

# Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-454

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S  
RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL

**Title:** AND PREVENTION YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY.

**Vote Date:** 3/23/2022

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/21/2022

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

The Public Health Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill requires the Department of Public Health (DPH) to administer the national Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) to select high schools in the state. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) randomly selects the schools and provides the survey material. The survey will provide data to identify trends, high-risk demographic groups, inequities, and emerging issues. The bill mandates participation in the survey by the schools randomly selected. The DPH would be required to provide the guidelines to the schools for administering the survey according to the CDC's protocol, methods for parents to opt out, and requirements to ensure the survey is anonymous and protects student privacy.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

### **Manisha Juthani, MD, Commissioner, CT Department of Public Health (DPH):**

The section of the bill that mandates participation by the selected schools should improve the data extracted. Previous survey results had been suboptimal due to lack of participation. The YRBS is the primary tool used locally and nationally to gather health information on youth. Programs are developed from this data to promote healthy behaviors so accurate data is essential. Increasing participation will positively impact health equity.

### **Sarah Eagan, Child Advocate, Office of the Child Advocate**

The YRBS is a model survey to further understand the health and behaviors of adolescent students. The survey provides essential information about adolescent well-being. CT has had a reasonable rate of participation in the past but ensuring adequate school district

participation to support evidence-based results has been a challenge. Requiring school districts to offer the survey to students, who participate voluntarily, should help further this public health initiative.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Kevin Borrup, DrPH, JD, MPA, Executive Director, Injury Prevention Center, CT Children's Medical Center (CCMC):**

Data collected from the YRBS can help educate and inform our statewide approach toward preventing youth suicide and substance abuse. CCMC uses this data to better understand mental health and wellness in young people, violence in relationships, and substance abuse. This valuable insight into the world of adolescents and young adults is essential, particularly during the pandemic which has significantly impacted children's mental health.

**Margaret Watt, Policy Chair, NAMI CT**

Current, valid data is critical to identifying trends, high-risk demographic groups, inequities, and emerging issues. It has been harder for the state to gather meaningful data over the last few years due to limited participation. This bill mandates participation by selected schools and the data should more accurately provide information on key issues.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

There was no testimony in opposition.

**Reported by: David Rackliffe, Asst. Clerk**

**Date: April 4, 2022**