

# Planning and Development Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-126

AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE STATE  
CAPITOL BUILDING, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING AND RELATED

**Title:** FACILITIES.

**Vote Date:** 3/4/2022

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 2/25/2022

**File No.:** 20

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Sen. Steve Cassano, 4<sup>th</sup> Dist.

Rep. Michael A. Winkler, 56<sup>th</sup> Dist.

Rep. David Michel, 146<sup>th</sup> Dist.

### REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill aims to study the accessibility of the State Capitol building, the Legislative Office Building (LOB) and all other buildings, related structures, grounds and parking facilities under the supervision, security, utilization and control of the Joint Committee on Legislative Management. The State Capitol building, the LOB, and several associated buildings were constructed prior to the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, numerous spaces remain inaccessible or difficult to navigate for those with disabilities. The goal of this bill is to identify and implement areas of improvement to ensure that individuals with disabilities are not barred from participating in government activities due to inaccessibility issues.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

### NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

**Kathleen Flaherty, Executive Director, CT Legal Rights Project, INC.:** Ms. Flaherty noted that the Legislative Office Building was opened two years prior to the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Ms. Flaherty supports the passage of the bill, as she believes the use of experts to generate a report on the accessibility of the buildings is crucial to identifying areas of improvement. This will ensure individuals with disabilities can more easily participate in government activities.

**Laura Hoch, Senior Manager of Advocacy, National Multiple Sclerosis Society:** Ms. Hoch testified that many individuals with multiple sclerosis (MS) are advocates that wish to testify at the Legislative Office Building (LOB). These individuals are often unable to do so or find difficulty in testifying due to insufficient parking, small elevators, and small hearing rooms. Ms. Hoch supports the bill's proposal to study the accessibility of the State Capitol, the LOB, and associated buildings, as she believes it will lead to updates that both increase the accessibility of public spaces and make the legislative process fairer and more transparent.

**Ben Shaiken, Director of Government Relations, The Alliance: Voice of Community Nonprofits:** Mr. Shaiken testified that parking facilities and the State Capitol Building are the two areas that create the greatest accessibility challenges for those with intellectual/developmental, physical, and mental disabilities. Many transport vans are unable to fit in the parking garage, and the State Capitol Building is often inaccessible to those wishing to access the opposite side of the Chamber. Mr. Shaiken supports the bill's proposal to study the accessibility of the State Capitol, the Legislative Office Building (LOB), and associated buildings to ensure that those with disabilities may continue to serve as active participants in democracy.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None expressed.

**Reported by: Maureen O'Reilly**

**Date: March 15, 2022**