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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **SB 20 (File 23, as amended by Senate "A")\***

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING THE MINORITY ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM.***

##### **SUMMARY:**

This bill eliminates the requirement that the Office of Higher Education (OHE) develop a strategic plan to ensure racial and ethnic diversity at each Connecticut public higher education institution. Under current law, the strategic plan must align with Connecticut Commission for Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) state agency affirmative action plan requirements (see BACKGROUND). The bill also eliminates policy development, reporting, and corrective action requirements associated with OHE's strategic plan.

Also, the bill alters OHE's minority advancement program by:

1. changing its purpose to rewarding and supporting public colleges and universities for strengthening minority student retention and graduation, rather than for meeting strategic plan diversity goals;
2. adding a new component program for college access and success; and
3. redefining an existing component program for Connecticut collegiate awareness and preparation (ConnCAP).

\*Senate Amendment "A" changes the purpose of OHE's minority advancement program from rewarding and supporting public colleges and universities for ensuring that student and staff diversity mirrors the state's as proposed in the original file, to rewarding and supporting them for strengthening minority student retention and graduation rates.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2014

### **STRATEGIC PLAN FOR RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY**

Current law requires OHE to develop a strategic plan consistent with CHRO affirmative action regulations. This plan must ensure that the racial and ethnic diversity of students, faculty, administrators and staff at each Connecticut public college and university mirrors the total state population. The bill eliminates the requirement that OHE create a strategic plan for individual institutions, along with related requirements to:

1. develop equal opportunity policies to guide the institutions,
2. report yearly to the governor and General Assembly on plan activities and goals, and
3. develop a corrective plan if diversity goals are not achieved.

### **MINORITY ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM**

Current law allows OHE to establish a minority advancement program to reward and support efforts by Connecticut public colleges and universities toward meeting diversity goals aligned with OHE's strategic plan. If OHE establishes such a program, the bill requires it to also establish a college access and success program as a related component to strengthen minority student retention and graduation rates at in-state colleges and universities.

The bill also redefines an existing minority advancement program component known as the Connecticut collegiate awareness and preparation program (ConnCAP). ConnCAP helps Connecticut colleges and universities develop linkages with public school systems to motivate and prepare certain middle and high school students to attend college. Under the bill, the program must be targeted to "low performing students" rather than "underachievers" as in current law.

Also, the bill requires OHE to annually report to the governor and the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee on ConnCAP students' high school graduation and higher education

enrollment and graduation rates.

**BACKGROUND**

***CHRO State Agency Affirmative Action Plan***

By law, each state agency and department must develop a plan for its personnel and administration to ensure that affirmative action is taken, as required by federal and state law, to provide equal employment opportunities, and to comply with upward mobility and anti-discrimination laws.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 17    Nay 3    (03/04/2014)