

Housing Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6707

AN ACT AUTHORIZING BONDS OF THE STATE AND APPROPRIATING
STATE FUNDS FOR INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES AND AUTISM SPECTRUM

Title: DISORDER HOUSING PROGRAMS AND REENTRY CENTERS.

Vote Date: 2/28/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/23/2023

File No.: 166

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Housing Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill would provide up to five million dollars to the Department of Developmental Services with the goal of providing grants to private non-profit organizations for supportive housing for persons with intellectual disability, autism, or both. The bill would also Departments of Correction, Housing, and Developmental Services to coordinate, develop, and administer a program proving community-based group homes for persons dealing with intellectual disabilities leaving the corrections system.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The sum of five million dollars is 46 appropriated to the Department of Developmental Services from the General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, for the planning and development of a program for community-based group homes for persons with intellectual disabilities reentering society from the correctional system.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Department of Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Commissioner, Jordan A. Scheff: While the Department recognizes the intent of this bill, it does not support the bill in its current form. The bill fails to consider how the Departments funds are allowed to be used per federal and state regulations. The bill's criteria for granting bonds does not align with the current eligibility for DDS medical waivers and they would not be able to receive federal funds in these cases. Meaning the State could not receive federal funds to match the outlined

criteria in the bill. Additionally, this would disrupt the current waiting list for individuals receiving residential support. Recommends amending “intellectual disabilities” in Section 3 to “developmental disabilities” so those with autism are properly included.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

The Arc of Connecticut, Director of Advocacy, Carol Scully: The bill would help to combat housing challenges specifically helping people with intellectual and developmental disabilities face after leaving the corrections system. Helps to stop criminalizing disability and getting these people the help, they need. Support an additional measure that adds “behavioral supports and training on how to interact with law enforcement and first responders.” Also believes changing language on “group homes” to avoid any negative associations.

The Hartford Foundation, Senior Public Policy Officer, Chris Senecal: Believes that this bill will help those with developmental disabilities successfully re-enter the community after incarceration. Finding adequate and proper housing for this population is often the biggest challenge and this bill would help to close that.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Bridgeport Property Owners Association, Board Member, Len Sclafani: Believes this bill would be bad for Connecticut's economy.

Reported by: David Leal

Date: 3/9/2023

