

Aging Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5311

AN ACT ENCOURAGING SOCIALIZATION FOR NURSING HOME RESIDENTS

Title: BY PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION FOR VISITS WITH FAMILY.

Vote Date: 3/10/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/8/2022

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Aging Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill would help nursing home residents to socialize with nearby family members by providing reasonably cost transportation and by establishing a grant program within available appropriations.

The JFS language indicates that family members live within fifteen miles of the nursing home facility.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Dept. of Social Services: The Dept. testified in opposition to this proposal. Requiring nursing homes to dedicate staff to these transportation services, considering current staffing issues, may have unintended consequences. Also, the grant program wouldn't be eligible for federal Medicaid reimbursements. Additionally, the Dept. would be required to hire more staff to administer the grant program and the additional funding is not in the Governor's budget.

Ms. Mairead Painter, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman: She supports this legislation and believes that any opportunity spend time with family and loved ones is a benefit to their wellbeing.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Rep. Kathleen McCarty, Representative 38th Dist.: She has offered testimony in support of this proposal pointing out that non-ambulatory nursing home residents who are confined to a wheelchair and who cannot be transported by family members are unable to enjoy a small measure of freedom and independence they need. Nursing homes with vans available are used to transport residents only to doctors' appointments. They cannot be used for social visits because reimbursement structures that are in place. Non-ambulatory residents with limited or no funds is deprived of social visits. Stating that there are no Federal or State funds available for social transportation this bill would establish a grant program for this use.

Ms. Mag Morelli, LeadingAge, CT.: Their testimony states they have no objection to this legislation since it is permissive and would provide financial means to support the effort.

Mr. Matt Barrett, President and CEO, CT Assoc. of Health Care Facilities: Their testimony was submitted in support of this bill. They point out that the proposed grant program is important because transportation issues that are not related to medical issues is not a part of the reimbursement structure now in place. By establishing a grant program, the bill may provide new opportunities for families to arrange these home visits.

Mr. Marc Gallucci, Chief Advocate, Center for Disability Rights: They are very supportive of this legislation, but they point out that they don't understand the limitation that the institution providing that the transportation within the municipality they are in? Most nursing homes serve an area that is outside of the boundaries of their municipalities. They recommended a defined radius (20miles?). They also suggest that the Seniors Nursing Facilities be obligated facilitate access to public ADA, Paratransit and Dial-a Ride services.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

David Godbout, Constituent: He expressed opposition to all bills put forward by the committee under the claim of nullification.

Reported by

Date: 3/14/22

**Richard Ferrari, Assist. Clerk
Cameron Clarke, Committee Clerk**