

HB 6908

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Public Health + Safety 242, 245-246, 251

House 5063

Senate 3402

**JOINT  
STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
HEARINGS**

**PUBLIC  
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As to H.B. 6776, the act creating additional residential and outpatient clinics. I think it's pretty obvious that we need more but it's difficult to talk to a statement of purpose because so much of the intent and so much of the final result of a bill is in the actual wording, the actual drafting of a bill. You could be for motherhood and ultimately not end up with not supporting it too.

The Association two years ago supported the then counterpart of present H.B. 6908. This is an appointment of an advisory council to the Board of Mental Health. Right now Connecticut is working in a sort of gray area. This council is required by federal regulation. And it could, the lack of it being authorized by statute could affect the inflow of federal funds to the state. Now I'm not saying it will because I don't know, but if we get some eager beaver bureaucrat in Washington that hews to the absolute letter of the law, we could be in trouble. It does not involve money other than traveling expenses for the unpaid advisory council. I don't really think we have any choice but to go along if we're going to continue to be part of the federal framework which I assume we're going to be, but to go along and go play the game by their rules.

Commissioner Launi and others have spoken to H.B. 7269 which expands the number of agencies that constitute the Department of Mental Health. There is another bill, H.B. 7019 which is on the same subject matter and there is only one significant difference. A difference though that I think we ought to do at this time. 7019 also includes the Division of Children and Adolescent Services which has been set up within the department with Charlie Launi as Associate Commissioner. It gives them statutory identification. And I think it's a long time coming that we identify and emphasize the fact that we do supply and we're committed to supply programs for children. This does in no way affect any of the operations, and it certainly doesn't cost any money since it's only one, two, three, four, five six seven words on a sheet of paper. But I do think the emphasis as such is important.

I'd like to say just a couple of things about our study, in rebuttal to the Commissioner, and I think Mrs. Wilson has touched on most of them. I think that maybe it needs to be re-emphasized that what we're talking is a type of delivery service, that is proven out, has been used in other states, and used successfully. It has one big basic advantage as I see it. It emphasizes the delivery of services in the community governed by the community needs and starts us away from pouring all our funds into the maintenance of the state hospitals system. We are - we talk like a real good fight

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Robert E. Bacon of West Hartford, Past President of the Greater Hartford and Connecticut Mental Health Associations, Regional Vice-President of the National Association for Mental Health and here today as Chairman of the Advisory Council to the Board of Mental Health on program development, community mental health centers construction.

I'm speaking in support of H.B. 6908. This is one of those bills that received a favorable committee report last session and somehow or other it got lost after the report and never really got out on the floor. We don't know what happened to it. As Mr. Melander indicated, there is a federal requirement under the Community Mental Health Centers Act that every state who is going to participate in funding from the federal government in this program must have a citizen's advisory council to review and make recommendations in regards to all applications for Mental Health Centers construction and staffing. We have such a council in this state but it has no statutory identification by the state government. There are at the present time forty-two prominent, dedicated, hard-working citizens who are participating in the work of this council. We've been engaged in some very serious studies. We have just recently, for example, passed on an application to provide federal funds for the Wheeler Clinic in New Britain, Plainville region. This council could very easily become a rubber stamp type of council with just giving perfunctory approval to anything that's presented and let it go and we'd be complying with federal regulations. But personally I won't let it be that kind of a council and the members of the council who are now involved don't want it to be that kind of a council. But we do feel that we should have statutory identification by the state of Connecticut, and the purpose of this bill is really to correct an oversight that was made six years ago when we were legalized in the federal eyes but not by state legislature or state action. So we're asking for that legalization at this time.

On another matter, speaking strictly as a private citizen, and as the past President of the Connecticut Association for Mental Health, I would like to endorse in principle bill 594. Thank you.

Sen. Pac: Any questions? Thank you. Hal Mark?

Hal Mark: Director of Planning for the Department of Mental Health: I'll be very brief and try not to repeat what, most of what Mr. Bacon said. I'm here in behalf of the Department on the same bill, H.B. 6908. to assure you of the Department's support for this bill, and that includes the Board of the

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Department of Mental Health. The Department feels it's very important that the state not jeopardize its continuing eligibility to participate in the Federal Community Mental Health Centers Act, and as Mr. Bacon and Mr. Melander both pointed out, the existence of a Citizens Advisory Council is necessary in order to continue this eligibility.

Sen. Pac; Any questions? Rather than go down this list, there are fewer people than I have on this list, so anyone wishing to speak come forward.

Francis Dellafera, President of the Association of Extended-Care Facilities, this is the nursing home group in Connecticut:

Sen. Crafts: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. Would the speaker give his name again?

Francis Dellafera: Yes, Francis Dellafera of Manchester. I'm also President of the Board of Licensure for Nursing Home administrators which was enacted under Public Act 754, and also a member of the Council of Hospitals which is enacted under Public Act 693: I came to speak about 6777, but before I do, I'd just like to mention my support for H.P. 6202. As a former member of the town council in Manchester and as a private citizen I was instrumental with other people in 1960 of getting this off the ground. And I watched it grow. They've done a real good job. Lately my activities with the sheltered workshop have been restricted to hiring one of their graduates who worked out very well until the family removed themselves to Pennsylvania. And then lately with a Unico service club in raising money to buy a delivery truck for these people in Manchester. They really do an excellent job. I'm not so sure all of them will be able to go out into the industrial or commercial world to work, but nevertheless, I support this and hope that you can do something within your fiscal capability.

As far as 677 (6777) is concerned, I didn't know what this was all about until Rep. Prete made his opening statement this morning. And I would like you to know that we would support any mechanism if it needs supporting or if any mechanism is needed, for the revocation of license for nursing homes. I can tell you that in my experience the last twelve or fourteen years I know of only three incidences where attempts were made to revoke licenses. And they did take some time. One was in a children's hospital. This finally had its license revoked. Children's hospitals are now licensed by the Mental Retardation Organization under the Health Department. The other two, one of them was closed in about six or seven months, and the other that came up for hearing on revocation did make corrections in its operations as I understand it and were able to continue

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deal of latitude provided to the Commissioner for the development of policies and procedures. He is not hamstrung, through the design of the mental health regional authorities, as it is now phrased in the legislation. There is latitude for creative embellishment, for providing new departures, even as the legislation now stands.

I am at a loss really to see in what areas further study could be more productive than the present product, before you.

The second bill that I want to comment briefly on is H.B. 6908. I think consistent with Mr. Mashmeyer's remarks about the business expertise that this stands up quite well. I think for the state to jeopardize in any manner an opportunity for fiscal support would be gravely foolish and would not serve the best interests of the citizens of the state. I think for us to fly in the face of federal regulations regarding the design of planning for our mental health centers and to thereby jeopardize financial support for those programs would be a disservice to all those who have been thus far successfully served by existing mental health center planning. Thank you very much.

Sen. Pac: Any question? Thank you very much. That was very enlightening. Anyone else wishing to be heard? The hearing is over.

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would indicate that many of these bills are meritorious. However, I think it is wrong for us to take up the items without a total budget package being arrived at. I have agreed that we could take these up, that my objection to this particular bill will stand on all the succeeding items, strictly in the interest of the convenience of this assembly, so that we would not have to spend several hours on each individual item with statements and with votes.

MR. SPEAKER:

First, we thank the gentleman of the 165th, it is to the benefit of all the members that when we consider the budget that we have before us the major document and when we consider the tax program, it also is not cluttered by a number of individual bills.

CLERK:

I am now going to read the calendar numbers, bill numbers and the file numbers of 62 bills.

Beginning on page 6, Calendar 103, House Bill 5154, file 913.

Page 7, Calendar 277, substitute for House Bill 6908, file 1442.

Calendar 278, substitute for House Bill 7438, file 890.

Calendar 322, Substitute for House Bill 5661, file 919.

Calendar 421, House Bill 5688, file 1385.

Calendar 456, substitute for House Bill 6914, file 1388.

Page 8, Calendar 460, House Bill 7450, file 1198.

Calendar 544, substitute for Senate Bill 149, file 1501.

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