
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5376

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE REEMPLOYMENT OF OLDER WORKERS AS THEY RELATE TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.

SUMMARY:

This bill establishes several reporting requirements concerning noncredit vocational courses and programs in public higher education institutions. The reporting requirements include (1) enrollment and completion rates; (2) participants' demographic information; (3) participants' employment, job retention, and earnings; and (4) financial aid availability. Under the bill, entities that must report some or all of this information are public higher education institutions, the Higher Education Coordinating Council, Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR), and Office of Higher Education (OHE).

The bill also requires BOR to (1) study the feasibility of expanding the manufacturing technology center model to create centers of excellence for other high-demand careers and (2) implement the Plus 50 Initiative model throughout regional community-technical college system (CTC). Under the bill, a center of excellence is a distinctive or potentially distinctive instructional, research, or public service program at a public higher education institution. The Plus 50 Initiative (which is not defined in the bill) is a national project to benchmark the most current and innovative programs at community colleges that engage learners age 50 and older. BOR must report on the feasibility study and implementation status to the Higher Education and Labor committees by July 1, 2015.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2014, except for the provision concerning the biennial financial aid report, which is effective October 1, 2014.

NONCREDIT VOCATIONAL COURSES**§ 2 — *Institutional Reporting***

The bill requires BOR, by July 1, 2015, to establish consistent parameters for noncredit vocational courses and programs to be recognized by each constituent unit of higher education (i.e., UConn, the Connecticut State University System, CTC, and Charter Oak State College). BOR must require each constituent unit, annually by July 1, 2016, to collect and report to it (1) total enrollment and completion rates for such courses and programs; (2) participants' demographic information, including age and gender; and (3) the employment status, job retention, and wage rates for students both before enrolling in and after completing the courses and programs. BOR must collaborate with the labor commissioner to obtain necessary information for implementing these requirements.

§ 3 — *Higher Education Coordinating Council*

By law, the Higher Education Coordinating Council must develop accountability measures for each constituent unit and public higher education institution. In doing so, it must consider several factors, including data on graduates by academic program. The bill specifies that the graduate data must include graduates' ages and be grouped by academic and noncredit vocational courses and programs.

By law, the council must work with the Department of Labor to, among other things, produce periodic reports on the employment and earnings of students who leave the constituent units of higher education. The bill requires that these reports (1) be capable of being sorted by student age; (2) include students enrolled in academic and noncredit vocational courses and programs; (3) specify the students' employment status and job retention; and (4) include their employment status, job retention, and earnings both before enrolling in and after completing the courses and programs.

§§ 4 & 5 — *Financial Aid*

By law, BOR and OHE must report biennially on (1) state, northeast regional, and national trends in the cost of attendance at public and

independent higher education institutions and private occupational schools and (2) the availability and utilization of all forms of student financial aid relative to economic conditions and personal income. The bill specifies that the financial aid portion of the report must include financial aid for academic and noncredit vocational courses and programs. The bill requires the report to be submitted to the Higher Education Committee, rather than the Education Committee as under current law.

The bill also requires BOR and OHE to study financial aid options for students enrolled in noncredit vocational courses and programs. The options must include low-interest loans whose payment may be subject to a sliding scale depending on income or deferred until the student is employed. BOR and OHE must report to the Higher Education Committee by January 1, 2015.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Program Review and Investigations Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 11 Nay 0 (03/13/2014)