



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE GAYLE MULLIGAN
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Human Services Committee
January 29, 2015

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 5430 AN ACT PROHIBITING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FOR PERSONS WHO ABANDON RESIDENCY AND HB 5431 AN ACT CONCERNING FRAUDULENT CLAIMS FOR STATE ASSISTANCE

Dear Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, Senator Markley, Representative Wood, and members of the Human Services Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of HB 5430 and HB 5431, both of which I proposed. The aim of each of these bills is to address and protect the state of Connecticut and its citizens against potential fraud and to ensure we are being mindful of the allocation of our financial resources.

HB 5430 addresses the possible abandonment of state residency by those receiving state public assistance. I support the programs provided to residents that are in need of assistance and firmly believe that our state resources should be limited to full time or "primary" residents of Connecticut. While the Department of Social Services makes reviews on an annual basis, there is no record or evidence to determine if the recipients of state assistance are indeed residing in Connecticut, as their "primary" residence for twelve months of the year. A system for recording of tracking residency is important to safeguard against abuse of state assistance programs and ensure accountability. My bill proposes that the Department of Social Services establish a system and/or protocol that would freeze public assistance if any recipient were found to be residing in another state or country for more than 30 consecutive days. The protocol would include evaluating the situation to determine resolution in a timely manner if assistance is frozen. Certain special situations should be identified by the Department of Social Services who may preclude individuals from having benefits frozen and removal from the state assistance programs. The intent of this bill is not to punish aid recipients; rather, it is to ensure that state resources are being utilized by the people who consider Connecticut their home and are in need of public assistance.

HB 5431 expands the scope of the general statutes to protect the state against fraudulent claims for public assistance. The intent of this bill is to broaden the definition and include forms of assistance such as but not limited to unemployment compensation, housing assistance, and the earned income tax credit. As with HB 5430, the design of this legislation is to protect the people of Connecticut and the integrity of our social service programs.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gayle Mulligan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the "Kind Regards," text.

Gayle Mulligan
State Representative – 55th District