative Pilot Program, should not be necessary. He claims this because the DESPP is already in an active partnership with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, with appropriated funding from this past year's budget, to better address a mental health scenario in order to reduce the need for arrest.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Vin Canderlora, State Representative, Connecticut General Assembly](#): Representative Canderlora is in support of the bill. He offers background on his testimony; Connection to

Recovery Through Intervention, Support & Initiating Services (CRISIS) was launched in 2017 and it gives state and local police officers training in de-escalation tactics related to mental health, overdose, and substance abuse. He adds that this program creates a safer environment for both officers and individuals in need. He states that after referral, a clinician takes over to ensure that this individual receives the help they need.

Monika Nugent, Manager, Public Policy The Alliance: Ms. Nugent is in support of the bill. She states that CRISIS partners with the State Police and Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DHMAS) personnel to better handle situations where individuals are experiencing a mental health crisis. She adds that these services were expanded in 2021 to cover northeastern Connecticut. She states that this program creates a safer community and environment. She adds that CRISIS also allows for a mental health professional to be on the call with officers.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, ACLU CT: Ms. Zaccagnino is in opposition of the bill. She claims that interactions between police and people experiencing a crisis have been tragic because these people require special treatment. She opposes the bill because it does not reduce the role of policing in communities.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Naomi jo Taylor: Ms. Taylor offered testimony for reasons unrelated to the bill.

Reported by: Emma Rybacki, Clerk
Olivia Buczak, Assist. Clerk

Date: 3/26/26