



Dannel P. Malloy

GOVERNOR
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

June 12, 2014

The Honorable Denise Merrill
Secretary of State
30 Trinity Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Madam Secretary:

I hereby return, without my signature, substitute Senate Bill 410, *An Act Concerning Administrative Hearings Conducted by the Department of Social Services*.

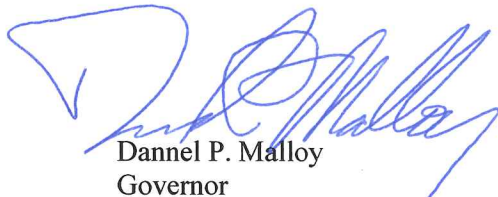
My concern with this bill is Section 1(d), which would restrict Department of Social Services (“DSS”) hearing officers’ ability to seek counsel from agency attorneys or other staff. The hearings at issue are held to determine whether DSS has properly denied an application for certain federal and state entitlement programs. Prohibiting hearing officers from consulting with counsel or with agency subject-matter experts would impair DSS’s ability to fulfill its mission of making accurate eligibility determinations in an efficient and timely manner.

My office has received communications urging me to sign this bill from private and legal services attorneys who represent clients before DSS, and I fully support a robust and collaborative process to identify and implement any reasonable improvements to guarantee the effectiveness, efficiency and fairness of the DSS hearings process. To that end, I am directing my General Counsel to convene a working group to examine thoroughly the DSS hearings process and to report to me by December 1st, 2014. That working group shall include three representatives of the state, at least three attorneys who represent or have represented clients in administrative hearings before DSS, and at least one independent expert in administrative law.

While I fully support a collaborative effort to identify any and all reasonable improvements to the DSS hearings process, I am not comfortable signing the bill in its current form.

For these reasons, I disapprove of substitute Senate Bill 410, *An Act Concerning Administrative Hearings Conducted by the Department of Social Services*. Pursuant to Section 15 of Article Fourth of the Constitution of the State of Connecticut, I am returning substitute Senate Bill 410 without my signature. I welcome the opportunity to work closely with proponents of this bill in the coming months.

Sincerely,



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

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