

Committee on Children JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5194

AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF COMMUNITY-BASED BEREAVEMENT
AND GRIEF COUNSELING ORGANIZATIONS AND SERVICES FOR

Title: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

Vote Date: 3/2/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/7/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Committee on Children.

COSPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Kathleen M. McCarty, 38th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would require the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity to conduct a study of community-based grief counseling organizations that provide services for children and families. They will also make recommendations for the implementation of a state-wide program to streamline these services.

This bill's implementation would allow for a more holistic understanding of the needs of our state specifically surrounding grief counseling for children. This bill will get information on the delivery, the services, and the implementation of such a program. This bill is a step to an understanding and appropriately implementing a state-wide grieving service for the children of our state.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

State of Connecticut House of Representatives, Representative, 38th Dist., Kathleen M. McCarty, supports this bill and its attempt to address the lack of support and accessible services accessible to grieving children and teens. This does not replace specialized therapy for mental health issues but instead serves to enhance services by a licensed clinician conversant with grief counseling. She reiterates the effectiveness of peer-to-peer programs to promote healing and connectedness.

Brian Dagle Foundation, President, Ann Dagle, supports this bill and its intentions of addressing children's grief. She adds that we may not always see children's grief but internally it may be hard to express. This bill will help children as an effective resource.

Connecticut Education Association, Vice President, Joslyn DeLancey, supports this bill and more specifically as an extension of the previous landmark children's mental health legislation enacted in the previous session. Providing these resources to children is wise and would ensure seamless access to counseling.

CT Association of School Based Health Centers, Executive Director, Melanie Wilde-Lane, supports this bill and continue the conversation around children's grief. They also want to continue to discuss the role of school-based health centers around the state.

Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity, Childrens Policy Analyst, Thomas Nuccio, supports this bill and the increase of grief counseling services for children. A state-wide program to fund grief counseling will benefit the children who need it the most. They also suggest implementing grief-related supports within schools.

Connecticut Association of Public-School Superintendents, Executive Director, Fran Rabinowitz, supports this bill and requests funding to trains social workers, counselors, and school-based health center staff to continue to support children in processing their grief.

Edwin O. Smith High School, Student, Pines Wenzel, supports this bill and adds that they are someone who has been between two low-income families, they understand the stress of cost in their environment. Reminding of the climbing suicide rate, giving proper funding to process grief saves lives and prevents the next child from becoming a statistic.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Christian Talarski

Date: 3/10/23