

Commerce Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5375

AN ACT CONCERNING SMALL BUSINESS GUIDANCE REGARDING
INFECTIOUS DISEASE MITIGATION STRATEGIES AND BEST PRACTICES
FOR OPERATING DURING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OR CIVIL

Title: PREPAREDNESS EMERGENCY.

Vote Date: 3/22/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/15/2022

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Commerce Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Committee Bill No. 05375 requires the state-wide small business hotline and the Office of Small Business Affairs to provide guidance to small businesses regarding COVID-19 mitigation strategies and best practices for operating during a declared public health emergency or civil preparedness emergency. With the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic still fresh in memory, the impact that it had on CT's businesses during the state of emergency still lingers. Even today the spread of COVID-19 is still a factor that harms and influences the running of many businesses throughout the state, as CT seeks to mitigate it's spread. As such, Committee Bill No. 05375 would require the small business hotline to give guidance and information to any small business within CT on how to not only prevent the spread of COVID-19, but also what to do in case another State-wide public health emergency arises. This can ensure that if CT has a public health emergency in future events, then small businesses will be better prepared and less devastated then they were at the beginning of COVID-19.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

David Lehman, Commissioner and Governor's Senior Economic Advisor, Department of Economic and Community Development.

Commissioner Lehman voiced opposition for Committee Bill No. 05375, as it would require the DECD's statewide small business hotline to expand to providing guidance regarding; infectious disease mitigation strategies, including, but not limited to, strategies to mitigate the

spread of COVID-19, and best practices for operating during a declared public health emergency or civil preparedness emergency. Commissioner Lehman states that the small business hotline staff is ill-equipped to educate small businesses on matters of public health, and unless further resources are provided to train said staff, the agency doesn't support placing this responsibility with the DECD.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Ashley Zane, Government Affairs Associate, Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA).

Ms. Zane voiced support for Committee Bill No. 5375, as it would require the state-wide small business hotline and the office of Small Business Affairs to provide guidance to small businesses regarding COVID-19 mitigation strategies and best practices for operating during a declared public health emergency. Ms. Zane further states this establishes a centralized platform for distributing accurate and timely information, and is a no-cost way for businesses to access up to date information from a reliable source. This effectively helps small businesses focus their attention and energy on impactful ways, so that they can mitigate the spread of COVID-19 or the next public health emergency.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

David Godbout

Mr. Godbout voiced opposition to Committee Bill No. 05375, as he believes that all Bills made during the 2022 session are illegitimate, due to committees meeting via electronic means as opposed to in-person. supposedly violating the fourth amendment rights of CT citizens.

Reported by: Ben McSheehy

Date: [Type Date]