

# Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-213

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS FOR APPRENTICESHIP AND WORK-BASED

**Title:** OPPORTUNITIES.

**Vote Date:** 3/15/2018

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/6/2018

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

State Senator Art Linares, 33<sup>rd</sup> Senatorial District

### REASONS FOR BILL:

To establish a quasi-public agency responsible for establishing public-private partnerships for apprenticeship and work-based opportunities.

Substitute language:

- Lines 5-6: changes the name from ARTA to AERA
- Lines 10 -40: reconstitutes the membership of the board of directors to include reps from regional workforce development boards (5 total), tech high school superintendent, CHESLA president, CCAT president, among others

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

#### [Kevin Lembo, Comptroller, Office of the State Comptroller](#)

Comptroller Lembo submitted testimony in support of this legislation stating that there is an immediate need for 13,601 new workers by the end of 2018 and that apprenticeships are often the way to well-paying middle class jobs.

#### [Scott Jackson, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Labor](#)

Commissioner Jackson opposes this legislation “because it would have a detrimental effect on the strides that we have made in Connecticut.” It “would be duplicative of the work being done by my Office of Apprenticeship Training (OAT), the State Department of Education, vocational technical high schools, State Community Colleges, Workforce Development

Boards and other workforce partners. The existing apprenticeship program has already developed public-private partnerships and will continue to do so.”

“The U.S. Department of Labor has designated my Agency as the entity in Connecticut with the sole authority to approve apprenticeships. Therefore, the creation of a new government agency seems like an unnecessary expense to perform duties that are already being capably done.”

Commissioner Jackson shared with the committee that Connecticut has over 6200 registered apprentices and over 1600 active apprenticeship sponsors (employers).

[Sean Bradbury, Director of Government Relations, Connecticut State Colleges & Universities](#)

Mr. Bradbury testified that the CSCU system appreciates the committee raising this bill and looks forward to working with legislators and agencies on it. He went on to say that 9 of the “community colleges offer curriculum approved by the Department of Labor and the Office of Apprenticeship Training.”

[Jeanette W. Weldon, Executive Director, Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority \(“CHEFA”\), Executive Director, Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority \(“CHESLA”\)](#)

Ms. Weldon said that CHEFA and CHESLA support this legislation because the quasi-public authority proposed in the legislation will provide a connection between educational institutions, businesses, and our future workforce.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

See Response from Administration/Agency.

[John Beauregard, President/CEO, Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board](#)

Mr. Beauregard submitted testimony in support of this legislation. He shared with committee members that the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board has convened the regional public-private partnership that oversees the Eastern CT Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative.

[Andrea Comer, Vice President, Workforce Strategies, Connecticut Business and Industry Association](#)

Ms. Comer’s testimony was in support of this bill. She stated that there are currently 13,000 unfilled manufacturing jobs in Connecticut. Ms. Comer went on to say that this legislation will help close the gap between manufacturers and people looking for work.

[Connecticut Association of Smaller Manufacturers \(CASM\)](#)

CASM submitted testimony in support, with some qualifications. They doubt that the industry will make an investment without being in control of operational details, that with no definite direction there will not be any meaningful action taken and that a new group of people should be involved.

[David Downes, Program Administrator, Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education](#)

Mr. Downes submitted testimony in support of this bill. He offered that employer sourced funding for apprenticeship programs needs to be encouraged, noting that it has decreased

over the past 2 decades. Mr. Downes also pointed out that because transportation is an issue in many parts of the state that decision making needs to be regionally based to best address access to programs.

[Kimberly Glassman, Director, Foundation for Fair Contracting of Connecticut, Inc.](#)

Ms. Glassman explained her organization's relationship with the Connecticut Department of [Labor's Office of Apprenticeship Training](#). She urged the committee to work with the Office of Apprenticeship Training to expand apprenticeship opportunities while protecting the Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee programs.

[Dr. Ruth Levy, Superintendent of Schools, Chester, Deep River, Essex, and Region 4 Schools](#)

Dr. Levy shared how her schools are already working with local manufacturers to have students take courses and that at the completion of the courses the students receive a certificate of advanced study in Manufacturing or Engineering from Connecticut's Department of Labor. She stated that the courses provide students with pre-apprenticeship experiences. Dr. Levy urged support for this legislation.

[Fran Rabinowitz, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents \(CAPSS\)](#)

Ms. Rabinowitz's testimony stated: "I believe that having an Authority dedicated to this goal and providing the experiences that students need to choose a career wisely is incredibly important. I would respectfully recommend that a CAPSS representative is included on this committee."

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

See Response from Administration/Agency.

[Cameron Champlin, Representative, Plumbers and Steam Fitters Local Union 777](#)

Mr. Champlin is against this legislation because he believes it duplicates work already being done by the Department of Labor and urged the committee against moving this bill forward.

[Lori J. Pelletier, President, Connecticut AFL-CIO](#)

Ms. Pelletier stated that "the Connecticut AFL-CIO opposes this bill because this work is already being done within the Connecticut Department of Labor." She continued "Rather than re-invent the wheel by passing the Department of Labor's work to an unproven public private partnership, this Committee would be wise to explore how existing apprenticeship programs might be utilized or expanded to meet the needs of employers in high-demand, high-growth jobs."

[Zachary Rubin, Representative, Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers \("SMART"\) Local 40](#)

Mr. Rubin indicated that the SMART Local 40 is against this legislation because "This bill would unnecessarily create a new quasi-public entity, the Apprenticeship, Recruitment and Training Authority ("the Authority"), to engage in many of the same functions as the apprenticeship office of the Connecticut Department of Labor ("DOL"). Moreover, given the rather broad statutory language in SB 213, the Authority could become a vehicle to erode existing apprenticeship standards and protections. . . . Notwithstanding its opposition, Local

40 would be happy to engage in discussions with the proponents to explore new ways to promote and expand apprenticeship opportunities.”

[Joyce Wojtas, Lobbyist, Mechanical Contractors Association of Connecticut](#)

Ms. Wojtas’ testimony stated “. . . the duties of this new “Quasi-Public Agency” are already being undertaken by the CT Department of Labor, which is and has been authorized by the U.S. Department of Labor as the agency to administer apprenticeship programs. . . . DOL currently works closely with the Technical School System, Community Colleges, Higher Education systems which this bill would duplicate. . . . Any additional funds that would be required under this bill (if they are available) should be allocated to the DOL to enhance their mission.”

**Reported by:** Jeanie Phillips, Clerk

**Date:** March 27, 2018