
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 384 (File 350, as amended by Senate "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING THE LOW-INCOME ENERGY ADVISORY BOARD.

SUMMARY

This bill redesignates the "Low-Income Energy Advisory Board" as the "Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board." It relatedly broadens the scope of the advice and assistance it may give state agencies and adds reporting requirements.

More specifically, the bill requires the board to make recommendations to the General Assembly on the availability and implementation of heating and water assistance programs that benefit low-income and moderate-income households, including the Connecticut Low Income Household Water Assistance Program. It also requires the board to come together and work out recommendations to improve the availability, administration, and implementation of heating and water assistance programs (particularly those created to benefit low-income households) by coordinating and optimizing existing energy efficiency, water conservation, and energy assistance programs. Beginning by October 15, 2024, the board must biennially report this second set of recommendations to the Energy and Technology, Appropriations, and Human Services committees.

The bill also authorizes the board to advise and assist the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), Department of Social Services (DSS), and Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) in planning, developing, implementing, and coordinating water-assistance-related programs and policies, including those to alleviate the impact of utility rates. Under existing law, unchanged by the bill, the board must advise and assist OPM and DSS on energy-assistance-related programs and advise DEEP on the impact of utility rates and policies.

Additionally, the bill changes one of the board's 24 members, replacing the Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut's executive director with a designee of Connecticut Legal Services, Inc. who must represent Connecticut Legal Services, Inc., Greater Hartford Legal Aid, or the New Haven Legal Assistance Association.

Lastly, the bill makes technical and conforming changes, including making Operation Fuel's chief executive officer, rather than its executive director, a board member and removing an obsolete reporting provision.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

*Senate Amendment "A" requires Connecticut Legal Services, Inc. to designate a board member representing one of the above three organizations instead of anyone without limitation.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Energy and Technology Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 20 Nay 0 (03/21/2024)