

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

PA 14-172

SB106

House	6959-6962	4
Senate	2407-2435	29
Human Services	41, 46, 57-58, 61-62, 85- 87, 212-214, 250-251, <u>310, 312</u>	16
		49

H – 1201

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2014**

**VOL.57
PART 21
6912 – 7260**

Those absent and not voting 6

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The bill, as amended, is passed.

Representative Aresimowicz.

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move that we immediately transmit to the Senate any items waiting further action.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Without objection, so ordered.

Representative Aresimowicz, I understand we have another Consent Calendar.

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

We are. We are about to list off the bills that will be included in our second Consent Calendar for the evening, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Proceed, sir.

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I move -- I'd to add the following to the Consent Calendar. Calendar 426, Calendar 308, Calendar 438, Calendar 488 --

SB281

SB19

SB182

SB330

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Whoa, whoa, whoa.

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

I apologize, Mr. Speaker. The first number was
427.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

So 427, thank you, sir. Proceed.

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

Calendar 476, as amended by Senate "A"; Calendar
445, Calendar 514, Calendar 505, as amended by Senate
"A"; Calendar 455, Calendar 456, as amended by Senate
"A"; Calendar 322, Calendar 536, as amended by Senate
"A" and Senate "B"; Calendar 430, Calendar 520, as
amended by Senate "A" and Senate "B"; Calendar 538, as
amended by Senate "A"; Calendar 424, as amended by
Senate "A"; Calendar 439, as amended by Senate "A";
Calendar 482, as amended by Senate "A"; Calendar 325,
as amended by Senate "A."

Calendar 526, as amended by Senate "A"; Calendar
509, as amended by Senate "A"; Calendar 532, Calendar
502, as amended by Senate "A"; Calendar 421, as
amended by Senate "A"; Calendar 431, as amended by
Senate "A"; and Calendar 539, as amended by Senate
"A."

- SB 194
- SB 402
- SB 324
- SB 45
- SB 221
- SB 257
- SB 201
- SB 389
- SB 418
- SB 438
- SB 427
- SB 260
- SB 208
- SB 424
- SB 241
- SB 14
- SB 106
- SB 322
- SB 410
- SB 217
- SB 477
- SB 429

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Is there objection to any of these items being placed on the Consent Calendar? If not, Representative Aresimowicz, would you like to move passage of the Consent Calendar?

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

Mr. Speaker, I want to remove Calendar 539.

SB429

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Please remove Calendar 539, Mr. Clerk.

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

Mr. Speaker, I move passage of the bills on the second Consent Calendar of the day.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The question is on passage of the items on Consent Calendar Number 2.

Staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Members take your seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll.

The House of Representatives is voting by roll on the second Consent Calendar of the day, House Consent 2. Please report to the Chamber immediately.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

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

If all the members have voted, the machine will
be locked.

The Clerk will take a tally.

And the Clerk will announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Consent Calendar Number 2.

Total Number Voting 147

Necessary for Passage 74

Those voting Yea 147

Those voting Nay 0

Those absent and not voting 4

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The items on the Consent Calendar are passed.

(Speaker Sharkey in the Chair.)

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The House will please come back to order.

Will the Clerk please call Emergency Certified
Bill 5597.

THE CLERK:

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CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2014**

**VOL. 57
PART 8
2311 – 2667**

Senate Bill Number 357 as amended.

Total Number Voting	33
Necessary for Adoption	17
Those voting Yea	33
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	3

THE CHAIR:

The bill is passed.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, if the Clerk would call as the next item from calendar page -- an item, calendar page 38, Calendar 231, Senate Bill 106.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On page 38, Calendar 231, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 106, AN ACT CONCERNING IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH EDUCATION AND ENSURING SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATES, favorable report of the Committee on Human Services, and there are amendments.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Thank you. Good evening, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Good very late evening, ma'am.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes, it is. I move acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

The motion is on acceptance and passage. Will you remark, ma'am?

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes, thank you, Madam President.

The Clerk has in his possession an amendment, LCO Number 5157. I would ask that it be called and I be granted leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 5157, Senate "A," offered by Senators Slossberg, Stillman, et al.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes, thank you, Madam President.

I move adoption.

THE CHAIR:

The motion is on adoption. Will you remark, ma'am.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes, Madam President.

This is a strike-all amendment that becomes the bill. The bill has a number of sections. The first section of the bill requires the Department of Social Services and the Department of Labor to permit a temporary family assistance recipient to take educational courses as part of his or her employability plan, so long as the State complies with federal work participation requirements and the education courses are approved by the Department of Labor commissioner.

Section two deals with some clarifying language with regard to our bullying law. It provides specifically that the safe school climate plan which allows students to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees, that that plan be given out in the beginning of each school year instead of just annually.

It also ensures that parents of students who had been bullied receive prompt notice of that and also requires that there be two separate meetings, that the meetings with the parents be separate where one would be with the parents of the student who was accused of bullying and a separate meeting with the parents of the student who was the victim or target of the bullying.

It also allows for a program to be funded from private grant dollars that will address social, emotional and behavioral, a culturally competent school-based curriculum, social emotional learning and self-awareness and self regulation program.

THE CHAIR:

I'm sorry. I missed it. Are you finished?

Will your remark? Will your remark?

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, may I ask a few questions to the proponent of the amendment?

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, ma'am.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you.

Through you, Madam President.

This particular bill has seen a number of versions of an amendment to try to include, I believe, some areas to add to the bullying legislation that we, many in this chamber as well as the chairs of the Education Committee have worked on for a number of years and have worked very hard with schools' associations, with our local school boards and so forth to make sure that this was done in such a fashion that they had time to weigh in on it and be able to explain what worked and what would be a problem for them. And in order to try to create a much better school environment and try to address a very serious issue of bullying.

Through you, Madam President, was this language, did it ever come before those organizations so they had an opportunity to have a public hearing to react to this new set of language that we have before us?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes, thank you, madam.

Through you, Madam President.

It is my understanding that this language has been available, publicly available since our JF deadline from Human Services. And it is my understanding that a number of the organizations that the good senator has mentioned have had an opportunity to see it and made comment.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Madam President, do I understand it then there has been no public hearing on this or testimony elicited through the normal committee process?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Thank you.

Through you, Madam President.

In terms of some of sections of this bill have in fact had a public hearing and some of them have not.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President.

It's my understanding that this language only appeared on the last day of committee meeting on JF deadline. And in fact, when I inquired about

this to our ranking member I don't believe they saw this language until just recently.

In fact, I believe that we've been trying to ascertain various aspects in the last couple of days. And in fact, through you, Madam President, if there's been some discussion with CABA on this because I do believe these expressed some concern to me on some of the aspects of this, although I do see that this very latest version which was -- just handed to me a few minutes ago does change it substantially.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG: Yes. Thank you.

Through you, Madam President.

I'm not sure there was a questionnaire.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher, would you explain it?

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Yes. You know, I think just to be clear of what we're looking at here, through you, Madam President, does this language then take out certain sections of it that were of concern previously that -- in other words, what is the difference between this particular LCO and LCO 5074?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

I'm sorry. Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

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Thank you.

Through you, Madam President.

I don't have another LCO in front of me at this time so I couldn't remark as to the differences.

THE CHAIR:.. . . .

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Very well, Madam President. Maybe if I can then just go through a couple of sections so that I can see if in fact this has changed substantially, as I said, in the last hour or so. I believe that the previous section from 5157, which I do believe then the proponent of the amendment knows what sections are in the latest version.

The previous one did contain language having to do with the fact that the reporting requirements were changed from once a year -- to once a year from biannually to the school system. So that became a mandate. In other words, what was required previously was a report every two years and now it is annually. Is that within this latest version, or has that been taken out?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes. Thank you.

Through you, Madam President.

I can only comment on the LCO that's in front of us, which is 5157. But if your question to me, is the language to that effect in this particular bill, this particular LCO? No, it is not.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Terrific. That's good to hear. It's good to see that. Another area that I believe the Association of School Boards just mentioned recently to me was an area of concern that had to do with the number eight in section, I believe, it is in section two of the bill. Section two talked about in subsection eight of this where there was a -- previously listed in here was to be included in each local and regional boards of education's safe school climate plan.

It should include various areas and one of them, it talked about parents and guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act of bullying, and the parents with whom such alleged act or acts were directed, received prompt notice. So in other words, there was notice in here. Is the notice also included in the most current amendment that we have before us?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes. Thank you.

If the reference is to lines 109 to 113, that does require prompt notice of parents of children who have been bullied.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you. That's very helpful. So essentially we've pared down this amendment to only two

different aspects and that's prompt notification and also that there would be two meeting held, one for the parents of the student who was a victim of possible bullying and one for those that have perpetrated the act of bullying.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

If the question is, are those two elements in this amendment, the answer is, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you very much, Madam President. I appreciate that.

Well, let's see if there were some other things that -- there was also an aspect in here that gave some of the school boards, members that represent them some concern and that was also requiring the principal of the school or designee to notify a school resource officer that was not originally included in the requirements that they had.

Through you, Madam President, is that included in the current amendment we have before us?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Through you, Madam President.

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No, it is not.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you very much.

And it obviously has changed quite a bit and I believe this does have the proper components that would make it acceptable, I'm sure, to most of the schools that are before us and I would support the new language that's in here. It is much improved from the beginning when this conversation first started.

Even though I might add it would have been much better to go through the normal public hearing process and be vetted in the normal procedure that we have. So I will not be asking any further questions on this particular section. I think it is supportable as it's been changed, however I do want to spend a few minutes talking about the first section of the bill. The first section of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Senator, we're on the amendment.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

On the amendment. Very good. I thank you for that and I appreciate that. And I appreciate the answers to the questions on this part of the amendment and I find that now the language has changed substantially enough that it is supportable and I'll wait to make my comments on section one after the amendment is passed.

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Slossberg, for the second time on the amendment.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Through you, Madam President.

I would ask for a roll call vote on the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

A roll call vote will be had.

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President. Through you, I ask a couple questions for the proponent of the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR KANE:

Through you, to Senator Slossberg.

It looks like the fiscal note on the amendment strikes the fiscal impact. Is that your understanding as well?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Through you, Madam President.

Yes, it is.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

And although it does strike the fiscal impact of the bill, there's still a section, section four in the fiscal note that mentions that it could result in a fiscal impact associated with allowing the OEC, the Office of Early Childhood, to offer competitive grants for up to three aligned school districts. Can you speak to that?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes. Thank you.

Through you, Madam President.

Section 4 does exactly that. It creates permissive language so that the Office of Early Childhood in collaboration with the State Department of Education may offer a competitive grant to develop and implement a strategy for the promotion of social and emotional well-being of our students.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

And I appreciate Senator Slossberg's answer. But

serving as the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee I'm more interested in the numbers. If maybe you can speak to the numbers in regard to this competitive grant.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes. Thank you.

Through you, Madam President.

For clarification, there are no state dollars or public monies being set aside for this. There is no appropriation for it. It contemplates private dollars.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you.

Yes, I see that it says that the grant may be offered from funds which may originate from public-private, federal or philanthropic sources. Is there a plan put in place for that requirement?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Thank you.

Through you, Madam President.

Currently there is no plan, however we are aware that the State has been approached by a private foundation that was interested in offering these private grants.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

And it also says that section 5 allows for up to 5 percent of the grant funds to be used for administrative costs. Are you comfortable with that figure?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes, thank you, Madam President. Through you.

Yes, I am.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

Is that a standard operation for that, such a thing for the administrative cost?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Thank you. Through you.

Yes, I believe it is although I couldn't tell you that for sure.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE: And Thank you, Madam President.

And the plan, if you will, b being developed in the underlying amendment that we've been talking about, is there a timeframe when these such grants would be anticipated. Will it be in the next fiscal year? The following fiscal year? Do you have any idea what the timing will be of these grants?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Thank you. Through you.

No, I do not.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

So the amendment basically strikes the fiscal impact and pretty much just sets the wheels in motion for future anticipated processes for this program.

I guess what I'm getting at, Madam President, is certainly we understand the budget difficulty we are in currently. I think no one knows that more than I sitting on the Appropriations Committee. And I understand the removal of the fiscal impact, but I want to make sure that if we plan on such a program going forward, we also have a plan in regard to the financing of it. And I'm just trying to get an understanding, and I know you mention in here about the possible private funding, but just an understanding of what that timeframe may be like in anticipation of it.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes, Madam President, through you.

I don't have an answer as to the timing. This is just -- this was something that was contemplated as a possibility and so you want to make sure that if a private foundation would like to continue to work with the State in this and districts are interested, that this be available to them.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

And if you may indulge me one more time?

THE CHAIR:

Sure.

SENATOR KANE:

This amendment obviously strikes the fiscal note. I notice a number of other amendments -- is there any other portion of the bill that may have a fiscal note? Or does this amendment take care of the entire thing?

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Through you, Madam President.

I believe this takes care of the entire fiscal note.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

I thank Senator Slossberg for answering my questions.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark?

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President.

I rise for the second time and thank you for that indulgence. I've had time to really peruse this more carefully. And I do commend the Senator for actually going through this and very carefully taking out areas that were of quite a bit of concern to this previous last LCO number.

I think that the good senator, Senator -- hmm. It is that late at night. I have to say Senator

Kane did bring up a concern and I think it comes from the fact that previous renditions of this did -- in fact, that section that he was very concerned about, had it within available appropriations. And since he is the ranking member of Appropriations he had the right to be concerned of that because in this current version, that was illuminated.

So Through you, Madam President, may I ask the proponent of the amendment why they took out within available appropriations in this latest version of that section. In fact, it is a very good section. Hopefully it will get some private donations to be able to fund a very worthy program.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Thank you Madam President, and through you.

We realized through the drafting and the review of this, that it was unnecessary language.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President.

Then I assume that basically the way it was written that it's going to be within whatever available appropriations they're able to get for this without using or expanding state funds.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Thank you.

Through you, Madam President.

There are no appropriations from state funds with regard to this program.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you very much, Madam President. Much appreciated.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further? Will you remark further?

If not, a roll call vote has been ordered on Senate "A."

Mr. Clerk, will you please call for a roll call vote? And the machine will be open on Senate "A."

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call on Senate "A" is ordered in the Senate. Immediate roll call on Senate "A" has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

If all members have voted -- all members have voted. The machine will be closed.

Mr. Clerk, will you please call the tally.

THE CLERK:

On Senate Amendment schedule "A."

Total Number Voting

34

Necessary for Adoption	18
Those voting Yea	34
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	2

THE CHAIR:

The amendment passes.

Will you remark?

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes, Madam President. Hold on.
I yield to Senator Looney.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney, will you accept the yield, sir?

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, thank you. Thank you, Madam President.

Thank you, Senator Slossberg for the yield.
Speaking in support of the bill as amended, I
wanted to commend Senator Slossberg and her
committee for it's hard work on this bill.

The first part of the bill as amended -- the
language in the first part --

THE CHAIR:

Excuse me, sir. Could there be a little more
quiet in the Senate?

Thank you, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

The first part of the amendment that has become the bill dealt with a problematic issue in terms of those who are trying to prepare themselves for employment while being TANF recipients.

And in terms of the rules of being able to improve themselves through education and at the same time meet the federal work participation requirements for the employment services program.

So it clarifies that to the extent, not in conflict with federal law, that the State will be able to permit a recipient of temporary family assistance to take education courses as part of the requirements of the recipient's employability plan. So obviously the goal is that people who are well motivated to improve themselves through education will, we hope, be better for higher levels of employment through education through that participation.

Unfortunately prior to this in some cases they were barred from receiving TANF while pursuing those educational opportunities. And there was, I think, some misunderstanding in the Department of Labor about there being a bar on that educational participation, and we found out that is not in fact the case. And hence, this bill, that will provide for those greater opportunities, or rather the first part of the bill.

And again, wanted to thank Senator Slossberg and her committee for her diligent and effective work on the issues related to the bill as amended.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will your remark further? Will your remark further?

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you very much, Madam President.

Madam President, I am asking the question through you, is why? Why do we need this legislation in the first place? What were the prohibitions of the legislation that would mandate that legislation would be needed in order to continue to receive welfare payments if a person went to an educational program?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes. Thank you.

Through you, Madam President.

The issue was that our Department of Labor and Department of Social Services was not counting educational activities as part of the work requirement and there is a certain number of hours that a recipient of temporary family assistance is required to perform. And they weren't counting time spent towards an education or retraining to grade.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, it's my understanding that there were federal requirements, also, and state requirements, that mandated that a process of an

individual had to be involved in a work process first to receive any benefits through that program.

Through you, Madam President is that the understanding of the proponent of the bill?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Thank you.

Through you, Madam President.

If I understand the question there are federal work participation requirements, but they are for the state program as a whole and then there are some more specific for each person for the recipients themselves. So the idea here is that in certain cases they can have -- they can count employment activities.

And in fact, in 2010 we passed legislation to authorize the ability to implement such a policy to do exactly what this does, but it has been applied inconsistently and so this is just to ensure that people who are trying to better themselves in order to actually get into the workforce are able to do so.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, it's my understanding that this change, both in federal and state law with regards to a work requirement was done in order to help change the cycle of poverty to try to have able-bodied individuals be involved in a work process where there was a great deal of

learning that happened in the workplace and was hugely successful.

And I do believe that it was specifically -- educational opportunities were specifically excluded from that process in order to stop the cycle of one generation after another being locked into an environment where welfare was their only means of being able to survive and subsist. And so that it compared very favorably to many people that have to work in order to get an education and that would be something that they could do both together.

Would you anticipate that if this was passed that an individual would avail themselves of just a school experience without having a work requirement at all in a two or four-year college program?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Thank you.

Through you, Madam President.

No there's still the requirement for seeking employment activities.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President.

As I read this, though, I don't see anywhere in here -- it appears to me that the language would say that you can't substitute a two or four-year school experience without any work requirement at

all.

Through you, Madam President, could I get some verification?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes. Thank you, Madam President.

I believe through the recipients' employability plan that in order to comply with the federal work participation requirements you would have to have both some work requirements as well as the education.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you for the answer, Madam President.

I -- it's certainly not clear to me in the language that I see before us. It appears here, in fact, that it appears that it would be a substitute for the amount of time. So an individual -- then through you, is my understanding that this would not be full-time enrollment in a two or four-year program that we're talking about here? ..

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes, that is correct. It doesn't necessarily have to be a full-time program. It's educational courses that may be included, are, you know, a

two-year or a four-year college degree program. But it does not exempt them from work requirements and this is pursuant to federal law.

So they still -- the program, their employability plan still has to be within the federal work requirements.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President.

As I read section B, to the extent permissible under federal law the labor commissioner in consultation with the commissioner of social services may approve education courses as required educational activities for a recipient.

So it seems to me that it could be placed in the substitute of education courses that may be approved, included but not limited to two-year or four-year college degree programs. It doesn't talk about part-time. It appears to me it could be full-time and high school graduate equivalency degree or basic education courses for recipients that were otherwise ineligible to enroll in such programs during they're first 20 weekly hours of required employment activities.

To me, this language would seem to be that you can substitute the educational program in lieu of any of the requirements of the 20 weekly hours of required employment activities.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes.

Through you, Madam President.

I don't believe that that is the case, that they can substitute one for the other and not -- but not have any work requirements at all.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Well, if that is the interpretation of this, then that certainly would be better for sure, because I do believe that a great deal of time and effort was spent on the changes in this program in order to facilitate an opportunity for individuals to be able to become employed. And that in itself would be a different learning environment, a positive role modeling environment that would be very helpful.

And it's often very helpful for many, many of us here as well that combined both work experience at the same time that they were getting an education and that would be probably the ideal. My concern that in any of this, that we are just literally substituting the program, and in other words, subsidizing a two or four-year program of a degree program full-time in lieu of also having that work requirement that has made substantial improvement and change in the program for individuals.

Thank you very much, Madam President. That's the end of my question that I have at this time.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, very, very much.

Will your remark? Will your remark?

If not, Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes, thank you, Madam President.

If there's no objection I'd ask that this item be placed on the consent.

THE CHAIR:

There is objection, ma'am.

Mr. Clerk, will you call for a roll call vote and the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, can you announce it one more time, please?

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Immediate roll call it the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

If all the members have voted -- if all members have voted the machine will be closed.

Mr. Clerk, will you please call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill Number 106 as amended.

Total Number Voting	33
Necessary for Adoption	17
Those voting Yea	32
Those voting Nay	1

Those absent and not voting 3

THE CHAIR:

The bill passes.

Senator. Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, would ask the Clerk to call
calendar page 3, Calendar 187, Senate Bill 426.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On page 3, Calendar 187, Senate Bill Number 426,
AN ACT SUSPENDING AND EVALUATING THE
CONSOLIDATION OF DISPATCH CENTERS WITHIN THE
DIVISION OF STATE POLICE, favorable report of the
Committee on Public Safety. There are
amendments.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley, good evening, madam.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Good evening, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Almost good morning --

SENATOR HARTLEY:

With the hopes this is going to be the last one
in the queue, I will be brief, madam.

THE CHAIR:

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**HUMAN
SERVICES
PART 1
1 – 504**

**2014
INDEX**

for the purpose of investing because that's what they do for a living, are we going to deter them from coming to Connecticut and investing in businesses here because they have to divulge all their personal or business information just to Connecticut? Or are they going to move on to different states? It's just a concern of if we want to keep the investors here. It's worth a look at, no?

SECRETARY BENJAMIN BARNES: I'll take a look at that.

REP. CASE: Thank you. Appreciate it, Secretary.

REP. ABERCROMBIE: Any other questions?

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. We do appreciate your time.

SECRETARY BENJAMIN BARNES: Thank you for your kind hospitality.

REP. ABERCROMBIE: We were kind of gentle, you got to admit.

Moving on to our Commissioner of DSS, Roderick Bremby. Thank you, sir, for being here.

COMMISSIONER RODERICK BREMBY: Good afternoon, Representative Abercrombie, Senator Slossberg, distinguished members of the Human Services Committee. I'm Rod Bremby. I'm the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services. I'm delighted to be here this afternoon to testify before you.

SB104
SB105
SB106
HB5137

On behalf of Governor's Bill HB House Bill 5052,
IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS, and
House Bill 5051, IMPROVING TRANSPARENCY OF
NURSING HOME OPERATIONS.

payments as well as accountability, efficiency, and critical funding that is not available typically in a state's General Fund. We would like to offer our expertise to the committee as they continue to develop and move this proposal forward. It is our hope, as well, that this proposal will be expanded to include multiple human service agencies and projects.

Senate Bill 106, IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH EDUCATION. This proposal would permit two, four-year, and high school degree or graduate equivalency degrees as allowable Job First Employment Service activities, or JFES activities, that could be counted in the recipient's first 20 hours of employment activities for Temporary Family Assistance recipients permissible under federal law.

The authorities to implement such a policy under -- as was permitted under PA 10-133 and is the current practice of our Department, in collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Labor which provides oversight to daily case management services for TFA and JFES recipients. While it duplicates a policy that is already in effect, the Department is not opposed.

House Bill 5137, THE ELIGIBILITY OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN OUR HUSKY PLAN. This proposal would permit the Department to take advantage of the Federal Medicaid option that allows for the continuous enrollment of children in the medical assistance program regardless if the family experiences a change in income.

The Department supports the concept and recognizes the importance of continued access to health care for children. In an effort to help ensure continuous medical eligibility for children in Connecticut, the Department has

waiting list? Is it more than what even that would cover, do you know?

COMMISSIONER RODERICK BREMBY: Yes. I'm told that there are 103 on the waiting list.

REP. ACKERT: Wow.

COMMISSIONER RODERICK BREMBY: The additional 50 reduces the waiting list almost in half.

REP. ACKERT: Okay. Okay. And those -- some of them have been on there for how long, do you know?

COMMISSIONER RODERICK BREMBY: My subject matter experts suggested three years.

REP. ACKERT: Okay. All right. Thank you for that information. I appreciate that.

And then on -- I was intrigued by the SB 106, IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH EDUCATION. I didn't get the grasp of what that -- I was going to go through -- I didn't get a chance, this coming through me, but it -- it was the one regarding improving employment opportunities through education. The proposal would include two and four-year high school graduate equivalency degrees as allow -- I didn't get enough -- what -- could you elaborate on that shortly? I don't want to take up the time from the committee here, but it's -- I was intrigued by it. I'll have to do some homework on it, too.

COMMISSIONER RODERICK BREMBY: Well, the welfare reform provided the opportunity for individuals to receive training in order to enter the workforce. There are some activities that they must achieve in order to remain eligible for the supports.

REP. ACKERT: Okay.

COMMISSIONER RODERICK BREMBY: Those eligible activities do not include working towards a two-year or four-year degree, or high -- high school equivalent. They're allowable, but they're not activities that we can clock, or measure, or count towards fulfilling their requirements. What we're suggesting is that we'd like for them to be able to do this. We are encouraging them to do this, and we believe that we will be able to support this behavior, but not in any way that harms our -- our performance before TFA or ACF, Administration of Children and Families.

REP. ACKERT: Thank you. I appreciate that.

COMMISSIONER RODERICK BREMBY: We are supportive of this. It is something that we are already doing. It just puts it into -- to statute.

REP. ACKERT: Excellent. Thank you.

And then finally on the 5051, just at this time now, you -- nursing homes are required, on a yearly basis, to submit their Profit and Loss to you, or face penalty if they don't do it by a certain date, I believe December 31st. So right now, because I brought the question regarding Profit and Loss Statements that most financial institutions that loan to corporations, business, and such, mandate that they have to provide a Profit and Loss. So to date you must -- all 238 that you support, or that gets funding, have and do submit Profit and Loss to you as by law.

COMMISSIONER RODERICK BREMBY: I believe in the Cost Reports that we require, a Profit and Loss Statement of the facility is required.

REP. ACKERT: Okay. Thank you for that, because it does state that. And -- and is there a review

SENATOR SLOSSBERG: Okay. Because the way that this is drafted currently would suggest that we're only looking for the direct care staff information only from the related party. I'm sorry; I just want to make sure that I'm clear on what the intent is from the administration on a particular piece. So it is, in fact, which is, of course, what makes sense, so, in terms of your -- your testimony.

So having said that, moving on to I -- the social innovation. I -- I really appreciate your support; and I know you brought that -- this to us last year, and it was not acted upon finally. And so we look for -- I really just wanted to say that we look forward to working with you and with the expertise that you have offered.

SB105

Moving on to Senate Bill 106; I'm just a little -- I just want to clarify because what you've said in your testimony is that we're already doing this, but this puts it into statute. So my real -- my question is, permitting a two-year, a four-year or a high school GED activity, is that actually considered eligible right now, or not?

COMMISSIONER RODERICK BREMBY: It is a permissible activity; it is not an accountable activity. So it will remain that way, regardless of this, when we report to TFA, or when we report to ACF about the participation, we'll report it in that way, that it is a permissible activity. We'll count those hours as an activity, but it is not allowable in order for us to make sure that we're abiding by the program requirements. We -- we don't think it's going to harm us.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG: No, I understand that we don't think it's going to harm us. I'm just trying to understand how it actually helps us if we are -- how does it actually -- I'm -- why don't I just ask the question that way, then. How does it

help us to change the statute? How does it help our -- the people who are receiving cash assistance to be able to pursue higher education, which we know we want them to be doing? How -- how does this change the -- change the equation?

COMMISSIONER RODERICK BREMBY: I'm going to try to be gentle with this, but we support this bill, but we're already doing what the bill suggests. So, without the bill, we would continue to do this.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG: I think that we're probably -- I -- I think maybe that's a -- a good line of further questioning for the people who are going to come and testify, because there's obviously a disconnect somewhere, because they're suggesting that this is not something that is going on, and that's why we need the legislation. So, obviously -- I'm glad we all agree that that's where we want to be. So I guess we sort of just have to figure out where the disconnect is there. I'm going to leave you for your question, since we're here.

A VOICE: Did you ask him about the (inaudible).

SENATOR SLOSSBERG: I didn't get to ask him that. So I'll let you do that.

A VOICE: Okay.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG: I think that probably takes care of my questions for now, and I know Madam Chair had another question for you as well.

Thank you, Commissioner. Thank -- we look forward to working with you for the rest of the short session.

COMMISSIONER RODERICK BREMBY: Thank you.

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rc/cd

February 20, 2014
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE 11:30 A.M.

REP. WOOD: Yes. I thank you for your indulgence, and thank you, Commissioner.

REP. ABERCROMBIE: Any further questions or comments?

Well, thank you, Commissioner, very much. We do appreciate your time and your -- your indulgence in this. So thank you, sir, we do appreciate it.

COMMISSIONER RODERICK BREMBY: Well, thank you very much, and we'll follow-up with the responses that we --

REP. ABERCROMBIE: Sounds great. Thank you.

We have gone over the hour that we set aside for state officials by a little bit, so we will be moving into the public portion, and then moving back and forth, so I do apologize to -- to two people that are still waiting to speak.

I would like to just for the purpose of an announcement, Representative Michelle Cook is not here today due to the passing of her mother-in-law, so I would like to send our condolences on behalf of our committee, and give her our best wishes as she goes through this difficult time. Thank you.

Moving on to 5052. The first person up is Jane McNichol.

Just so everybody understands, because we are moving into the public portion, you are three minutes. We will be holding you firm to the three minutes, so we do appreciate you taking that into consideration.

Hi, Jane.

JANE MCNICHOL: Hi. Thank you. I'm Jane McNichol. I'm the executive director of the Legal

HB5052
SB106

Assistance Resource of Connecticut, the advocacy and support center for the legal services programs in the state. We represent the interests of very low-income residents of the state.

HB5052
SB106

I'm really here to talk about Sections 5 and 6 of the -- of 5052, which is the COLA provision for Temporary Family Assistance, and SAGA recipients, but I do want to keep a little bit of time to talk about 106, and why the education thing is there at all.

The -- we strongly oppose this change in the way that a COLA is dealt with for people receiving cash assistance. The -- the current -- the proposed change doesn't have any effect on this budget year. It's -- it's for the future. The COLA requirement has been in place for many years. In all but four of those years, the adopted budget -- the final adopted budget didn't include a COLA for these programs.

There was a COLA last year. There will be one in July of this year. That's important to know. But the Temporary Family Assistance and SAGA cash benefit grants are woefully inadequate and stagnant. Currently in most of the state, a family of three receives a maximum of \$588 per month, or \$756 -- \$7056 per year. The SAGA cash benefit for a single individual is \$216 per month.

What we should be doing is providing a bump up. These numbers have not gone up significantly in many years, and then -- I don't think that can be right -- I was timing it -- an annual cost of living increase. At the very minimum we should be doing what we're doing now, and requiring us to affirmatively deny a cost-of-living increase each year rather than saying we'll give it if we

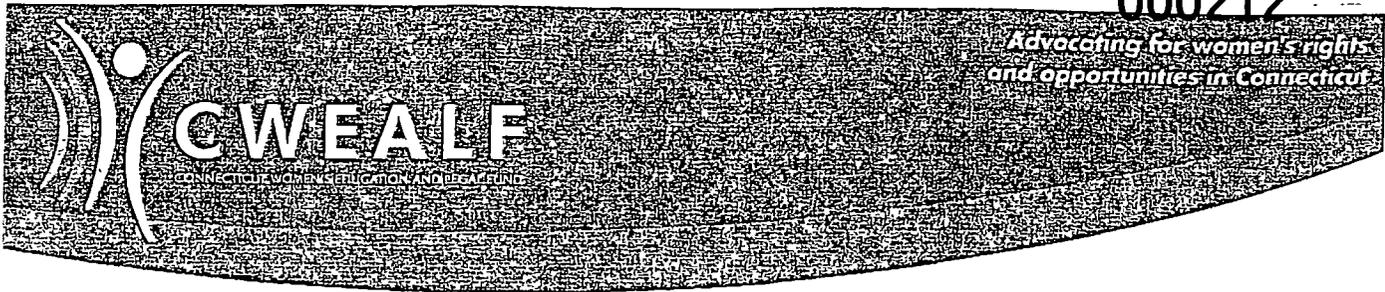
think we can figure it out in the current appropriation.

So we really think this needs to be relooked. It is worth noting that we are -- with the cost of living coming up in 2014, we are still projecting a cut in the cash benefit costs for both SAGA and TFA. So, you know, there's space in there. It is also worth noting that we used to pay over \$300 million in cash benefits in the TFA program 15 years ago, and we now pay about \$100 million, so we are saving \$200 million a year.

Just briefly, because I do think I have a little extra time, on Senate Bill 106, which is not actually a bill that we proposed, although we strongly support it, the reason it keeps coming up is -- I mean, it was really encouraging to hear the Commissioner's testimony. The reason it keeps coming up is that policy and -- and sort of the public posture in the past has been that this is not a countable activity, and therefore not an activity that we were going to support. Under federal law, there's in fact been conversations saying that it is not a permissible activity under law. That's -- that's wrong, and obviously we will -- there are still policies in writing that really urge -- move people away from education and training unless it has been very recently changed. That's, I'm sure, why this bill is here. That's why it's important. It's -- it's a statement of activities that we should be encouraging people to do and a message to the departments to do that.

If they're really doing it, and they've really embraced that, that's really wonderful for people who need this education to get jobs. Probably the policies and procedures need to be revised to reflect that change in policy.

REP. ABERCROMBIE: Thank you, Jane.



Human Services Committee

Raised Bill 106: AN ACT CONCERNING IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH EDUCATION.

Submitted by Alice Pritchard, Executive Director, CT Women's Education and Legal Fund
February 20, 2014

I am pleased to submit testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF). CWEALF is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the personal and professional lives of women, girls and their families.

I've come here today to urge your support for RB 106 An Act Concerning Improving Employment Opportunities Through Education.

Since 1999, CWEALF has worked with individuals and service providers involved in the Jobs First Employment Services program. What we have consistently witnessed is that people receiving cash assistance want to work. They are seeking educational opportunities that will prepare them for jobs so that they may become self-sufficient. As Connecticut has implemented new programs and designed different strategies to move the welfare population into self-sufficiency, by necessity, the system has to be flexible in its approach. This bill expands the range of opportunities for participants to increase their skills and employability. Individuals are unlikely to gain self-sufficiency without the right combination of education, training, and work/personal supports.

Having a high school diploma is no longer a guarantee for a good job. According to "Meeting the Challenge: The Dynamics of Poverty in CT," women and men in Connecticut who lack a high school diploma can expect to be "very poor," 72% and 67% of the time, respectively. Vocational training and post-secondary education are becoming more important for securing self-sufficient employment in these economic times. In fact, 66 percent of jobs created by 2018 will require at least some post-secondary education¹. Without basic skills such as reading, math and English proficiency, jobs with high wages, health benefits and room for advancement are out of reach for Connecticut's poor population.¹¹

According to the January, 2014 "At a Squint" produced by the CT Department of Labor, only 13% of the participants in the JFES system have education beyond the high school level. And "no high school diploma" is cited as a barrier to employment for 23% of the current caseload. Additionally, this report shows that 45% of participants are involved in job search activities only. While having individuals in job search activities helps Connecticut achieve the federal workforce participation rate, it does nothing to ensure people receiving cash assistance acquire the education they need for the current middle skills jobs available so they can get off and stay off public assistance.

For Connecticut to have a higher percentage of economically self-sufficient citizens, permitting more access to education for the poorest citizens must be a priority. The large number of workers and families who lack economic security shows the need for state and local policy to promote post-secondary education and job training. Having post-secondary training, an Associate's or Bachelor's degree increases earning potential and employment opportunities for men and women. For example, the likelihood of women with a B.A. or an advanced degree earning an income above the state median is 68%.ⁱⁱⁱ Adults with higher levels of education are more likely to participate in the labor market than those adults with little or no education. Not only are persons with higher educational attainment more likely to be active in the labor market, they are more likely to have jobs that pay above the poverty level, have health benefits, and more job security. Improving basic skills and promoting post-secondary education will only help Connecticut families reach self-sufficiency.

While supporting this bill, it is necessary to point out that the current twenty-one month time-limit allotted for stabilizing one's family and pursuing educational and training activities is not sufficient to achieve adequate levels of training or education. There is a high demand in Connecticut for middle-skill workers, an educational and training level commensurate with an associate's degree. Even if an associate's degree is achieved in the assumed two years, which is a struggle even for some individuals in the most promising of situations, that still does not fit within the current time limit. We must be careful to align all aspects of our policies with the goals we wish to achieve.

Supporting RB 106 will be an investment in the future of Connecticut's families, as well as businesses and our economic prosperity.

ⁱ *The Basic Economic Security Tables for Connecticut, Wider Opportunities for Women, 2012*

ⁱⁱ *The Basic Economic Security Tables for Connecticut, Wider Opportunities for Women, 2012*

ⁱⁱⁱ *Meeting the Challenge: The Dynamics of Poverty in Connecticut*, Connecticut Association for Community Action and Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis, pg. 27, January 2013.

SENATOR MARTIN M. LOONEY
MAJORITY LEADER

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February 20, 2014

Good Morning Sen. Slossberg, Rep. Abercrombie, and members of the Human Services Committee. I am here today to testify in support of SB 106 AN ACT CONCERNING IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH EDUCATION.

I have learned from constituents that recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) cannot get work credit for the type of education that would most help them secure employment that provides at least a living wage. This bill would allow education (post-secondary or GED) to be used to satisfy the work requirement under TANF.

I believe that encouraging TANF recipients to acquire this type of education is an investment in our future. The state should encourage these recipients of assistance to acquire the skills and education that will enable them to escape poverty and become productive tax paying citizens of our state. Thank you for hearing this important legislation.

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page 9, line 22

Legal Assistance Resource Center
of Connecticut, Inc.

363 Main St., Floor 3-1 Hartford, CT 06106-1886
 (860) 278-5688 www.larcc.org

Testimony before the Human Services Committee on
Governor's Bill 5052,
An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations for Human Services
Programs
and Raised Bills 5137 and 106

by Jane McNichol, Executive Director
 February 20, 2014

Good afternoon. I am Jane McNichol, Executive Director of the Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut, the advocacy and support center for legal services programs in the state. We represent the interests of very-low income residents of the state.

I am here today primarily to voice **strong opposition to Sections 5 and 6 of Governor's Bill 5052, An Act Implementing the Governor's Recommendations for Human Services Programs.** These sections remove the requirement that the cash assistance available through the Temporary Family Assistance, SAGA cash assistance and State Supplement programs be increased yearly through the adoption of a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).

The proposed change would be not effective until July 1, 2015 so it has no impact on the 2014-2015 budget year.

The language change makes a COLA adjustment subject to the discretion of the Commissioner and requires that it be "within available appropriations". A COLA increase must be a budgeted item that can be incorporated into benefit amounts on an on-going basis. It cannot be provided "within available appropriations". The effect of this change will be to eliminate the possibility of a COLA unless explicitly authorized annually in an adopted budget.

This COLA requirement has been in place for many years. In all but four of those years, the adopted budget did not include a COLA for these programs. The Temporary Family Assistance and SAGA cash benefits are woefully inadequate and stagnant. Currently, in most of the state, a family of three receives a maximum of \$588 a month, or \$7,056 a year, in TFA cash assistance. The SAGA cash benefit is \$216 a month or \$2,592 a year.

We should be increasing these grants and then providing an annual cost of living increase to families and individuals eligible for these programs. At the very least, we should continue to require that we review the state's ability to provide increases during every budget cycle. **We urge that the changes proposed in Sections 5 and 6 of this bill be rejected.**

I also want to **express support** for two important bills being heard today:

- **Raised Bill 5137, An Act Concerning the Eligibility of Children Enrolled in the HUSKY Plan.** This bill would require the state to adopt "continuous eligibility" for children in HUSKY A and B. This is a state option in the Medicaid and CHIP programs

that guarantees coverage for a year, even if a child would otherwise lose coverage due to changes in circumstances such as income or family size. In addition to providing continuity of health care for the child, this change would simplify administration of the Medicaid program for DSS. Given the many delays in processing documents and applications, we should embrace sensible program enhancements that eliminate work for DSS. This bill does not propose continuous eligibility for adults. We should consider that policy as well, although the cost for implementing that policy may be higher than adopting this proposal for children.

- **Raised Bill 106, An Act Concerning Improving Employment Opportunities Through Education.** This bill acknowledges the importance of education as a pathway to self-sufficiency for families in Connecticut's welfare program. The bill requires that DSS and DOL increase opportunities for education for parents in the Jobs First Employment Services program, while recognizing the need for the state to meet federally mandated work participation rates. Connecticut has historically limited access to education but has met and exceeded work participation rates. Education is a key component to achieving financial stability. We need to reflect this in our JFES program.

Thank you for your work on these important issues.



T2

page 3, line 21



Testimony before the Human Services Committee

Roderick L. Bremby, Commissioner

February 20, 2014

SB104

SB105

SB106

Good morning, Senator Slossberg and Representative Abercrombie and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Roderick Bremby and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services. I am pleased to be before you today to testify on behalf of the Governor's bills HB 5052, AA Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations for Human Services Programs and HB 5051, AA Improving Transparency of Nursing Home Operations. In addition, I offer written remarks on several other bills on today's agenda that impact the department.

HB5137

Governor's Bills

HB 5052, AA Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations for Human Services Programs

This proposal implements various provisions of the Governor's recommended SFY 2015 Budget Adjustments. Provisions are as follows:

Section 3 of the bill prioritizes eligible veterans for the Security Deposit Guarantee Program.

Section 4 increases the number of available slots under the CT Home Care Program for Adults with Disabilities pilot from 50 slots to 100. The program currently serves 50 individuals with neuro-degenerative conditions such as MS, ALS, Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease. The current waiting list for the program is over 3 years. Persons served under this state-funded program are supported with services that average about 25% of the cost of nursing home care. This allows persons to remain at home and supports our rebalancing efforts. These clients could quickly turn to Medicaid as a payment source for nursing home placement if they do not receive home and community-based services.

Sections 5 - 11 ensure that scheduled cost-of-living and rate increases for various programs and service entities are only provided when there is a corresponding appropriation to support such an increase.

The department supports this legislation.

HB 5051, AA Improving Transparency of Nursing Home Operations

This bill requires that any chronic and convalescent nursing facility that receives state Medicaid

processes to support more timely application processing. For example, we designated four offices as application processing hubs in October. These hubs are responsible for processing all long-term care applications within a designated catchment area. Each application is assigned to a specific worker, who serves as the point of contact. We expect that this configuration will result in more timely eligibility determinations. We are also currently reviewing long-term care application processing best practices within the four hubs, as well as from other states, to gain greater efficiencies.

We cannot support this legislation due to the fiscal concerns described above as we continue to improve our processes.

SB 105, AAC Social Innovation Investment

The department is supportive of this proposal and commends the chairs for bringing it forward again this session. The department proposed a similar piece of legislation last year that unfortunately was not acted upon. It is our hope that this legislation will provide the basis of redesigning the social services funding and delivery system.

Social Innovation Investment is a pioneering concept that couples private sector investment and financing with public sector service delivery. This model supports performance-based payments as well as accountability, efficiency and critical funding that is not available in the state's General Fund.

We would like to offer our expertise to the committee as they continue to develop and move this proposal forward. It is our hope as well that this proposal will be expanded to include multiple human services agencies and projects.

SB 106 AAC Improving Employment Opportunities through Education

This proposal would permit two-year, four-year and high school graduate equivalency degrees as allowable Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) activities that could be counted in the recipient's first 20 hours of employment activities for Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) recipients permissible under federal law.

The authority to implement such a policy was permitted under PA 10-133 and is the current practice of the Connecticut Department of Social Services, in collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Labor, which provides oversight to daily case management services for TFA/JFES recipients. While it duplicates policy that is already in effect, the department is not opposed.

HB 5137 AAC the Eligibility of Children Enrolled in the HUSKY Plan

This proposal would permit the department to take advantage of a federal Medicaid option that allows for the continuous enrollment of children in the medical assistance program regardless if the family experiences a change in income.