

Education Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7083

AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF PUERTO RICAN AND LATINO

Title: STUDIES IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM.

Vote Date: 3/25/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/6/2019

File No.: 615

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Education Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill aims to include Puerto Rican and Latino studies in the public school curriculum as our current curriculum does not give a full, comprehensive take on Puerto Rican and Latino history.

Substitute Language:

Substitute language adds the below sections:

Section 2: Requires each Board of Education include Puerto Rican and Latino studies to its curriculum starting with the 2019-2020 school year.

Section 3: Makes Puerto Rican and Latino studies a one-credit requirement for graduation, starting with the graduating class of 2023.

Section 4 & 5: Requires SDE, by July 1, 2020, to develop the one-credit Puerto Rican and Latino studies curriculum.

Section 6: Requires the State Board of Education, by July 1, 2020, to develop a model curriculum for grades K through 8 to include Puerto Rican and Latino studies among various subject matter areas. Also requires SDE to provide assistance and training to implement the curriculum.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner, Department of Education: The Department is very supportive of this bill. They do, however, request that the date of implementation be extended to July 1, 2021 so that they can create a comprehensive set of guidelines. With the implementation of the Holocaust and genocide studies to the curriculum last year, they have found that it takes a significant amount of time to engage appropriate stakeholders with their social studies consultant to create guidelines they can recommend.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Representative Geraldo Reyes Jr., 75th District: Representative Reyes is extremely proud of our state's recent strides in focusing on cultures and religions in public schools. He supports this bill as it will continue to celebrate our nation's diversity and encourage students to embrace our cultural diversity.

Fran Rabinowitz, Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS): CAPSS supports this bill as they believe it is time to have a statewide model curriculum in every content area. Having statewide model curriculum would allow the contributions of Puerto Ricans and Latinos in science, arts, literacy and language arts to be represented, thus representing all members of our school community.

Jeff Leake, President, Connecticut Education Association (CEA): CEA wholeheartedly supports this bill and believes this addition is long overdue. They believe in the dissemination of information and programs that include the heritage, language, culture and history of Hispanics and we must work to provide an inclusive community for these students and parents.

Steve Ginsberg, Director, Anti-Defamation League – CT (ADL-CT): The ADL supports this bill and speaks to the harm caused by historic ignorance and cultural insensitivity. This bill is important to provide education and address the gaps in understanding which can cause racial bias and hateful incidents.

The Education Committee received over 35 similar pieces of testimony in support of this bill. Students, teachers, parents and advocates support the inclusion of Puerto Rican and Latino studies to the public school curriculum.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE): CABE supports the initiative of this bill but opposes the specific curriculum mandates. They believe resources are available from the DOE to enable districts to incorporate these topics, making a mandate unnecessary.

Reported by: Garnet McLaughlin

Date: 4/9/2019