

Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-286

AN ACT CONCERNING DEADLINES FOR MANDATORY REPORTING OF
Title: SUSPECTED ELDER ABUSE AND PENALTIES FOR FAILURE TO REPORT.

Vote Date: 3/17/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/8/2022

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Human Services Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This legislation aims to identify and eliminate abuse of the elderly. Every year, at least one out of every ten persons over the age of 60 who live in the community is abused, and the rate of abuse is substantially greater for older adults who live in institutions. This, like other forms of abuse, frequently occurs in secret and goes unreported. This bill would require a mandatory reporter who fails within the required period to retake the elder abuse training for first-time violators and be fined up to \$500 and retake the mandatory elder abuse training for repeat violators.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language for this bill would change the reporting deadline from 12 to 24 hours.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Commissioner Deidre S. Gifford, Department of Social Services (DSS) is in support of this bill. The testimony expresses Protective Services for the Elderly (PSE) statutory reporting timelines would be reduced. This corresponds to the Department of Children & Families' statutory timeframes for reporting child abuse and neglect. In addition, this adjustment addresses recommendations from the State Auditors of Public Accounts' performance audit of PSE in 2021. The Department also proposes that mandated reporters who fail to report maltreatment within the prescribed timeframes must retake the elder abuse course and present confirmation of completion to the Department. DSS hopes that by taking this approach, it would alleviate some of the worries that some stakeholders may have

concerning repercussions for not reporting. Individuals may fail to report due to a lack of awareness of their responsibilities or a requirement for training on the signs and symptoms of elder abuse.

Mairead Painter, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, supports this bill. The long-term care ombudsman's office is in favor of any additional safeguards, such as requiring mandated reporters to report elder abuse within twelve hours of suspicion or suspected action. It will be easier to deliver services if the right authorities are contacted. Individuals who may be at risk are given protections. In relation to reporting requirements, there is a need for education and accountability.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

AARP Connecticut is in support of this legislation. AARP Connecticut stated that mandated reporters have a responsibility to protect elderly people, and they should intervene quickly if they become aware of such situations. AARP CT agrees that the penalty for a first offense for not contacting the program within 72 hours should be changed to require that the mandated reporter retake the elder abuse training and provide the program with proof of successful completion of such training. While AARP does not endorse any specific reporting timelines or fines for failure to report elder abuse, they support mandated reporters.

Mag Morelli, President of LeadingAge Connecticut, has no objections to this bill. As stated, LeadingAge Connecticut has no concerns moving forward with the penalty for failure to report being changed but were concerned that the proposed 12-hour time limit for filing such a report would be too short. This adjustment has been addressed in the substitute language of the bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Connecticut Resident, David Godbout, opposes this bill. As stated in the testimony, all proposed bills within the Connecticut General Assembly are in violation of citizens' 4th Amendment Rights, citing the fact that many spaces in the Capitol and Legislative Office Buildings are currently restricted.

Reported by: Taylor Williams

Date: 03/24/2022