

PA13-26

HB6392

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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2013**

**VOL.56
PART 7
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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

The House will return to the call of the calendar.

Would the Clerk please call Calendar Number 107?

THE CLERK:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

House Calendar 107 on House Calendar page 5, favorable report of the Joint Standing Committee on PUBLIC HEALTH Substitute Health Bill 6392, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

Representative Johnson, for what purpose do you rise?

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I move the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

The motion before the Chamber is accepted for the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill. Will you comment further?

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

This is a very simple bill. It's to streamline the reporting requirements for the Department of Health and Addiction Services. It reduces the reporting from three-second reports to one, because these reports also have -- have -- will limit the amount of time that the DMHAS has to spend making these reports by combining them into one, so this is a cost-saving measure.

The bill also eliminates an unnecessary hospital reporting requirement, which will also help with hospital reporting. So that's basically it, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

Thank you.

Will you remark further on the bill before us?

Will you remark further on the bill before us?

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do rise in strong support of this bill. As the Chairwoman of the Public Health Committee so eloquently said, what this basic -- bill basically does reduces the -- the reporting requirements, so that we're not redundant. These save money and we do

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not need these repetitive -- repetitive kind of reporting that needs to be done.

We streamline that, make it a far effective way of reporting, and I hope that the legislature will pass this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

Thank you, Representative.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Thank you so much for your remarks.

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

Representative Johnson.

REP. JOHNSON (49th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you Representative Srinivasan for your remarks. And I move adoption of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

Thank you.

The motion is for -- is adoption of the bill.

Will you remark further on the bill before us?

Will you remark further on the bill before us?

If not, will staff and guests please come to the Well of the House? Will members take your seats? The machine will be open.

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THE CLERK:

House of Representatives is voting by roll. The
House of Representative is voting by roll. Will the
members please return to the chamber immediately.

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members
voted?

Will the members please check the board to
determine if your vote is properly cast.

If all the members have voted, the machine will
be locked and the Clerk will take the tally.

Will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Bill Number 6392.

Total Number Voting 144

Necessary for Passage 73

Those voting Yea 144

Those voting Nay 0

Absent and not voting 6

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

The bill passes.

Would the Clerk please call Calendar Number 344?

THE CLERK:

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**PUBLIC
HEALTH
PART 1
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lk/gdm/gbr PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE February 20, 2013
11:30 A.M.

CHAIRMEN: Representative Johnson
Senator Gerratana

MEMBERS PRESENT:

SENATORS: Bartolomeo, Slossberg,
Welch, Kane, Musto

REPRESENTATIVES: Alexander, Arconti,
Betts, Cook, Conroy,
Davis, Demicco, Hovey,
Klarides, Maroney,
Perillo, Riley, Ryan,
Sayers, Scribner,
Tercyak, Ziobron, Zoni

REP. JOHNSON: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the Public Health Committee. I'm Representative Susan Johnson. And I'm here with my co-chair, Senator Gerratana. And we're here to hear the Committee bills. The first hour is going to be all public officials. And then we will alternate between public officials and the public until we've exhausted the list for public officials.

So, I'm going to call Commissioner Patricia Rehmer to provide testimony. She's signed up.

Welcome, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER PATRICIA REHMER: Hi. Good morning.

Good morning, Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, and members of the Public Health Committee. I'm Commissioner Pat Rehmer of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and I'm here this morning to speak to you in favor of House Bill 6392, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

And I want to thank the Committee and your assistance for raising this proposal.

Essentially, what this bill does is combine and eliminate some reporting requirements for our department. Retirements, hiring freezes, et cetera, have made it difficult to attend to some of the tasks before the Department. And, so, we've had to prioritize resources. And in don't -- doing so, evaluated some of our reporting requirements.

We have three separate reports that are currently required on substance abuse treatment. And we are asking that we are allowed to combine those reports into one report. And, also, eliminate a general hospital report -- reporting requirement that's related to screening and early -- and brief intervention that, really, no longer has any value that's in place and has been reported to us for a number of times. It would be one less thing for the hospitals to have to report on.

This bill was before you last year, but did not get taken up as the session was winding down. So, this is before you again. I appreciate the time and attention that you have given to this matter, and be happy to answer any questions that you have.

SENATOR GERRATANA: Thank you, Commissioner. I just have a question on Section 3 of the bill. And that is "Each hospital shall establish protocols for screening patients for alcohol and substance abuse." You are eliminating the report to your department. And I just wanted to know the reason why.

COMMISSIONER PATRICIA REHMER: The hospitals have

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been doing that for some time, now. They've been reporting to us on that. And it's really something that's been in place for a long time, and they've complied with it. And we don't really see the value of continuing to ask them to report to us on that.

SENATOR GERRATANA: So, we don't utilize their reports in anyway?

COMMISSIONER PATRICIA REHMER: I'm looking to Doreen to help me on this one.

VOICE: (Inaudible)

COMMISSIONER PATRICIA REHMER: Oh, I'm sorry. So, the original reporting requirement was on the protocols on how they were going to, actually, implement it. We will continue to gather the information. It's just that we don't need the information on the protocols because it's been implemented across the state.

SENATOR GERRATANA: I see.

COMMISSIONER PATRICIA REHMER: I apologize.

SENATOR GERRATANA: Quite all right. It did raise my eyebrows a little bit.

COMMISSIONER PATRICIA REHMER: Yes.

SENATOR GERRATANA: But, now, I understand.

COMMISSIONER PATRICIA REHMER: Right.

SENATOR GERRATANA: And I thank you very much for that. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

REP. JOHNSON: Thank you. Are there any questions for the Commissioner about the revisions?

Well, thank you very much for bringing these things to our attention. And we look forward to working with you.

COMMISSIONER PATRICIA REHMER: Thank you.

REP. JOHNSON: The next person the list is Senator Looney.

VOICE: And this is (inaudible)

REP. JOHNSON: Okay. Representative Mavis.

I think that some people were expecting that they would be called later.
Representative Dan Carter.

Representative Mitch -- Dan Carter?
Representative Carter?

REP. CARTER: Hi.

REP. JOHNSON: Hi. Thank you. Thank you. Okay.

Thank you for being here. Welcome.

REP. CARTER: I have to say it's amazing that you guys run this like a tight ship and it started on time. So, I apologize for being a few minutes tardy.

To the Chairs of the Committee, Representative Johnson, Senator Gerratana, all the Vice Chairs and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here before you today. And I'm speaking on, I believe, it's House Bill 5733. You have my testimony. I might have the number incorrect as I'm waiting on my notes.

Basically, what we're talking about is restricting access to death certificates. In

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**PUBLIC
HEALTH
PART 3
681-1010**

2013



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Patricia A. Rehmer, MSN
Commissioner

Testimony by Patricia Rehmer, MSN, Commissioner
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Before the Public Health Committee
February 20, 2013

Good morning Sen. Gerratana, Rep. Johnson, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. I am Commissioner Patricia Rehmer of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and I am here this morning to speak in favor of **HB 6392 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES' REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**. I want to thank the Committee for your assistance in raising this proposal.

The bill before you would combine and eliminate some reporting requirements for our department. Retirements and hiring freezes have made it difficult to attend to the many tasks before us. We have had to prioritize our resources and in doing so, looked at our reporting requirements. We are asking that you combine three separate reports on substance use treatment and that you eliminate a general hospital reporting requirement to DMHAS that no longer has any value. This bill was before this Committee last year but did not get taken up in the waning hours of the session.

I appreciate the time and attention you have given to this matter, and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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Will you remark? Will you remark? Will you remark?
If not, Senator Leone.

SENATOR LEONE:

Thank you, Madam President.

If there is no objection, I would move to place this
item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered, sir.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, if the Clerk would call as the next
item Calendar Page 26, Calendar 512, House Bill 6392.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Page 26, Calendar 512, Substitute for House Bill
Number 6392, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF
MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES' REPORTING
REQUIREMENTS, Favorable Report of the Committee on
Public Health.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana, good afternoon.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Good afternoon, Madam President, nice to see you
there.

THE CHAIR:

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Thank you, nice to be seen.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Nice to see you this weekend too at Race in the Park.

Madam President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is on passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Yes, Madam President, thank you.

This bill before us comes to us from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. The Commissioner is developing and working on a state plan on substance abuse and she^a asked us to make these changes to streamline the process so she can get on with her work.

Of course I move passage. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Will you remark? Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

Through you, I have a couple of questions to the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

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I guess this is one of those situations where it intrigues me why we need to create legislation, you know, why we aren't doing these things already. When even in your salvo you said that we need to get out of the Commissioner's way and have her create this plan.

Through you, Madam President, to the proponent of the bill, what is -- what's in the way?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Thank you, Madam President.

The Commissioner asked us to do this because of the process. There's some reporting mechanisms already in statute. This is just a cleanup of those reporting mechanisms so that the council, that is mentioned in the bill, and the Commissioner can get on with the work that she has to do.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

And when it says that the law requires DMHAS to develop a state substance abuse plan that is something that has never come up before? We've never created this plan or looked to create a plan previously?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

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Thank you, Madam President.

In fact I just spoke with a representative of the Department. The plan has not been fully formed from what I understand but that the Commissioner is working on this plan. Now I went to the DMHAS website also. I did notice that there is a link to collection of data, unfortunately it came up with that error announcement that sometimes comes up on computers so I couldn't do that, but it says collection and evaluation of data related to substance use, abuse and addiction programs by annual report, that was in 2008.

So it looks to me as though the Commissioner, as part of her duties, would like to develop this plan and she asked for these changes and we thought they were reasonable public health.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

And one more question if I may. There's a section in here in regards to eliminating the requirement that hospitals report to DMHAS on their protocols to screen patients for alcohol and substance abuse. Can you speak to that?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Yes, through you, Madam President, I believe, I don't want to misspeak, but I'm under communication -- verbal communication that that is something that is redundant and no longer needed and that the Commissioner does get that information elsewhere.

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Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Great, thank you, Madam President, I appreciate the good Senator for answering my questions.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS:

Thank you, Madam President.

I -- I rise in strong support of the bill. I -- you know whenever we talk about -- well first of all it eliminates some requirements -- reporting requirements, streamlines government more efficient. I mean that -- that's -- I want to hear more of that in this Chamber and in this General Assembly but secondly it -- it pushes forward a plan regarding substance abuse because substance abuse is such a debilitating disease.

You know when you find out that your child especially is suffering from a substance abuse problem, whether it be alcohol or drugs or whatever, it -- it tears the family apart and it's so difficult to start dealing with and -- and looking to find the program that -- that works.

And -- and anything that we can do in this Chamber to help combat that and put in a -- in a central databank and collect the data to how to prevent and reduce the substance abuse issues that we have in the state, good for us, and so this is something that I -- I stand in strong support and I urge the Chamber's adoption.

Thank you, Madam President.

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THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark further? Will you remark further? If not -- Senator Guglielmo.

SENATOR GUGLIELMO:

Thank you, Madam President.

Just a -- a real quick question to the proponent.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR GUGLIELMO:

Thank you, Madam.

As someone who was on a hospital board for many years, I was wondering why the annual hospital report was eliminated? I'm -- I'm happy to see that by the way but I just was curious because that's kind of counter to what we usually do here.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Thank you, Madam President.

Senator Guglielmo, this is something that I believe in talking with the Department is redundant. They can get the information elsewhere so it was very I think appropriate of them not to have to bother the hospitals for this information when it's available through other sources.

Through you, Madam President.

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Senator Guglielmo.

SENATOR GUGLIELMO:

Thank you, Madam President.

I approve, thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Will you remark? Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

If there is no opposition, I would ask that this item
be moved to our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, seeing no objection, so ordered.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, if the Clerk would call as the next item from Calendar Page 25, Calendar 501, House Bill 5799 and then as the -- the next item after that, Madam President, from Calendar Page -- under Matters Returned from Committee, Calendar Page 43, Calendar 167, Senate Bill 879.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

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The bill passes.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, if the Clerk might now call the items on the Consent Calendar before proceeding to a vote on that Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 1, Calendar 545, Senate Resolution Number 27; also on Page 1, Calendar 546, Senate Resolution Number 28. On Page 2, Number 547, Senate Resolution Number 29. On Page 2, Number 549, Senate Resolution Number 31. On Page 5, Number 184, Senate Bill 1026. On Page 7, Calendar Number 253, Senate Bill Number 763. On Page 16, Calendar Number 412, Senate Bill Number 962. On Page 17, Calendar Number 436, Senate Bill Number 673. On Page 18, Calendar Number 438, Senate Bill Number 761. Also on Page 18, Calendar Number 443, Senate Bill Number 1056. On Page 19, Calendar Number 449, Senate Bill Number 828. On Page 20, Calendar Number 461, House Bill Number 6540.

On Page 21, Number 469, House Bill Number 6574. On Page 23, Number 480, Senate Bill Number 238. On Page 25, Calendar Number 501, House Bill Number 5799. Also on Page 25, Number 507, House Bill Number 5117. On Page 26, Calendar Number 508, House Bill Number 6571. On Page 26, Calendar Number 509, House Bill Number 6348. Also on Page 26, Calendar Number 510, House Bill Number 6007 and on Page 26, Calendar Number 512, House Bill Number 6392.

On Page 40, Calendar Number 48, Senate Bill Number 519. On Page 40, Calendar Number 60, Senate Bill Number 859. Also on Page 40, Calendar Number 104, Senate Bill Number 833.

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On Page 41, Calendar Number 107, Senate Bill Number 917. On Page 42, Calendar Number 123, Senate Bill Number 434. On Page 43, Calendar Number 129, Senate Bill Number 898. Also on Page 43, Calendar Number 139, Senate Bill Number 158. On Page 43, Calendar Number 167, Senate Bill Number 879.

On Page 45, Calendar Number 195, Senate Bill Number 816. Also on Page 45, Calendar Number 204, Senate Bill 652. On Page 47, Calendar Number 241, Senate Bill 1040. On Page 48, Calendar Number 269, Senate Bill 1003. Also on Page 48, Calendar Number 270, Senate Bill Number 1007.

On Page 50, Calendar Number 304, Senate Bill 1019. Also on Page 50, Calendar Number 310, Senate Bill 903. And finally on Page 53, Calendar Number 399, Senate Bill 1069.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, will you call for a roll call vote. The machine will be open on the Consent Calendar.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Senators please return to the Chamber. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

If all members have voted, if all members have voted the machine will be locked. Mr. Clerk, will you please call the tally.

THE CLERK:

On Consent Calendar Number 1.

Total Number Voting	36
Necessary for Adoption	19
Those Voting Yea	36
Those Voting Nay	0
Those Absent and not Voting	0

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar is passed.

Are there any points of personal privilege?

Senator Doyle.

SENATOR DOYLE:

Thank you, Madam President.

Yeah for a point of information for the Chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR DOYLE:

Yes, thank you, Madam President.

Tomorrow the General Law Committee will be meeting at 11:15 outside the Hall of the House. The bulletin said 15 minutes before the early session so now we're making it definitive. Tomorrow at 11:15 outside the Hall of the House the General Law Committee will be considering one bill that was referred to us.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Duff next.

SENATOR DUFF:

Thank you, Madam President.

For the point of announcement please.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.