

# Committee on Children JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6109

**Title:** AN ACT CONCERNING THE ALBERT J. SOLNIT CHILDREN'S CENTER.

**Vote Date:** 2/25/2021

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 2/4/2021

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Committee on Children

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill would allow the Department of Children and Families to receive the funding it needs in order to direct additional nursing and clinical staff to meet the anticipated licensure standards made by the Working Groups regarding the Solnit Center. These new recommendations would be put in place in order to better treat the people who are at the Solnit Center.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

**Vannessa Dorantes, Commissioner, Department of Children and Families:** Her testimony is in favor of this bill. She appreciates the intent of the bill and explains how the Solnit Center works along with its facilities. In addition, she also explains that there are mandatory inspections every five years undertaken by the Department of Social Services (DSS). Due to federal regulations regarding the remediation of concerns the Plan of Correction decided that a full-time consulting team to help monitor and implement necessary improvements. To implement this requirement, a Working Group was organized in August 2019, comprised of representatives from DCF, DPH, DSS, OCA, the Solnit Center campuses, Beacon Health Options, and two privately-operated adolescent psychiatric treatment facilities. The Working Group met on a bi-weekly basis through November 2019 in order to draft the report, which was submitted to the Committee on Children in early 2020. The bill adopts the Working Group's recommendations to repeal the licensure exemption for the Solnit Center and for DPH to promulgate regulations on licensing the PRTFs at both the north and south campuses. In order to carry out these recommendations, DCF would require funding to support additional nursing and clinical staff to meet the anticipated licensure standards.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Connecticut Department of Public Health:** The department is in accordance with this bill. It was said that the special Act 19-16, An Act Concerning the Licensure of the Albert J. Solnit Children's Center, directed the Commissioner of Children and Families (DCF) to submit a report recommending a process for DPH to license the Solnit Center's North and South Campuses. DCF worked with the Departments of Public Health and Social Services and the Office of the Child Advocate in the drafting of the report. A working group was organized in August 2019, comprised of representatives from the four state agencies, the Solnit Center, Beacon Health Options, and two privately-operated adolescent psychiatric treatment facilities. Recommendations were developed and a report was issued early in 2020. The working group's recommendations are reflected in this bill. Should this bill move forward, the Department would need additional resources to implement the requirements.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

No Opposition to this bill offered

**Reported by:** Gabriela Dos Santos

**Date:** March 6<sup>th</sup> 2021