

Judiciary Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-426

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING COURT OPERATIONS.

Vote Date: 3/28/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/18/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Judiciary Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This is the annual Judicial Branch bill regarding court operations designed to streamline and simplify processes, resolve small drafting errors, keep up with technology and enhance access to justice.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language makes changes throughout the bill, the first being in section 8 regarding court procedures involving appeals of summary process judgments. In section 29, changes were made to the dog bite provisions based on discussions with the Department of Agriculture. In section 30, changes were made to judgment creditor foreclosure provisions. The substitute language also added new sections 32 through 37. Sections 32 through 34 are regarding FOIA-related venue proceedings. Section 35 removes the requirement regarding the reporting of rules changes to the General Assembly for study. Section 26 is regarding limitations on prejudgment remedy applications. Finally, section 37 is regarding permissible venue options.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Elizabeth Bozzuto, Chief Court Administrator, CT Judicial Branch: She testified in support of this bill, stating that it is the annual court operations bill designed to streamline and simplify court processes, enhance access to justice, keep up with technology, and resolve small statutory drafting errors. She wanted to note that prior to submitting the proposal, they reached out to state agencies and organizations that may be impacted by the bill to get their input; the Office of the Attorney General, the Office of the Chief State's Attorney, the Office of

the Chief Public Defender, the Governor's Office, the Office of Policy and Management, the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Correction, the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association, and the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association all had no concerns.

Natasha M. Pierre Esq., State Victim Advocate, Office of the Victim Advocate: She testified in support of this bill, stating that crime victims have state constitutional rights through the criminal justice process, such as being notified, informed, and heard. She explained that sections 21-25 of this bill address various barriers that victims face in exercising their rights of accessing service. She also explained that the statute of limitations for filing an application for victim compensation would increase from two to three years. She stated that the Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) has heard from many victims who have been denied compensation because they filed the application after the statute of limitations had passed. She also stated that the bill will allow for a compensation claim for emotional harm to include "security measures" that a victim may need in response to the crime.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Joni DiLella, Support Our Courts: They testified in support of the bill and believe we should support our court system, including the marshals, security guards, and judges.

Terra Volpe, Outreach Director, CT Against Gun Violence (CAGV): She testified in support of the bill, especially sections 23 and 25 which would eliminate the timeline for victims of violent crimes to report to law enforcement and to extend the filing requirement with the Office of Victims Services for victim's compensation funding by one year. She believes these changes work with the needs of victims of intimate partner violence, who tend to delay reporting for a variety of reasons. In addition, she stated that CAGV approves of the increase of membership of the state Advisory Council for Victims of Violent Crimes from fifteen to twenty. She believes that all victims of gun violence, including those impacted by intimate partner violence, deserve access to CT's victims' compensation funding and the voice of gun violence victims deserve to be represented on the Office of Victims Services' Advisory Council.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Hillary Desideraggio

Date: 3-25-24