



CONNECTICUT
TRIAL
LAWYERS
ASSOCIATION

150 Trumbull Street, 2nd Floor
Hartford, CT 06103
p) 860.522.4345 f) 860.522.1027
www.cttriallawyers.org

Raised Bill 5519
Public Hearing: 3-12-14

TO: MEMBERS OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
FROM: CONNECTICUT TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (CTLA)
DATE: MARCH 12, 2014

RE: OPPOSITION TO HB5519, AAC STUDENT INTERNS

The CTLA strongly opposes the immunity found in HB5519 An Act Concerning Student Internships. It would immunize educational center partners from their own negligence, leaving unpaid or low paid interns holding the bag.

This proposal to afford employers broad immunity for negligent actions and omissions is problematic in a few different ways.

First, it does not encourage safety at these workplaces. Environments like agricultural and science workplaces are places where the state public policy should be to do everything it can to promote safety, not shield employers from responsibility for it. Immunities like this, offered as thinly veiled “cost saving measures”, inevitably will lead to lower safety standards for the interns working and learning there.

Second, there is no reason why if these agricultural and scientific educational centers are given broad immunity against their own negligence every workplace wouldn't ask for the same escape from their negligent acts. Offering internships to students should not be looked at as a burden employers and educational partners should need to be protected from, they enjoy low or no cost labor and should take care of those workers, interns or not.

Lastly, it is amazing that these student interns are not being covered under workers' compensation. The workers' compensation system was set up to deal with these exact situations. Employers may, even when not required by law to do so, voluntarily cover student interns under the workers' compensation act.

This proposal sets a bad precedent in Connecticut of seeking to protect the negligence of employers at the expense of their student interns, who are not in the position to effect safety changes on the job. Students are also in a much worse off position to shoulder the costs of injuries caused by their employer.

WE STRONGLY URGE YOU TO OPPOSE HB5519. Thank you.