

Senate Children and Family Law Committee

Joshua Schauer 271-3077

SB 23-FN, expanding the crime of endangering the welfare of a child.

Hearing Date: January 14, 2025

Time Opened: 11:30 a.m.

Time Closed: 11:45 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Abbas, Sullivan and Long

Bill Analysis: This bill expands what constitutes endangering the welfare of a child by adding additional violative conduct.

Sponsors:

Sen. Long

Rep. Gregg

Who supports the bill: Sen. Long (SD20), Sen. Altschiller (SD24), Elizabeth Sargent (NH Assoc. of Chiefs of Police), Nicholas Georgoulis (Manchester Police), Lissa Mascio (NH Child Advocate Office), Vanessa Blais (NH Council on Developmental Disabilities).

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Senator Long:

- Sen. Long introduced the bill which strengthens the protection of children.

Manchester Police Officer, Nick Georgoulis

- Emphasized his 15-year career in the Juvenile and Domestic Abuse unit during his time at Manchester PD.
- Time and time again, Police and DHHS departments have been asking for expansion of child welfare cooperation between departments.
- The crime of endangering a welfare child is only a misdemeanor and does not address the endangerment in the home or a person who has the duty of care that is mistreating the child. The bill's language provides more appropriate felony options that more closely align with the many cases Mr. Georgoulis has seen throughout the years.
- Officer Georgoulis shared the horrific conditions he has seen in homes, things that are left out including weapons, drugs, alcohol. All do not qualify for more serious charges other than a misdemeanor. A misdemeanor charge is not adequate for the crimes being committed against children in this state.

- Officer Georgoulis described the incidents being seen, both Class A and Class B. A repeat offender is considered a pattern to the Police Department.
- This legislation allows for Class A and B felony options.
- Officer Georgoulis described a case whereby 5 children and their mother were living in a house in which the conditions were disgusting and horrendous. He quoted the judge from that case, “based on how the law as it stands, the proposed sentence does not sufficiently reflect the seriousness of the mother's conduct in this case.”
- This proposal will protect children and help the victims most hurt in our community.

JS

Date Hearing Report completed: January 15, 2025