

Government Administration and Elections Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5494

AN ACT PROHIBITING THE DISCLOSURE OF CERTAIN CONTACT
Title: INFORMATION UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.

Vote Date: 3/28/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/25/2022

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The reason for this bill is to prohibit the disclosure of contact lists under the Freedom of Information Act, and to prohibit the usage of such lists by campaigns. This would protect the email addresses of any individuals on such lists.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Colleen M. Murphy, Executive Director, Freedom of Information Commission, stated her opposition to this bill, on the grounds that the FOI Commission already has a working premise for determining when contact information is public information or not, and that this is determined by whether it falls under the category of law-making or constituent information. She further testified that this bill is both overbroad and unclear in terms of who is covered by it.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

None expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Michele Jacklin, Vice President and Legislative Co-Chair, Connecticut Council on Freedom of Information, offered testimony in opposition to this bill, stating that the FOIC already has a balanced way of determining what is in the public's interest and what is not, and that this bill could have unintended consequences by not allowing for the disclosure of information relating to lobbyists or donors attempting to exert undue influence on legislation.

She further stated that the phrase "governmental purpose" is not defined regarding such an exception.

Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, ACLU CT, testified in opposition to this bill, stating that as written, the bill excludes far too much information that the public has a right to know. She stated that the information within contact lists is important and relevant information about whether a person in contact with a legislator about legislation or public duties is a constituent or not. She further stated that past FOIC decisions have confirmed that some of the information within this bill would be a matter of public record.

David Godbout, Constituent, testified in opposition to this bill, on the grounds that access to such records is in the public's interest.

Reported by: Cameron Clarke

Date: 3/28/2022