
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 878 (File 481, as amended by Senate "A")*

AN ACT MAKING CLARIFYING CHANGES TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION STATUTES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REORGANIZATION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM.

SUMMARY:

This bill makes several unrelated changes to the higher education statutes, including (1) adding UConn's provost to the Higher Education Coordinating Council and allowing UConn to enter into student exchange agreements, (2) transferring certain duties from the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) to the Office of Higher Education (OHE), (3) extending certain deadlines for the Planning Commission for Higher Education, and (4) repealing obsolete statutory language. It also makes technical and conforming changes.

*Senate Amendment "A" (1) removes a provision transferring the administration of the academic scholarship graduate student loan program and fund, (2) modifies the transfer of certain teacher certification duties, (3) modifies the deadline extensions for the Planning Commission for Higher Education, and (4) makes technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013

§§ 1 & 3 — UCONN

The bill adds UConn's chief academic officer (i.e., provost) to the Higher Education Coordinating Council. By law, the council must, for public higher education institutions, (1) identify, examine, and implement savings in administrative functions and (2) develop accountability measures. The bill also allows UConn to enter into student exchange agreements with foreign countries or other states. BOR and OHE have this authority under existing law.

§ 2 — UNIQUE IDENTIFIER TRACKING

Under current law, BOR must require public and independent higher education institutions receiving state funding to track unique identifiers or state-assigned student identifiers for all in-state students enrolled at the institution until the student graduates or is no longer enrolled. The bill eliminates BOR's responsibility and instead directly requires institutions to do this. By law, such identifiers are assigned to all students tracked by the Early Childhood Information System.

§ 5 — TEACHER CERTIFICATION

The bill transfers to OHE a requirement to cooperate with the State Department of Education (SDE) in establishing, within available appropriations, (1) an accelerated cross endorsement process for subject shortage areas and (2) a program for formerly certified teachers to regain certification. Under current law, SDE performs these functions in cooperation with BOR.

§ 11 — PLANNING COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

By law, the Planning Commission for Higher Education must develop and ensure the implementation of a strategic master plan for higher education. The bill extends several of the commission's reporting dates. It requires the commission to submit (1) a preliminary report on the development of the strategic master plan by June 1, 2014 and (2) the plan by September 1, 2014 (rather than by January 1, 2012 and October 1, 2012, respectively). Under current law, the plan must include specific goals and benchmarks for the years ending 2015 and 2020. The bill instead requires goals and benchmarks for the years ending 2020 and 2025.

The bill also requires annual reports to the governor and legislature on the plan's implementation and progress toward achieving the goals (1) beginning January 1, 2016, to various legislative committees and (2) beginning October 1, 2016, to the governor (rather than by January 1, 2014 and October 1, 2014, respectively).

§§ 4 & 12 — REPEALED PROVISIONS

The bill eliminates provisions that provide, for reasons of hardship,

death, or disability, loan deferments and forgiveness to undergraduates who receive loans under the academic scholarship loan program. By law, the program supports students who intend to teach in the state's public schools.

The bill also eliminates obsolete references to the auxiliary services funds of the constituent units of higher education. These funds were eliminated in 1991; the constituent units instead have single operating funds.

Additionally, the bill repeals the high technology doctoral fellowship program, advisory committee on federal matters, and Student Financial Aid Information Council, all of which are defunct. It also repeals obsolete provisions concerning (1) paraprofessional certification programs and (2) the issuance of postsecondary education certificates by BOR. Lastly, it eliminates an obsolete requirement concerning the disclosure to the BOR president of certain gifts received from foreign entities.

BACKGROUND

Related Bills

sHB 6363, reported favorably by the Government Administration and Elections Committee, also eliminates the Student Financial Aid Advisory Council.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 20 Nay 0 (03/26/2013)