

Aging Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6575

AN ACT ENCOURAGING SOCIALIZATION FOR NURSING HOME RESIDENTS

Title: BY PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION FOR VISITS WITH FAMILY.

Vote Date: 2/28/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/16/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Aging Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would authorize nursing homes to provide nonemergency transportation for residents to visit family and would establish a grant through the Dept of Social Services, within available appropriations, to pay for this service.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Representative Kathleen McCarty, 38th Assembly District: She offered her testimony in **support** to this bill. The goal is to increase socialization opportunities for non-ambulatory residents of nursing homes. Ambulatory residents may be transported from nursing homes by family members or friends for social visits. This is not the case for non-ambulatory nursing home residents who are confined to a wheelchair and who cannot be transported outside of the nursing home by family members for home visitations. This bill seeks to fill this gap and to establish a grant program to fund non-emergency transportation for non-ambulatory residents to be administered by the Dept. of Social Services.

Dept. of Social Services, Ms. Andrea Barton Reeves, Commissioner: They **cannot support** this bill since this ne grant program is not currently supported by the budget, would not be eligible for Medicaid reimbursement and would result in additional unbudgeted costs. Additional staff that would be required to support the administrative of the grant are also not in the budget.

Dept. of Aging and Disability Services, Ms. Mairead Painter, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman: They are in **support** of this proposal and believe that access to transportation

which allow individuals to stay connected to loved ones and the greater community should be supported.

Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity, Ms. Kiley Pratt, Master's Student of the Yale School of Public Health Policy: Their testimony is in **support** of this legislation. Granting funds to nursing homes will provide visits to those whose families who would otherwise not be able to afford to visit. Given that low-income folks are at a higher risk of social isolation than those with higher incomes this bill would help remedy that outcome. The bill is a meaningful investment in the mental and physical health of those in nursing homes.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

LeadingAge Connecticut, Ms. Mag Morelli, President: They are **supportive** of this proposal which is permissive in Nature. They appreciate the attempt to provide financial support to facilitate the effort.

Connecticut Assoc. of Health Care Facilities/Connecticut Center for Assisted Living, Mr. Matt Barrett, President & CEO: Their testimony offered their **support** for this proposal. The proposed grant program in the bill is an important provision given that transportation unrelated to a medical issue is not part of the reimbursement structure in place. By establishing a grant program, this bill may provide new opportunities for families to arrange these important home visits.

National Assoc. of Social Workers/Connecticut Chapter, Ms. Cheryl Wilson, President: They submitted testimony in **support** of this bill pointing out that it is very important that the elderly and disabled have direct contact with family and friends. This bill would help facilitate this.

Mr. John Interlandi, Canton, CT
Ms. Paola Lopex , Newtown, CT
Mr. Frederic Kaeser, Seymour, CT
Ms. Nina Romanenko, Past Therapeutic Recreation Dir.
Ms. Amy Dadini, Old Greenwich, CT
Ms. Mary Schulte, RN
Anonymous (2)

All offered their **support** for this bill, and several offered intimate and antidotal stories about their experiences.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None

Reported by: Richard Ferrari, Assist. Clerk

Date: 3/7/23