



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 929

January Session, 2011

* _____SB00929ED_APP032411_____*

AN ACT CONCERNING CLOSING THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT GAP.

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

1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force
2 to address the academic achievement gaps in Connecticut by
3 considering effective approaches to closing the achievement gaps in
4 elementary, middle and high schools. The task force shall develop, in
5 consultation with the Department of Education, the Connecticut State
6 University System, the Interagency Council for Ending the
7 Achievement Gap established pursuant to section 2 of this act, and the
8 joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance
9 of matters relating to education, a master plan to eliminate the
10 academic achievement gaps by January 1, 2020. Such master plan shall:
11 (1) Identify the achievement gaps that exist among and between (A)
12 racial groups, (B) ethnic groups, (C) socioeconomic groups, (D)
13 genders, and (E) English language learners and students whose
14 primary language is English; (2) focus efforts on closing the
15 achievement gaps identified in subdivision (1) of this subsection; (3)
16 establish annual benchmarks for implementation of the master plan
17 and closing the achievement gaps; (4) make recommendations
18 regarding the creation of a Secretary of Education; and (5) develop a
19 plan for (A) implementing the changes to the requirement of when a
20 child five years of age may enroll in kindergarten pursuant to section

21 10-15c of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and (B)
22 providing spaces in school readiness programs to those children who
23 reach the age of five after October first of any school year and are no
24 longer eligible to enroll in kindergarten for such school year. The task
25 force may amend such master plan at any time.

26 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

27 (1) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;

28 (2) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate;

29 (3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of
30 Representatives;

31 (4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

32 (5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of
33 Representatives;

34 (6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;

35 (7) One appointed by the chairman of the Black and Puerto Rican
36 Caucus of the General Assembly;

37 (8) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee;
38 and

39 (9) One appointed by the Governor.

40 (c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (1),
41 (2), (3), (4), (5), (6) or (7) of subsection (b) of this section may be a
42 member of the General Assembly.

43 (d) All appointments to the task force shall be made not later than
44 thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall be
45 filled by the appointing authority.

46 (e) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president

47 pro tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the task force
48 from among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons shall
49 schedule the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not
50 later than sixty days after the effective date of this section.

51 (f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
52 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education
53 shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

54 (g) (1) Not later than January 1, 2012, the task force shall submit the
55 master plan described in subsection (a) of this section to the joint
56 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of
57 matters relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of
58 section 11-4a of the general statutes, and the Interagency Council for
59 Ending the Achievement Gap described in section 2 of this act.

60 (2) Not later than January 1, 2013, and annually thereafter until
61 January 1, 2020, the task force shall submit annual progress reports on
62 the implementation of the master plan described in subsection (a) of
63 this section and recommendations for implementing said master plan
64 to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
65 cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with the
66 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

67 (h) The task force shall terminate on January 1, 2020.

68 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2011*) (a) There is established an
69 Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap. The council
70 shall consist of: (1) The Lieutenant Governor, or the Lieutenant
71 Governor's designee, (2) the Commissioner of Education, or the
72 commissioner's designee, (3) the Commissioner of Children and
73 Families, or the commissioner's designee, (4) the Commissioner of
74 Social Services, or the commissioner's designee, (5) the Commissioner
75 of Public Health, or the commissioner's designee, (6) the Commissioner
76 of Higher Education, or the commissioner's designee, (7) the
77 Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, or the

78 commissioner's designee, (8) the Commissioner of Administrative
79 Services, or the commissioner's designee, and (9) the Secretary of the
80 Office of Policy and Management, or the secretary's designee. The
81 chairperson of the council shall be the Lieutenant Governor, or the
82 Lieutenant Governor's designee. The council shall meet at least
83 quarterly.

84 (b) The Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap shall
85 (1) assist the achievement gap task force, established pursuant to
86 section 1 of this act, in the development of the master plan to eliminate
87 the academic achievement gaps in Connecticut, described in section 1
88 of this act, (2) implement the provisions of such master plan, and, if
89 necessary, make recommendations for legislation relating to such
90 master plan to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly
91 having cognizance of matters relating to education, and (3) submit
92 annual progress reports on the implementation of such master plan to
93 the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
94 cognizance of matters relating to education and the achievement gap
95 task force established pursuant to section 1 of this act.

96 (c) The Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap shall
97 be within the Department of Education for administrative purposes
98 only.

99 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2011*) Not later than July 1, 2012, the
100 Department of Education shall develop model curricula in reading and
101 mathematics for grades prekindergarten to grade four, inclusive, for
102 use by local and regional boards of education for school districts or
103 individual schools identified as having an achievement gap pursuant
104 to section 4 of this act.

105 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2011*) The Department of Education
106 shall annually prepare a list of school districts and individual schools
107 identified as having significant achievement gaps. The local or regional
108 board of education for any school district or individual school so
109 identified by the department as having such achievement gaps shall

110 semiannually submit, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-
111 4a of the general statutes, accountability reports to the department, the
112 achievement gap task force established pursuant to section 1 of this act
113 and the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
114 cognizance of matters relating to education. Such accountability
115 reports shall include descriptions of efforts being made to address and
116 eliminate the achievement gaps in the school district or individual
117 school. For purposes of this section, "achievement gaps" means the
118 existence of a significant disparity in the academic performance of
119 students among and between (1) racial groups, (2) ethnic groups, (3)
120 socioeconomic groups, (4) genders, and (5) English language learners
121 and students whose primary language is English.

122 Sec. 5. Section 10-4q of the general statutes is repealed and the
123 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2011*):

124 (a) The State Board of Education shall establish a State Education
125 Resource Center to assist the board in the provision of programs and
126 activities that will promote educational equity and excellence. Such
127 activities, to be provided by the State Education Resource Center or a
128 regional educational service center, may include training and
129 continuing education seminars, publication of technical materials,
130 research and evaluation, and other related activities. The center may
131 support programs and activities concerning early childhood education,
132 the federal No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110, and closing the
133 academic achievement gap between socio-economic subgroups, and
134 other related programs.

135 (b) The Commissioner of Education, with the assistance of the State
136 Education Resource Center, may provide grants to local and regional
137 boards of education for districts identified as in need of improvement
138 under the provisions of section 10-223e. The grants shall be for the
139 creation and acquisition of new curricula, training in the use of the
140 curricula and related supporting textbooks and other materials. Local
141 and regional boards of education may use such grants only for
142 curricula, training and related textbooks and materials that have been

143 authorized by the commissioner. Local and regional boards of
144 education shall apply for grants pursuant to this subsection at such
145 time and in such manner as the commissioner prescribes, and the
146 commissioner shall determine the amount of the grant awards.

147 (c) Within available appropriations, the Department of Education
148 shall establish a Connecticut School Reform Resource Center within
149 the State Education Resource Center established pursuant to
150 subsection (a) of this section or by contract through a regional
151 educational service center. The center shall operate year-round and
152 focus on serving the needs of all public schools. The center shall (1)
153 publish and distribute reports on the most effective practices for
154 improving student achievement by successful schools, (2) provide a
155 program of professional development activities for school leaders,
156 including curriculum coordinators, principals, superintendents and
157 board of education members, (3) provide information on successful
158 models for evaluating student performance and managing student
159 data, and (4) provide other programs and materials to assist in the
160 improvement of public schools.

161 (d) The Department of Education shall establish a Connecticut
162 School Cultural Resource Center within the State Education Resource
163 Center established pursuant to subsection (a) of this section or by
164 contract through a regional educational service center. The center shall
165 operate year-round and shall serve all public schools. The center shall
166 (1) develop culturally-relevant methods for educating students whose
167 primary language is not English, (2) develop strategies for assisting
168 such students who are in danger of failing, and (3) provide a program
169 of professional development activities for teachers to educate such
170 students that includes research-based child development and reading
171 instruction tools and practices.

172 Sec. 6. Section 10-15 of the general statutes is repealed and the
173 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2011*):

174 Public schools including kindergartens shall be maintained in each

175 town for at least one hundred eighty days of actual school sessions
176 during each year. When public school sessions are cancelled for
177 reasons of inclement weather or otherwise, the rescheduled sessions
178 shall not be held on Saturday or Sunday. Public schools may conduct
179 weekend education programs to provide supplemental and remedial
180 services to students. A local or regional board of education for a school
181 that has been designated as a low achieving school pursuant to
182 subdivision (1) of subsection (c) of section 10-223e may increase the
183 number of actual school sessions during each year, and may increase
184 the number of hours of actual school work per school session in order
185 to improve student performance and remove the school from the list of
186 schools designated as a low achieving school maintained by the State
187 Board of Education. The State Board of Education (1) may authorize
188 the shortening of any school year for a school district, a school or a
189 portion of a school on account of an unavoidable emergency, and (2)
190 may authorize implementation of scheduling of school sessions to
191 permit full year use of facilities which may not offer each child one
192 hundred eighty days of school sessions within a given school year, but
193 which assures an opportunity for each child to average a minimum of
194 one hundred eighty days of school sessions per year during thirteen
195 years of educational opportunity in the elementary and secondary
196 schools. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section and section 10-
197 16, the State Board of Education may, upon application by a local or
198 regional board of education, approve for any single school year, in
199 whole or in part, a plan to implement alternative scheduling of school
200 sessions which assures at least four hundred fifty hours of actual
201 school work for nursery schools and half-day kindergartens and at
202 least nine hundred hours of actual school work for full-day
203 kindergartens and grades one to twelve, inclusive.

204 Sec. 7. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2011*) (a) For the school year
205 commencing July 1, 2013, and each school year thereafter, the local and
206 regional boards of education for schools identified as priority schools
207 pursuant to section 10-16p of the general statutes, or school districts
208 identified as priority school districts, pursuant to section 10-266p of the

209 general statutes, shall (1) make school readiness spaces available to all
210 eligible children who reside in the priority school district, or in an area
211 served by a priority school, and (2) provide full-day kindergarten to all
212 children who reside in the priority school district or in an area served
213 by a priority school.

214 (b) For the school year commencing July 1, 2015, and each school
215 year thereafter, local and regional boards of education shall provide
216 school readiness spaces to all children who reach the age of five during
217 the period after the first day of October and prior to the first day of
218 January of any school year and are ineligible to enroll in kindergarten,
219 pursuant to section 10-15c of the general statutes, as amended by this
220 act, during such school year.

221 Sec. 8. Subsection (a) of section 10-15c of the general statutes is
222 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
223 *1, 2011*):

224 (a) The public schools shall be open to all children five years of age
225 and over who (1) for the school years commencing July 1, 2011, to July
226 1, 2014, inclusive, reach age five on or before the first day of January of
227 any school year, and [each] (2) for the school year commencing July 1,
228 2015, and each school year thereafter, reach age five on or before the
229 first day of October of any school year. Each such child shall have, and
230 shall be so advised by the appropriate school authorities, an equal
231 opportunity to participate in the activities, programs and courses of
232 study offered in such public schools, at such time as the child becomes
233 eligible to participate in such activities, programs and courses of study,
234 without discrimination on account of race, color, sex, religion, national
235 origin or sexual orientation; provided boards of education may, by
236 vote at a meeting duly called, admit to any school children under five
237 years of age.

238 Sec. 9. Section 10-265g of the general statutes is repealed and the
239 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2011*):

240 (a) Each local and regional board of education for a priority school
241 district shall offer a summer reading program, as described in
242 subsection (d) of section 10-265f, to children enrolled in kindergarten
243 in the schools under its jurisdiction who are determined by their
244 [teachers to need additional reading and reading readiness instruction]
245 school to be substantially deficient in reading based on measures
246 established by the State Board of Education.

247 (b) For [each] the school year commencing [on or after] July 1, [2006]
248 2011, and each school year thereafter, each local and regional board of
249 education for a priority school district shall require the schools under
250 its jurisdiction to [evaluate] assess the reading level of students
251 enrolled in (1) kindergarten at the end of the school year, and (2)
252 grades one to three, inclusive, in the middle of the school year and at
253 the end of the school year. A student shall be determined to be
254 substantially deficient in reading based on measures established by the
255 State Board of Education. Each school shall provide [a reading
256 program] instruction for such students that incorporates the
257 competencies required for early reading success and effective reading
258 instruction as delineated in section 10-221l. If a student is determined
259 to be substantially deficient in reading based on a middle of the school
260 year or end of the school year [evaluation] assessment, the school shall
261 notify the parents or guardian of the student of such result and the
262 school shall develop and implement [a personal] an individual priority
263 school district reading plan for such student.

264 (c) The [personal] individual priority school district reading plan
265 shall include assessment results, applicable federal requirements and
266 additional instruction, within available appropriations, such as
267 tutoring, an after school, school vacation, or weekend program or a
268 summer reading program as described in subsection (d) of section 10-
269 265f. [Personal] Individual priority school district reading plans
270 pursuant to this section shall be (1) reviewed and revised as
271 appropriate after each [evaluation] assessment or state-wide
272 examination, as appropriate, (2) [discussed with] monitored by school

273 literacy teams that shall consist of, but not be limited to, teachers,
274 school reading specialists, internal or external reading consultants, the
275 school principal and the provider of the additional instruction, and (3)
276 given to the parent or guardian of the student, in accordance with the
277 provisions concerning notice to parents or legal guardians pursuant to
278 section 10-15b, and include specific recommendations for reading
279 strategies that the parent or guardian can use at home. For purposes of
280 providing additional instruction, boards of education for priority
281 school districts shall give preference first to elementary schools and
282 then to middle schools, with the highest number of students who are
283 substantially deficient in reading.

284 (d) [Promotion of] Educational and instructional decisions for
285 students with [personal] individual priority school district reading
286 plans from kindergarten, first, second or third grade shall be based on
287 documented progress in achieving the goals of the [personal]
288 individual priority school district reading plan or demonstrated
289 reading proficiency. If a decision is made to promote a student who is
290 substantially deficient in reading from first, second or third grade, the
291 school principal shall provide written justification for such promotion
292 to the superintendent of schools.

293 (e) [A personal] An individual priority school district reading plan
294 that incorporates the competencies required for early reading success
295 and [effective] explicit reading instruction as delineated in section 10-
296 221l shall be maintained for a student who is substantially deficient in
297 reading until the student achieves [a satisfactory] grade level
298 proficiency, as determined by a reading [evaluation] assessment
299 pursuant to this subsection or a state-wide examination pursuant to
300 section 10-14n.

301 (f) Subject to the provisions of this subsection and within available
302 appropriations, each local and regional board of education for a
303 priority school district shall require for the [2006-2007] school year
304 commencing July 1, 2011, and each school year thereafter, students in
305 [grades one to] kindergarten to grade three, inclusive, who, based on

306 an end-of-the-year [evaluation] assessment pursuant to subsection (b)
307 of this section, are determined to be substantially deficient in reading,
308 to attend school the summer following such evaluation. The
309 superintendent of schools may exempt an individual student from
310 such requirement, upon the recommendation of the school principal,
311 based on the student's progress with the student's [personal]
312 individual priority school district reading plan. If a student does not
313 receive such an exemption, has been offered the opportunity to attend
314 a summer school program and fails to attend summer school, the local
315 or regional board of education shall not promote the student to the
316 next grade.

317 (g) The superintendent of schools shall report to the Commissioner
318 of Education the information such superintendent receives pursuant to
319 subsection (d) of this section regarding the number of students who
320 are substantially deficient in reading and are promoted from
321 kindergarten, first, second or third grade to the next grade. The State
322 Board of Education shall prepare and publish a report containing such
323 information.

324 Sec. 10. (*Effective July 1, 2011*) The Commissioner of Education may
325 identify schools to participate in a pilot study for the purposes of
326 promoting best practices in early literacy and closing the academic
327 achievement gaps, as defined in section 4 of this act. The pilot study
328 may utilize various assessment tools, including, but not limited to, the
329 assessment conducted pursuant to section 10-265g of the general
330 statutes, as amended by this act. The Commissioner of Education may
331 waive the state-wide assessments, described in said section 10-265g,
332 for certain grade levels in participating schools. The Department of
333 Education may conduct research and evaluation of participating
334 schools with external groups or organizations. Not later than October
335 1, 2013, the department shall report to the joint standing committee of
336 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to
337 education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the
338 general statutes, on the findings of the pilot study.

339 Sec. 11. Subsection (b) of section 10-220 of the general statutes is
340 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
341 *1, 2011*):

342 (b) The board of education of each local or regional school district
343 shall, with the participation of parents, students, school administrators,
344 teachers, citizens, local elected officials and any other individuals or
345 groups such board shall deem appropriate, prepare a statement of
346 educational goals for such local or regional school district. The
347 statement of goals shall be consistent with state-wide goals pursuant to
348 subsection (c) of section 10-4. Each local or regional board of education
349 shall [develop] annually establish student objectives for the school year
350 which relate directly to the statement of educational goals prepared
351 pursuant to this subsection and which identify specific expectations for
352 students in terms of skills, knowledge and competence.

353 Sec. 12. Subsection (b) of section 10-145f of the general statutes is
354 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
355 *1, 2011*):

356 (b) (1) Any person who does not hold a valid certificate pursuant to
357 section 10-145b shall (A) achieve satisfactory scores on the state
358 reading, writing and mathematics competency examination prescribed
359 by and administered under the direction of the State Board of
360 Education, or qualify for a waiver of such test based on criteria
361 approved by the State Board of Education, and (B) achieve a
362 satisfactory evaluation on the appropriate State Board of Education
363 approved subject area assessment in order to be eligible for a certificate
364 pursuant to said section unless such assessment has not been approved
365 by the State Board of Education at the time of application, in which
366 case the applicant shall not be denied a certificate solely because of the
367 lack of an evaluation on such assessment. A person who holds a valid
368 school administrator certificate in another state that is at least
369 equivalent to an initial educator certificate, pursuant to section 10-
370 145b, as determined by the State Board of Education, and has
371 successfully completed three years of experience as a school

372 administrator in a public school in another state or in a nonpublic
373 school approved by the appropriate state board of education during
374 the ten-year period prior to the date of application for a certificate in a
375 school administration endorsement area shall not be required to meet
376 the state reading, writing and mathematics competency examination.

377 (2) Any person applying for an additional certification endorsement
378 shall achieve a satisfactory evaluation on the appropriate State Board
379 of Education approved subject area assessment in order to be eligible
380 for such additional endorsement, unless such assessment has not been
381 approved by the State Board of Education at the time of application, in
382 which case the applicant shall not be denied the additional
383 endorsement solely because of the lack of an evaluation on such
384 assessment.

385 (3) On and after July 1, 1992, any teacher who held a valid teaching
386 certificate but whose certificate lapsed and who had completed all
387 requirements for the issuance of a new certificate pursuant to section
388 10-145b, except for filing an application for such certificate, prior to the
389 date on which the lapse occurred, may file, within one year of the date
390 on which the lapse occurred, an application with the Commissioner of
391 Education for the issuance of such certificate. Upon the filing of such
392 an application, the commissioner may grant such certificate and such
393 certificate shall be retroactive to the date on which the lapse occurred,
394 provided the commissioner finds that the lapse of the certificate
395 occurred as a result of a hardship or extenuating circumstances beyond
396 the control of the applicant. If such teacher has attained tenure and is
397 reemployed by the same board of education in any equivalent unfilled
398 position for which the person is qualified as a result of the issuance of
399 a certificate pursuant to this subdivision, the lapse period shall not
400 constitute a break in employment for such person reemployed and
401 shall be used for the purpose of calculating continuous employment
402 pursuant to section 10-151. If such teacher has not attained tenure, the
403 time unemployed due to the lapse of a certificate shall not be counted
404 toward tenure, except that if such teacher is reemployed by the same

405 board of education as a result of the issuance of a certificate pursuant
406 to this subdivision, such teacher may count the previous continuous
407 employment immediately prior to the lapse towards tenure. Using
408 information provided by the Teachers' Retirement Board, the
409 Department of Education shall annually notify each local or regional
410 board of education of the name of each teacher employed by such
411 board of education whose provisional certificate will expire during the
412 period of twelve months following such notice. Upon receipt of such
413 notice the superintendent of each local and regional board of education
414 shall notify each such teacher in writing, at such teacher's last known
415 address, that the teacher's provisional certificate will expire.

416 (4) Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection to the
417 contrary, to be eligible for a certificate to teach subjects for which a
418 bachelor's degree is not required, any applicant who is otherwise
419 eligible for certification in such endorsement areas shall be entitled to a
420 certificate without having met the requirements of the competency
421 examination and subject area assessment pursuant to this subsection
422 for a period not to exceed two years, except that for a certificate to
423 teach skilled trades or trade-related or occupational subjects, the
424 commissioner may waive the requirement that the applicant take the
425 competency examination. The commissioner may, upon the showing
426 of good cause, extend the certificate.

427 (5) On and after July 1, 2011, any person applying for a certification
428 in the endorsement area of elementary education shall achieve a
429 satisfactory evaluation on the appropriate State Board of Education
430 approved mathematics assessment in order to be eligible for such
431 elementary education endorsement.

432 Sec. 13. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2011*) (a) On or before July 1, 2012,
433 the Department of Education shall develop a uniform system of
434 accounting for school expenditures that includes a chart of accounts for
435 each individual school under the jurisdiction of a local or regional
436 board of education, regional educational service center, regional
437 vocational-technical school system or state charter school.

438 (b) For the school year commencing July 1, 2013, and each school
 439 year thereafter, all local and regional boards of education, regional
 440 educational service centers, the regional vocational-technical school
 441 system and state charter schools shall (1) maintain all school financial
 442 accounts in compliance with the uniform system of accounting for
 443 school expenditures developed pursuant to subsection (a) of this
 444 section, (2) annually file the chart of accounts required pursuant to
 445 such uniform system of accounting for school expenditures with the
 446 Department of Education, and (3) make such chart of accounts
 447 available on the Internet web site for the local or regional board of
 448 education, regional educational service center, the regional vocational-
 449 technical school system or state charter school.

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|---|---------------------|-------------|
| This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections: | | |
| Section 1 | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 2 | <i>July 1, 2011</i> | New section |
| Sec. 3 | <i>July 1, 2011</i> | New section |
| Sec. 4 | <i>July 1, 2011</i> | New section |
| Sec. 5 | <i>July 1, 2011</i> | 10-4q |
| Sec. 6 | <i>July 1, 2011</i> | 10-15 |
| Sec. 7 | <i>July 1, 2011</i> | New section |
| Sec. 8 | <i>July 1, 2011</i> | 10-15c(a) |
| Sec. 9 | <i>July 1, 2011</i> | 10-265g |
| Sec. 10 | <i>July 1, 2011</i> | New section |
| Sec. 11 | <i>July 1, 2011</i> | 10-220(b) |
| Sec. 12 | <i>July 1, 2011</i> | 10-145f(b) |
| Sec. 13 | <i>July 1, 2011</i> | New section |

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Joint Favorable Subst. C/R

APP