

CONFIDENTIAL
LEGISLATIVE BILL REVIEW FORM

Bill Number: H.791 Name of Bill: Housing; Housing First; study committee

Agency/Dept: AHS/Central Office Author of Bill Review Angus Chaney

Date of Bill Review: March 13, 2014 (check status below)

Upon introduction Upon Passage of 1st body Final bill review Fiscal

1. SUMMARY OF THIS LEGISLATION:

Bill creates a legislative summer study committee with technical support from legislative counsel and JFO to examine statewide implementation of the "Housing First" model.

2. STATEMENT OF NEED:

Need somewhat unclear: Evaluate the Housing First model, including the following: (1) the experience and effectiveness of Pathways Vermont in implementing the Housing First model for the benefit of individuals with psychiatric disabilities; (2) the experience and effectiveness of other states in implementing the Housing First model for the purpose of addressing chronic homelessness; (3) the impact that statewide adoption of the Housing First model would have on private landlords; and (4) the fiscal impact of adopting the Housing First model statewide.

3. PRIMARY ADVOCATES/OPPONENTS:

Pathways Vermont is the primary advocate as they are recognized as a "housing first" provider. Other advocates and opponents of the "Housing First" approach do not break evenly along departmental or organizational lines. The study itself is less polarizing as it is viewed as a compromise.

4. COSTS & PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS:

Committee composition is currently heavily weighted towards the legislature. Adding state employees would increase their workload between August and December 2014. Results of this study likely to influence appropriation discussions in future fiscal years though in what programs and direction it is too early to say.

5. RECOMMENDED POSITION:

Support with significant modification. Expand scope of study committee to assess the impact, efficacy and cost of supportive housing, in general, and review studies from two or three other states as well as in-state data from existing programs.

6. RATIONALE:

In the past month, the Agency of Human Services has begun exploring program and funding models to expand supportive housing opportunities for Vermonters with complex needs in areas such as health, mental health and disability. Most studies of permanent supportive housing and housing first models are from urban areas. We are looking to gather and analyze data that tests this thesis in Vermont's rural landscape. As the proposed legislative study and our agency efforts appear to follow a similar timeline and require similar analysis, AHS proposes that the scope of H.791 be broadened to look at the impact, efficacy and cost of Supportive Housing, in general, of which the "Housing First" model is a type. AHS feels that merging these two studies, along with technical support from the JFO, would give all parties a better understanding of the challenges, opportunities, benefits, savings and limitations of various types of Supportive Housing.

7. WHO WILL THE BILL IMPACT FISCALLY AND PROGRAMMATICALLY ?

In the short-term, temporary staff-time impact for departments contributing staff to committee. Longer-term, potential to impact the funding of supportive housing programs and/or other institutions the supportive housing approach might divert clients from.