



Testimony Regarding H.B. 5517: An Act Concerning Executive Branch Data Management and Policies

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General Administration and Elections Committee
March 19, 2018

Senator Flexer, Senator McLachlan, Representative Fox, Representative Devlin, and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Karen Siegel, and I am submitting testimony today on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based child advocacy organization working to ensure that all Connecticut children have an equitable opportunity to achieve their full potential.

As noted in our recent report on the availability of data to evaluate racial disparities in family health, Connecticut collects a significant quantity of data and has begun several efforts to share executive agency data. Without access to consistent, reliable data, it is not possible to evaluate the success, efficiency, or cost-effectiveness of existing programs or to see the needs of specific communities for innovations. The need to expand and coordinate the state's data transparency efforts is also discussed in our recent report; for the full report, please see:

<http://www.ctvoices.org/publications/data-promote-health-equity-children-and-families-connecticut>. We are in support of this act to codify existing practices of the executive branch and to preserve and improve Connecticut's open data projects through the Office of Policy and Management.

We respectfully urge the committee to consider the following additions to this bill: 1) facilitate coordination between the Chief Data Officer and the Health Information Technology Officer in the Office of Health Strategy to work towards integration of data across state agencies as outlined in H.B. 5290; 2) ensure that race/ethnicity data is collected in a uniform manner across agencies; and 3) expand the race/ethnicity categories used by state agencies to better reflect the demographics of our state and enable actionable analysis.

Like many other research and advocacy organizations, Connecticut Voices for Children relies on Connecticut's Open Data Portal, the reports submitted by executive agencies to legislative councils and the general assembly, and existing state data dashboard efforts to inform policy analyses. Such data is crucial to the work we do and we hope you will pass this codification of existing practices and provisions to improve data integration and availability.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding H.B. 5517. I can be reached with any questions at ksiegel@ctvoices.org or at 203-498-4240, ext. 120.