



Senate

General Assembly

January Session, 2001

File No. 311

Senate Bill No. 716

Senate, April 17, 2001

The Committee on Public Health reported through SEN. HARP of the 10th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL
RETARDATION HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 (NEW) The Commissioner of Mental Retardation, in collaboration
2 with the Board of Trustees for Community-Technical Colleges and the
3 Board of Trustees of the Connecticut State University System, shall
4 establish a higher education partnership for the purpose of offering
5 student internships in the areas of: (1) Personal care assistants for
6 persons with mental retardation and families of such persons; (2)
7 leisure coaches for municipalities providing services to persons with
8 mental retardation and families of such persons; and (3) after-school
9 care programs to assist persons with mental retardation and families of
10 such persons. Such internships shall be made available within
11 available appropriations of the Department of Mental Retardation. The
12 commissioner may adopt regulations, in accordance with chapter 54 of
13 the general statutes, to carry out the provisions of this section.

PH *Joint Favorable*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: Indeterminate

Affected Agencies: Department of Mental Retardation, Regional Community Technical Colleges, Connecticut State University System

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

State Impact:

The bill establishes a partnership between the Community-Technical Colleges (CTC), Connecticut State University (CSU) and the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) for the purpose of developing and offering student internships and cooperative education programs (co-ops) in specific areas related to care and services for persons with mental retardation.

Currently, the state's public colleges and universities offer both paid and unpaid internships and co-ops in various areas including, but not limited to, accounting, business administration, business office technology, communication, computer information systems, criminal justice, culinary arts, disabilities specialist, early childhood, food service management, graphic design, hospitality & tourism, paralegal, social services, sport & exercise, and therapeutic recreation. Students are generally required to perform a minimum number of hours at the

work site in order to receive credit. In addition, students participating in paid internships earn between \$8 and \$12 per hour. Finally, no single co-op or internship program exists at every campus.

At various campuses, there are staff members who are specifically responsible for developing relationships with businesses in order to establish internships and co-ops. Furthermore, businesses can work with the campuses to develop programs that will suit the needs of their particular industry. Based on the description of the internships in the bill, it does not appear that such programs currently exist within the higher education system. Therefore, it may be necessary that new programs be developed in order to meet DMR's needs. It should be noted that both the level of interest in such internships and the number of internships necessary to meet the need is indeterminate. The bill also provides that these programs will be developed within the available appropriations of DMR.

Currently, the Department of Mental Retardation does not have an internship program. Although the bill states that this newly created internship program would be established within available appropriations, the bill does not state if these internships are for purposes of payment or academic credit. HB 6668 (the Governor's Recommended FY 02 - FY 03 Biennium Budget) does not include additional funding for these internships either in DMR, CTC or CSU.

The internships are intended to assist individuals with mental retardation and as a result would allow for services to be provided to individuals that may not currently be receiving them or enhancing services to clients with existing services. As a result of supervision provided by the DMR for each intern, in addition to a coordinator and/or department liaison to the higher education partnership, there would be a workload increase. The extent of the workload and impact to existing services is indeterminate at this time.

The bill allows the commissioner of DMR to adopt regulations to

carry out this new program, which the department could do so within their available resources.

OLR BILL ANALYSIS

SB 716

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP.**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) to collaborate with the boards of trustees for the community-technical colleges and the Connecticut State University system in establishing a higher education partnership for specified student internships involving services to people with mental retardation and their families. Specifically, these internships must be in the following areas: (1) personal care assistants, (2) leisure coaches for municipalities providing services, and (3) after-school care programs.

These internships must be offered subject to available DMR appropriations. DMR can adopt regulations to implement the program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2001

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Report

Yea 24 Nay 0