

Government Administration and Elections Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5720

AN ACT REESTABLISHING THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW AND

Title: INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE.

Vote Date: 3/15/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/10/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee was a bipartisan, bicameral committee, which conducted and provided research on legislation related topics and then made recommendations based on the findings. This bill would restore this committee, and in turn, restore in-depth, bipartisan cooperation and research in the legislative branch.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Judicial Branch, External Affairs Division stated they have no opinion on the bill, but have a specific issue with Section 10(e) which would require the Judicial Review Council to disclose to the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee any information regarding complaints received by the Council and the disposition of such complaints. They requested that the requirement be limited to informational and data collection purposes only. The reason being that, pursuant to Article 5, Section 7 of the Connecticut Constitution, judges may be removed by impeachment, and removed by the Governor on the address of two-thirds of each house of the General Assembly. Additionally, the Constitution permits the General Assembly to establish a judicial review council, which may censure or suspend any judge for a period not longer than one year. Finally, the Supreme Court may remove or suspend a judge. As such, the Program Review and Investigations Committee should have no role in investigating or disciplining judges.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Jeff Davis, 1000 Friends of CT's Property Tax Working Group testified that the PRI, before its elimination in 2017 had an over 40 year long track record of important bipartisan work. He said that the legislature would really benefit from, and is sorely missing "in-depth, nonpartisan, independent information to assist policymakers regarding state agency performance and other issues, including tax policy." He also asked that the legislature look into starting an independent public policy research center, like the Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

John Filchak, Executive Director, Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments testified in strong support of PRI, which among many other things, conducted the study that would lead to the creation of Connecticut's nine regional councils of government. He cited the Committee's bipartisan, extensive, credible, important, and efficient track record as the driving force the support for restoration.

Michael Teiger, President, Hartford Brainard Airport Association expressed their utmost support for PRI and used a very close-to-home example to explain why they value PRI. PRI's last completed study was "Use of Hartford-Brainard Airport's Site, Staff Findings and Recommendations Report". They explained that they have found this study invaluable in deciding the fate of the airport. They explained that the report was extremely useful and detailed. They concluded by saying that the program can also save money, since the state would not have to pay outside sources to conduct research.

Other Groups that expressed similar reasons for support include:

Betsy Gara, Executive Director, CT Council of Small Towns

Ben Shaiken, Director of Government Relations, CT Community Nonprofit Alliance

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Jonathan Lukasiewicz

Date: 3/15/23