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SB 1122
Establishing a State Cooperative Educational Internship Program

SB 1124
Providing Essential Planning for Catastrophic Events Impacting the State

Testimony of Dr. Martin Anderson, DAS
Before the Government Administration & Elections Committee
March 16, 2007

Good day Senator Slossberg, Representative Caruso and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. My name is Dr. Martin Anderson and I am Director of Administration for the Department of Administrative Services.

I am here today to speak in favor of two bills proposed by the Governor. The first is Senate Bill 1122, An Act Establishing a State Cooperative Educational Internship Program, and the second is Senate Bill 1124, An Act Providing Essential Planning for Catastrophic Events Impacting the State.

SB 1122 will create a variety of internships throughout the state agencies in difficult-to-recruit job titles, such as social services, engineering and IT. There are three main goals of this proposal: First, to attract the best and the brightest college and post-graduate students to state civil service careers; second, to establish an on-the-job recruiting tool to help respond to the needs created by the state's aging workforce; and third, to help prepare Connecticut undergraduate and graduate students for professional careers in their chosen discipline.

We believe it is necessary to create internships to meet these goals. For a variety of reasons, the state is now missing out on talented students who leave the state or take positions in the private sector instead of choosing a career in civil service – especially in professions that are in high demand. The state simply does not have the flexibility in our system to quickly change our compensation rates to respond to the market, or to offer signing bonuses, merit bonuses, and other tangible benefits to compete with the private sector.

Also, research shows that students coming out of college and degree programs these days do not respond to the same incentives as their parents and grandparents -- job security and benefits are not the main draw for them. They

are looking for exciting, challenging work that will help them build a resume. Working internships are very popular in this generation, and these young adults are making connections with our competition in the private sector when they accept internships with those organizations. By working with the state colleges and graduate schools to establish working positions in the agencies, we hope to introduce these students early to a career in public service before our competition scoops them up.

Regarding SB 1124, this proposal supports the Governor's ongoing efforts to ensure that the State of Connecticut will be able to continue to provide essential state services in case of a catastrophic event, pandemic flu or other disaster that causes staffing in state agencies to be greatly reduced over an extended period of time. The Governor has already taken the lead to ensure that all state agencies have viable plans for the continuity of their essential operations. In fact, over the past several months, state agencies participated in four training sessions managed by DAS to help them assess their operations and staff, and to provide all the essential ingredients for agencies to put together workable continuity of operations plans. Just a little over two weeks ago, we engaged the agencies, through their own incident management teams, in a functional simulation exercise of their plans. Fully defining and refining everything our agencies would need to do to keep essential functions operating during an event such as a pandemic will take continuing work, practice and training. This bill simply makes it clear that the Commissioner of Administrative Services will continue forward with this effort to bring Connecticut to a state of readiness.

I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.