

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-214

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY COLLEGE CONSOLIDATION.

Vote Date: 3/6/2018

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/27/2018

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following Joint Favorable Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

To close, merge, or consolidate any or all institutions within the Connecticut State University System, the regional community-technical college system if those institutions align with criteria established by the Board of Regents. This requires that in the event of a recommended closing, the Board of Regents approves the closing by a two-thirds vote and notifies the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee about the recommended closing or the recommended merger or consolidation.

Substitute language:

- Deletes from the original bill the revised procedure for BOR to follow when merging/consolidating institutions:
 - 1) Obtain accreditation for merged institutions
 - 2) Notify the HED committee of proposed merger and receipt of new accreditation
 - 3) Hold two-thirds vote of the board in favor of merger (formerly lines 16-37)

- Lines 86-120: Adds new reporting requirements and communications access requirement (see above)

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None submitted

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Bryan Bonina, President of the Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges](#): President Bonina testified in support of this bill. He emphasized the Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges' agreement with the committee that no consolidation should endanger any community college's accreditation. He encouraged the creation of an Accrediting Standard Committee to report on accreditation status.

[JoAnn Ryan, President & CEO, Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce](#): President Ryan testified in support of this bill. She and the members of the Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce value the contributions of Northwestern Community College and the efforts Northwestern Community College has made to meet the needs of employers. She highlighted the Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce's support for President Ojakian's "Students First" proposal. She asked that a qualified resident of Northwest Connecticut be placed on the Board of Regents, as none of the Board members currently reside there.

[The Connecticut Community College Round Table](#): The Connecticut Community College Round Table testified in support of this bill. While they believe that the stipulation that the Board of Regents obtain accreditation in advance of consolidation will safeguard higher education in Connecticut, they expressed "concerns about the emerging plan's lack of attention and specific guarantees related to the Commission's accreditation standards..."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Mark Archambault](#): Mr. Archambault testified in opposition to this bill. As a business owner and former president of the Quinebaug Valley Community College foundation board, he has been involved with QVCC for many years and believes it to be run very efficiently. He sees the consolidation as the sacrifice of that efficiency for what he believes to be marginal savings.

[John Board](#): Mr. Board testified in opposition to this bill. As a student, Mr. Board was concerned with what the impact of consolidation would be in regard to students. Mr. Board would be more comfortable if legislative and gubernatorial approval was needed prior to a final vote.

[Charlene Lavoie, Community Lawyer, Winsted CT](#): Ms. Lavoie testified in opposition to this bill. She recommended the committee substitute language in order to require legislative approval for any consolidation proposals.

[State Representative Terrie Wood, 141st District](#): Representative Wood testified in opposition to this bill. She expressed concerns about the ultimate savings achieved by the plan and the transparency in regard to the consolidation proposal. She expressed support for the community colleges to hold informational public hearings with their communities in regard to the consolidation proposal and addition of language to SB 214 that gives final approval to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee and the legislature.

Reported by: Stephanie Goebel

Date: March 20, 2018

