

Education Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5448

AN ACT CONCERNING THE ALIGNMENT OF EDUCATION CURRICULA AND
Title: PROGRAMS AND WORKFORCE NEEDS.

Vote Date: 3/19/2018

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/14/2018

File No.: 199

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Education Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

HB 5448 requires the Labor Department (DOL), in consultation with SDE and the Board of Regents for Higher Education, to conduct a study of existing educational opportunities and the workforce needs of the state. For the study, DOL must examine the curricula and programs offered at public high schools, the Technical Education and Career System and the regional community-technical college system to determine whether such curricula and programs are providing career-oriented instruction, preparing students for apprenticeship programs or employment, and are meeting the workforce needs of businesses and industries in the state. DOL must report to the Education, Labor, and Higher Education and Workforce Advancement committees no later than January 1, 2019.

Substitute language:

The substitute language for HB 5448 makes the Labor Department, rather than SDE, the lead agency to conduct the study. Also, it (1) removes OHE and replaces it with the Board of Regents for Higher Education and (2) requires the report to go to the Labor, and Higher Education and Workforce Advancement committees, in addition to the Education Committee.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Dianna Wentzell, Commissioner State of Connecticut, State Department of Education (SDE):

Commissioner Wentzell testified that the SDE does not have the capacity or resources to carry out the work necessary to support HB 5448. She cautioned that this bill could duplicate efforts being performed by the Regional Workforce Advisory Board in collaboration with

Connecticut Technical and Education Career System Board, which includes Commissioners of Labor, Economic and Community Development and Education.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (HFPG):

Hartford Foundation for Public Giving submitted testimony supporting HB 5448. Hartford Foundation for Public Giving believes the proposed study will better align Connecticut's education system with the state's workforce needs by having the education system recognize its role in preparing students and young adults to work in high-demand jobs in Connecticut. Furthermore, the organization noted how this study will help improve Connecticut's response to the high unemployment rate of young black and Latino adults in Connecticut because the study will closely examine the effectiveness of programs in place in terms of meeting education and job training needs that employers seek.

Their testimony cited Metro Hartford Points, indicating that 27 percent of Connecticut future jobs will require middle-level skilled workers, which current employers are struggling to already find, creating a gap in the workforce that can be barely filled. It is their strong belief the study to be conducted will fully assess the type of educational and job training preparation youths and adults, including those recently released from prison, need to secure employment and provide recommendation to improve such program in order to make them more effective and cost efficient.

Camara Stokes Hudson, Associate Policy Fellow, Connecticut Voices for Children:

Camara Stokes submitted testimony on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children in favor of HB 5448. Camara stated that the current accessible data regarding the alignment between traditional public high school curricula and workforce needs, which is used to determine if Vocational Programs meet workforce needs is outdated. However, the proposed study will provided accurate, current, and useful data that would help policy makers, the business community, and educators to create effective policies to close gaps in workforce training and preparation. This in turn will assist in Connecticut's economic growth and development, and in keeping jobs in the state.

Ed Leavy, President, State Vocational Federation of Teachers (SVFT):

Ed Leavy submitted testimony on behalf of State Vocational Federation of Teachers on HB 5448. While he commends all efforts to incorporate the Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS) in the economic future of the state SVFT has concerns that such efforts are not considering the procedure already in place. He went on to say, that every trade offered in CTHSS has a Technical Trade Advisory Committee (TTAC), which is composed of trade persons and business owners, who have first-hand experience on what education and job skills employers are seeking from future hirees. TTAC's responsibility is to review the curricula and processes in place for the trades offered by CTHSS.

In addition to the TTAC, there is a CTHSS Board, which the Department of Labor and Department of Economic Development sit on, that carefully examines and determines the extent of which each trade is reauthorized, every five years. Ed stressed that the review process done by the board is stringent, in the past four years, two trades were not reauthorized, and the reauthorization of another trade was cut to a year. Although the study

under HB 5448 seems redundant, Ed stated that neither the CTHSS or TTAC oppose the study, but rather it is the disregard of the unified concern of CTHSS or TTAC on the rising funding cuts to CTHSS that is the underlining issue. He stated both CTHSS and TTAC have underscored how budget cuts greatly impair their ability to equip students to succeed in the workforce. For instance, there are students that are being taught by uncertified teachers because the school does not have sufficient funding to acquire authorization for that position, and there are student in welding and electrical who do not have the necessary tools and supplies to practice their craft because of the limited funding. In Ed's opinion, there is no study, no matter how well intentioned or designed, that change these circumstances.

David Downes, a Connecticut Association of Adult & Continuing Education (CAACE) Program Administrator:

David testified on behalf Connecticut Association of Adult & Continuing Education (CAACE) in strong support of 5448. He noted that "as part of the Campaign for a Working Connecticut", CAACE has examined and produced recommendations to expand pre-apprenticeship programs at the secondary level and apprenticeships for credentialed postsecondary certificate programs in Connecticut because CAACE recognizes the need for a stronger partnership between education leaders and the Department of Labor in order to better prepare student to answer the work demands of growing trades in the state.

David cited that there are over 3,800 sponsored apprenticeships listed on DOL website, but there is a poor connection between these apprenticeship opportunities and most secondary and postsecondary school programs in the state. He believes the state should emulate throughout the state the partnership between Electric Boat, Ella Grasso Technical High School, Three Rivers Community College and other area schools; and the partnership Connecticut's adult education programs built with employers and its incorporation of the IBEST model with some other postsecondary programs to better align workforce needs with curricula. CAACE looks forward to receiving the data when the study is finalized.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

No opposition to the bill was submitted.

Reported by: Leslie Navarrete

Date: April 5, 2018