

Education Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5168

AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF THE SUMMER LEARNING

Title: GRANT PROGRAM.

Vote Date: 3/14/2018

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/26/2018

File No.: 122

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Education Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

HB 5168 allows State Department of Education, in consultation with the after school committee, to administer a program to provide grants to summer learning programs. Programs must (1) have a minimum of 240 hours of educational, enrichment, and recreational activities during the summer for public schools; (2) include instruction in literacy and math; (3) serve grades K-12; and (4) have a parental involvement component. Grants are within available appropriations, and eligibility is determined biennially.

Substitute Language:

The substitute language for HB 5168 (line 30) eliminates the requirement that grant recipients must report to SDE on childhood obesity outcomes associated with their summer learning programs in order to receive the second year of the grant.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Commissioner Diana R. Wentzell, Department of Education (SDE):

Commissioner Wentzell testified in support of most concepts of HB 5168 but SDE will not report impact on obesity due the stigma surrounding the topic. Commissioner Wentzell supported the other aspects of the bill, with which SDE will administer if the grants are funded sufficiently and include the 4% set aside as proposed in the bill because the bill shares similarities to two granted the department already administers, State After School Grant Program and Priority School District Accountability / Summer Program Grant. For these reasons, SDE is willing to collect, compile, and deliver to the General Assembly the data from each operator on the students it serves. The Commissioner was hesitant on supporting the

240 hour minimum for the programs because she felt the time was an extensive amount of time for this specific program.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Patricia L. Buell, Superintendent of Schools, Town of Brooklyn:

Superintendent Buell testified in favor of HB 5168. She stated it would help mitigate student's learning loss in the summer by allowing schools to reach students over the summer. In addition, she noted HB 5168 will provide opportunities for schools to offer summer recreation and learning opportunities, which supports literacy and numeracy instruction and contains a parental involvement component.

Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc. (CABE):

Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc. (CABE) strongly supports the passage of HB 5168. In their testimony, CABE stated that summer learning programs will help close the achievement gap when the programs are built around enrichment, educational, and recreational activities, and literacy and numeracy. Students often experience significant loss of learning over the summer, especially under performing students; however, HB 5168 will better help students to excel in the classroom.

John L. Cattelan, Executive Director, Connecticut Alliance of YMCAs:

John Cattelan testified on behalf of Connecticut Alliance of YMCAs, stating they support HB 5168. They support the bill because it addresses the summer learning loss and if successful, the achievement gap will be bridged sooner. There are already multiple YMCAs across Connecticut have already implemented summer learning programs with a inclusive curriculum that includes academic enrichment to mitigate summer learning loss. John highlighted the Greater Hartford YMCA's successful curriculum to increasing the literacy rate of its' students. In 2014 only 24% of those students demonstrated age appropriate literacy skills, but by 2016 that number had increased to 59%. More YMCA locations would be willing to start these programs if the funding was provided and to work with local municipalities to create initiatives that address the CT achievement gap.

Dr. Matthew J. Conway Jr., Superintendent of Schools, Derby Public Schools:

Dr. Matthew Conway testified on behalf of Derby Public Schools, in favor of HB 5168 as written. He stated summer learning programs often provide opportunities to those who may not otherwise be exposed to education in the summer. Conway asserted it is vital this bill does not restrict specific grade levels and allows all districts to apply.

Michelle Douchette Cunningham, Executive Director, CT After School Network:

Michelle Douchette Cunningham testified on behalf of the CT After School Network in support of HB 5168. Michelle Douchette Cunningham supports the bill as an effort to stop the summer learning loss that contributes to the achievement gap. She cited how over 40 empirical studies underscore the negative impact summer learning loss has especially on low income youths, who do not receive intervention, they fall further behind. She suggested using the Building Educated Leaders for Life (BELL) model, which is composed of small-group instruction in literacy and math and enrichment courses and activities in a variety of subjects. BELL model summer programs are community based, which would make them less expensive. Her suggestions for funding include shifting existing educational funds, especially

in Alliance Districts. She concluded by supporting summer learning programs as they keep young people safe, help working families, and help students gain academic skills.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed

ADDITIONAL TESTIMONY:

None expressed

Reported by: Kaceylee Klein

Date: April 4, 2018