



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE THEMIS KLARIDES
ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

REPUBLICAN LEADER

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
300 CAPITOL AVENUE, SUITE 4200
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

CAPITOL: (860) 240-8700 or TOLL FREE: (800) 842-1423
Themis.Klarides@housegop.ct.gov

Testimony in Support of House Bill Number 5664 Commerce Committee February 24, 2015

Chairmen Hartley and Perone, Ranking Members Frantz and Camillo and Members of the Commerce Committee, the House Republican Caucus would like to thank the Committee for raising **House Bill Number 5564: An Act Concerning The Implementation of the Learn Here, Live Here Program.**

One of the largest issues facing Connecticut is the loss of our educated youth to other states due to our high cost of living and unfriendly business climate. Connecticut is consistently ranked near the top in the country in losing its educated youth to other states. If this problem continues, the long term effect could be disastrous. As young people flee the state, our population will continue to grow older with fewer, young professionals available to share the burden of paying taxes that help pay for services to our neediest citizens, thus placing further strain on the state's economic condition. The state simply cannot afford to lose its younger population.

In 2013, the Legislature established the Learn Here, Live Here Program but did not mandate the DECD Commissioner implement it. This bill would require the Commissioner to implement the program. The program would allow graduates of higher education institutions including colleges, universities, health care training schools and technical high schools to segregate a portion of their income tax liability into a separate account. Within 10 years of graduation the graduate could withdraw the money to help buy their first home. The program is limited to \$1 million per year to keep the revenue loss to the state reasonable. If the graduate does not withdraw their money within 10 years, the money is transferred to the General Fund.

It is our hope this kind of program will keep our young professionals in the state while assisting businesses in finding and hiring the state's best and brightest. Businesses around the state often discuss the high cost of living and lack of young professionals as one of the reasons they consider moving out of state. This bill will not only provide incentive for our young population to stay but also encourage businesses to stay.

I urge the Commerce Committee to pass HB 5564, requiring the implementation of the Learn Here, Live Here Program. Please allow the full General Assembly the opportunity to debate this issue and to pass legislation to help keep our young talent in Connecticut.