



Testimony of
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Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee Hearing
February 20, 2018

HB 5136 An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Office of Higher Education

Good afternoon Senator Bye, Senator Linares, Representative Haddad, Representative Staneski and member of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee.

My name is John Brady and I am the Executive Vice President of AFT Connecticut, a diverse state federation of more than 30,000 public and private sector employees; which includes state workers, healthcare workers, public school teachers, paraeducators, and higher education faculty and staff in the Community College system and UConn

Today I would like to address concerns over ***HB 5136 An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Office of Higher Education***.

While I am unsure of the reasoning behind this bill, I wish to express extreme caution in deliberations over any adoption of it. The stated purpose of the bill is to make permissive that the Office of Higher Education develop a strategic plan to ensure racial and ethnicity diversity at public institutions of higher education. HB 5136 would alter Section 10a-11 of the General statutes to make compliance permissive.

Section 10a-11 states that the Office of Higher Education will develop a strategic plan to ensure that students, faculty, administrators and staff are representative of the racial and ethnic diversity of the population of the state. In addition, it calls for the Office of Higher Education to report annually to the Governor and the General Assembly on progress on this strategic plan as well as a plan for corrective actions, should institutions fall short of their goals.

Certainly, these are worthwhile goals. I am surprised the Office of Higher Education does not already have a strategic plan in place to achieve this goal. In fact, the Office of Higher Education does not need a statute to establish a strategic plan to achieve such desired diversity. It could have, and should have, developed such a plan on its own already. The fact is that the legislature felt it was necessary to develop a statute to ensure such a plan be developed to achieve the desired diversity.

Making them permissive would completely negate Section 10a-11. It would also negate the requirement that the Office of Higher Education report annually to the Governor and General Assembly.

For these reasons, I advise extreme caution in adopting HB 5136, and thereby, effectively repealing Section 10a-11.

Thank You.