

**Public Safety and Security Committee**  
**JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT**

**Bill No.:** HB-6579

AN ACT CONCERNING THE EXPANSION OF THE CRISIS INITIATIVE PILOT

**Title:** PROGRAM THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

**Vote Date:** 3/16/2023

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 2/14/2023

**File No.:** 353

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**SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Public Safety and Security Committee  
Rep. Klarides-Ditria, 105<sup>th</sup> District  
Rep. Delnicki, 14<sup>th</sup> District

**REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill requires Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) Division of State Police and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to employ the use of the CRISIS initiative program statewide by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. The CRISIS Initiative represents a collaboration between state and local police and mental health professionals to combat the opioid crisis and associated mental illnesses by connecting those struggling with addiction to recovery, support, intervention resources. Expanding the CRISIS Initiative statewide will offer police officers better training and mechanisms to handle encounters with people suffering from addictions. The expansion would also allow those individuals greater access to necessary care and treatment.

**RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

None stated.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Representative G. Kenneth Bernard, House Republican Office,** support the bill because the CRISIS initiative creates a safer environment for police officers and the communities they serve. The program has already previously shown promising results in its earlier implementation with numerous referrals and follow-ups conducted.

**Connecticut Resident, Margaret Fogarty**, supports this bill, and states that police should be required to receive Crisis Intervention Training.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Kathleen Flaherty, Esq. Executive Director, CT Legal Rights Project, Inc.**, opposes this bill, and stated the most successful crisis response programs rely on efforts that come from the community and are led by peers. It is also stated that the current structure hinders the progress towards people engaging voluntarily with services.

**Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT)**, opposes this bill, and states that public health and social work actors should be the ones to take the lead when addressing mental health crises and addiction, not as an auxiliary afterthought to police. It is also stated that rather than continue to entrench the role of police in mental health, this Committee should seek to divest police from this function entirely.

**Reported by: Micaela Rufus**

**Date: 3/28/2023**