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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **sSB 353**

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF THE CONNECTICUT HOPE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill allows the Office of Higher Education (OHE) to establish the Connecticut Hope Scholarship program, a merit-based scholarship program for Connecticut residents enrolled as full-time undergraduate students carrying 12 or more semester credit hours at state public higher education institutions. Such institutions include UConn, the Connecticut State University System, the regional community-technical college system, and Charter Oak State College.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2018

#### **CONNECTICUT HOPE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

##### ***Scholarship Eligibility***

Under the bill, a student may receive a Connecticut Hope Scholarship if he or she resides in Connecticut and (1) graduated with a 3.5 grade point average (GPA) from a Connecticut public high school no more than four years before enrolling as a full-time undergraduate student at any public higher education institution in the state, (2) is currently enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student at such a school, and (3) maintains an undergraduate GPA of at least 3.5.

##### ***Scholarship Awards***

The amount awarded must equal the student's tuition and required fees as published by each institution, and include a fixed amount for required books and supplies as set by OHE. The enrolling institution must disburse the award money received as direct financial assistance only for such eligible educational costs. The award is renewable annually provided the student continues to meet the established academic standards.

***Program Administration and Reporting Requirements***

Under the bill, the program must include an administrative allowance of at least \$100,000 based on .25% of the available appropriations. The bill requires OHE to develop and use fiscal procedures, including compliance reviews, to ensure accountability of public funds disbursed under the program.

Each public higher education institution must (1) annually provide OHE with data and reports on all students receiving such a scholarship; (2) maintain records verifying the number of student recipients and documentation used to determine their eligibility, for at least three years; and (3) starting in FY 19, biennially submit the results of an audit of such records conducted by an independent certified public accountant.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 17 Nay 3 (03/15/2018)