

# Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No:** SB-431 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING PALLIATIVE AND HOSPICE CARE IN LITCHFIELD  
**Title:** COUNTY.

**Vote Date:** 3/19/2026

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/10/2026

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Human Services Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill seeks to evaluate and address gaps in access to palliative and hospice care services in Litchfield County, where availability may be limited due to geographic and resource constraints. The purpose of the bill is to ensure that individuals with serious or terminal illnesses have equitable access to high-quality, supportive end-of-life care, while also helping the state better understand regional disparities and implement targeted, data-driven solutions. It directs the appropriate state entity to study current capacity, identify unmet needs, and develop a pilot program aimed at improving access to these critical services.

## **SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:**

Substitute language refines and clarifies the bill after the public hearing and committee review, ensuring the proposal is more workable and targeted. Specifically, the Human Services Committee adopted changes (LCO 3456) to adjust how the study and pilot program would be structured focusing the bill more clearly on evaluating need and implementing a feasible approach to expanding palliative and hospice care in Litchfield County.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

**Department of Social Services, Andrea Barton Reeve, Commissioner:** provided generally supportive testimony on SB 431, noting that DSS sees value in studying the availability and need for palliative and hospice care services to better understand gaps in access. However, she raised considerations around implementation and coordination, emphasizing the importance of ensuring any study or pilot program is structured in a way that is feasible, aligns with existing services, and effectively informs future policy decisions.

**Connecticut General Assembly, Senator Stephen Harding, Senate Minority Leader 30th District:** supports the bill emphasizing the need to address gaps in access to palliative and hospice care in rural areas like Litchfield County, where services can be limited due to geographic challenges. He noted that the bill would help identify unmet needs and move toward solutions that ensure residents can receive compassionate, end-of-life care closer to home.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Litchfield County, Executive Director & CFO, Michael Caselas:** supports the bill emphasizing the importance of expanding access to palliative and hospice care services in the region, where geographic and resource limitations can impact availability. He highlighted that the bill would help identify service gaps and support efforts to ensure patients receive timely, high-quality end-of-life care within their communities.

**The Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home, Tracy Wodatch, President and CEO:** supports the bill emphasizing that studying palliative and hospice care needs in Litchfield County is an important step toward identifying gaps in access and improving care delivery in underserved areas. They highlighted that better understanding regional needs will help inform targeted solutions to ensure patients can receive appropriate, community-based end-of-life care.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

Anonymous 6 and 7: testimony in opposition.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF GENERAL COMMENTS:**

Anonymous 8: submitted general comments.

**Reported by: Mackenzie Frenette**

**Date: April 1, 2026**