

## Public Safety and Security Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-845

AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE FIRE PREVENTION AND FIRE SAFETY CODES, MEMBERSHIP OF THE CODE TRAINING AND EDUCATION BOARD OF CONTROL, APPOINTMENT OF A TEMPORARY FIRE MARSHAL AND REPORTS FILED AFTER A FIRE, EXPLOSION OR OTHER FIRE

**Title:** EMERGENCY.

**Vote Date:** 3/24/2021

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 2/11/2021

**File No.:**

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### **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Public Safety and Security Committee

### **REASONS FOR BILL:**

Under current CT fire and safety laws governing building safety, there exists two codes that are applied to structures and buildings: the State Fire Prevention Code and the Fire Safety Code. Current regulations, however, do not codify a clear jurisdiction whereby either code is applied, leading to confusion when meeting building safety standards in new and old structures alike. In addition to renaming the advisory committee as the Fire Prevention Code Committee, the authority of the advisory committee that oversees the application and enforcement of the aforementioned codes is enhanced to better its ability to address the problems in applying and adhering to fire prevention and safety laws of CT. While this bill was primarily drafted to address this problem related to the application and enforcement of each codes provisions, it was also aimed to reduce the burdens placed upon fire chiefs or local fire marshals to push out reports after a fire, explosion or other fire emergency occurs. In this, it deletes a provision mandating such action and allows for the appointment of temporary fire marshals in completing particular tasks.

The JFS for SB 845 revised and added language to the bill to primarily reflect the comments made in the testimony submitted by the DAS regarding the application of the State Fire Prevention Code, the application of the Fire Safety Code, and the sourcing members of Code Training and Education Board of Control from the Codes and Standards Committee.

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

**Bill Abott, State Fire Marshal, Department of Administrative Services (DAS) of CT**

The DAS supports this bill but would prefer some technical and minor changes in its languages be made. The DAS believes that the changes it offers to the bill further the desired effects of the bill while addressing the problems that coincide with existing proposed language and sourcing membership of Code Training and Education Board of Control from the Building Code and Fire Marshals Training Councils. The DAS cites that the Building Code and Fire Marshal Training Councils have historically struggled to retain members and thus sourcing membership from them could be problematic. Instead, the DAS suggests that the membership of the Code Training and Education Board of Control be sourced from members of the Codes and Standards Committee which historically maintains its membership. The DAS believes that technical changes should be made to (1) ensure the application of the Fire Prevention Code applies to any processes (activities) that occur on or within buildings and structures covered under the code as well as (2) delete proposed language requiring committee procedures to be adopted through regulation. The DAS also believes that technical changes should be made to (1) clarify the scope of the Fire Safety Code to include application of the code to any structures in addition to buildings covered under the code, and (2) to allow residential buildings, regardless of when they were built, to take advantage of using modern technology for smoke detection.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Mike Muszynski, State and Federal Relations Manager, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM)**

The CCM supports this bill. The CCM supports the modifications the bill makes to Fire Safety Codes, the provisions the bill affords to cities and towns in appointing temporary fire marshals, and its removal of particular reporting requirements for fire chief and/or fire marshals. The CCM believes that this bill provides greater flexibility for local fire officials to complete their duties, including inspection requirements. The CCM believes that the last two listed changes that it implements provide a necessary mandate relief and reduce burdens for local fire officials.

**Connecticut Realtors (CTR)**

The CTR supports this bill. The CTR believes the measures of this bill, especially as it relates to clarifying the authority and enforcement of the State Fire Prevention Code and the Fire Safety Code, are necessary since the former predated the latter. The CTR is also supportive of the accommodations that are made towards older buildings which allows for the integration of newer fire safety devices aside from outdated, hard wired devices.

**Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Connecticut (HBRA-CT), Inc.**

The HBRA-CT supports this bill. The HBRA-CT believes that this bill implements changes and necessary updates to the enforcement and statutory provisions provided under the State Fire Prevention Code and the Fire Safety Code. The HBRA-CT believes these changes allow builders and homeowners to take advantage newer products that integrate with smart home technologies while still ensuring health and safety of Connecticut's residents.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None Expressed

**Reported by: John Gerke, Intern**

**Date: 4/5/2021**