



# Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 220**

*January Session, 2003*

Substitute Senate Bill No. 839

*Senate, April 8, 2003*

The Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement reported through SEN. HARTLEY of the 15th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## **AN ACT CONCERNING ATTENDANCE ISSUES AT PRIVATE OCCUPATIONAL SCHOOLS.**

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

1 Section 1. Subsection (a) of section 10a-22b of the general statutes is  
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*  
3 *passage*):

4 (a) No person, board, association, partnership, corporation or other  
5 entity shall offer occupational instruction unless such person, board,  
6 association, partnership, corporation or other entity first receives from  
7 the Commissioner of Higher Education a certificate authorizing the  
8 occupational instruction to be offered. Except for initial authorizations,  
9 the Commissioner of Higher Education shall accept institutional  
10 accreditation by an accrediting agency recognized by the United States  
11 Department of Education, in satisfaction of the requirements of this  
12 section and section 10a-22d, including the evaluation [and attendance]

13 requirement, unless the commissioner finds reasonable cause not to  
14 rely upon such accreditation.

15 Sec. 2. (*Effective from passage*) Not later than January 1, 2004, each  
16 private occupational school authorized in accordance with the  
17 provisions of sections 10a-22a to 10a-22k, inclusive, of the general  
18 statutes shall report to the joint standing committee of the General  
19 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher education  
20 and employment advancement concerning existing methods for  
21 recruiting prospective students, standards for admission and any  
22 prerequisites for enrolling in coursework or programs offered by the  
23 private occupational school.

24 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2003*) Commencing with the 2004-  
25 2005 academic year, each private occupational school authorized in  
26 accordance with the provisions of sections 10a-22 to 10a-22k, inclusive,  
27 of the general statutes shall provide to each student admitted to the  
28 school a clear and conspicuous disclosure of the student's specific  
29 financial obligations to the school and the procedure for formally  
30 withdrawing from a course offered by the school in order to minimize  
31 the student's financial liability. Such disclosure shall be in all capital  
32 letters of no less than twelve-point boldface type of uniform font and  
33 in an easily readable style.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2003</i>

**Statement of Legislative Commissioners:**

In section 2, a reference to section 11-4a of the general statutes was removed for accuracy.

**HED**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

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:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Type	FY 04 \$	FY 05 \$
Higher Ed., Dept.	GF - None	None	None

Note: GF=General Fund

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

The bill requires Connecticut’s 70 private occupational schools to keep student attendance records.<sup>1</sup> These records are used to help determine the amount a student may have to repay in student loans following the withdrawal from a program. Under current law, schools eligible for Title IV financial aid can keep up to one-half of a withdrawn student’s financial aid regardless of the time of enrollment.<sup>2</sup> Passage of the bill would not result in any fiscal impact to the state.

The bill also provides for the establishment of certain reporting requirements for private occupational schools and for the clear disclosure of program withdrawal processes. These provisions do not result in any fiscal impact to the state.

<sup>1</sup> This bill reverses the exemption from attendance record requirements for private occupational schools made by PA 02-7 of the May 9, 2002 Special Session.

<sup>2</sup> Where schools cannot determine the last date of attendance, they may default to the midpoint of the payment period as prescribed by federal regulations. Debt burden to the student could be less where the precise date of withdrawal can be identified.

**OLR Bill Analysis**

sSB 839

**AN ACT CONCERNING ATTENDANCE ISSUES AT PRIVATE OCCUPATIONAL SCHOOLS****SUMMARY:**

This bill requires private occupational schools in Connecticut that are accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) to keep student attendance records pursuant to state specifications. Currently, the higher education commissioner, when considering renewal of these schools' certificates of authorization, must accept their national accreditation, including its evaluation and attendance requirement, unless reasonable cause is found not to rely on the accreditation. The bill reverses the exemption from attendance record requirements for such schools made by PA 02-7 of the May 9 2002 Special Session, thus restoring the requirement as it existed for both accredited and non-accredited private occupational schools prior to passage of that act. Among other things, attendance records help to determine the amount of a student's financial aid that may be applied to tuition costs following withdrawal from the program and, ultimately, how much the student may have to repay in student loans.

The bill also requires all private occupational schools (1) to provide a report to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee by January 1, 2004 regarding existing methods for recruiting prospective students, admission standards, and any prerequisites for enrolling in courses they offer and, (2) beginning with the 2004-05 academic year, provide each admitted student a clear and conspicuous disclosure of his financial aid obligations to the school and the procedure for formally withdrawing from a course in order to minimize his financial liability. The disclosure must be in an easily readable style of uniform font and in capital letters of at least 12-point boldface type.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Upon passage except the student financial aid obligation disclosure requirement is effective October 1, 2003.

**BACKGROUND**

**Accredited and Non-accredited Private Occupational Schools**

There are 16 private occupational schools in Connecticut participating in Title IV Federal Student Financial Aid (Pell Grant) and therefore are accredited by a DOE-recognized accrediting agency. There are 57 private occupational schools in Connecticut that do not participate in the Title IV program and therefore are not accredited by a national accrediting body.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 22      Nay 0