

Labor and Public Employees Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-5

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A WORKFORCE PIPELINE AND JOB CREATION

Title: TASK FORCE.

Vote Date: 3/19/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/12/2019

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor and Public Employees Committee.

REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill will create an 11 member task force to help guide and create a workforce pipeline and job creation mechanism to prepare the state future workforce for well-paying manufacturing and technical jobs located.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Kurt Westby, Commissioner, Department of Labor: Commissioner Westby's testimony supports the creation of jobs and services strengthening the community workforce and economy, but said this bill may duplicate the charge of the CT Employment and Training Commission. The office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) has staff, leadership, support and technical assistance available. CT also has 5 Regional Workforce Development Boards which conduct comprehensive planning and coordinate regional workforce development policy and programs. There is already a statewide partnership whose goal is to achieve comprehensive workforce development, guided by the Governor. They would be happy to discuss the most effective ways to achieve the goals of this bill.

Shawn T. Wooden, Treasurer, State of Connecticut: Manufacturing is undergoing a resurgence in the State but there are not enough skilled workers or training programs to meet the need. More immediate and vital efforts should be made through the combined efforts of the State, businesses and academic communities. Residents must have access to good jobs and the state's economy must be ready for the 21st century. Investing in the workforce will generate excellent returns both for residents and the business community.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT: CT General Assembly, Senate Democrats: A letter of support was submitted supporting efforts to supply skilled workers in all business fields, including manufacturing, skilled trades and health. CT must to look for ways to create a pipeline to guide new generations. The letter was signed by President Pro Tempore Martin M. Looney, Majority Leader Bob Duff, Senators Mary Daugherty Abrams, Saud Anwar, Steve Cassano, Christine Cohen, Will Haskell, Julie Kushner, Carlo Leone, James Maroney, Doug McCrory, Marilyn Moore, Norm Needleman, Catherine Osten, Alex Bergstein, Mae Flexer and Dennis Bradley.

Nora Duncan, State Director, AARP CT: It may be surprising to see AARP weighing in about manufacturing, but they are working closely with high schools and colleges on a project. Students are getting interested in manufacturing, but the demand is out-pacing the supply. The need for instructors is so great that AARP received a request for assistance to identify and recruit retired manufacturers who might consider applying real world skills in the classroom. A commissioned study found there was interest in teaching, but instructor training, supports and guidance are lacking. The main reason respondents want to teach is to help build the future-manufacturing workforce. About half of them stay informed about advanced manufacturing developments. Respondents want their employers to share a variety of opportunities including flex and part time work options. They emphasize expanding opportunities for instructors and for those without a college degree.

Elizabeth Fraser, Policy Director, CT Association for Human Services (CAHS): Ms. Fraser's testimony requested consideration of two elements to amplify the potential impact of a career pipeline and workforce task force. First, consider those left behind. Many graduated from high school (or have a GED) but still lack necessary skills to get into educational/training programs. Within 10 years, an estimated 70% of CT jobs will require postsecondary education or specialized training. Additional developmental education opportunities should be made available. Second, consider future generations by establishing two-generational initiatives that specifically ensure both children and adults in the same household receive targeted services. This allows those with lower levels of education to participate meaningfully. Providing high quality training and education is essential to the skilled workforce needed to grow the economy.

Shannon Jacovino, Director, Advocacy & Public Policy, ARC: They ask the bill be amended to include at least one seat on the task force filled by a representative from the disability community. Greater employment for people with disabilities yields a positive return on taxpayer investments with a \$1.46 return on every \$1 spent on well-executed employment. To access employment planning, vocational and social skill building supports are needed. This can be done by starting transition at age 14 with a robust planning instrument like Charting the LifeCourse, braiding existing federal funding in order to take advantage of each agency's expertise, and publishing successes of all types as they occur. There is a need for tax incentives for businesses, increase opportunities for post-secondary education and increased earning/ assets without losing eligibility for needed public benefits.

Jim Perras, CEO, Home Builders & Remodelers Association of CT: They recommend adding an individual with residential construction labor market expertise to the taskforce. Also, the language should include well-paying residential construction jobs, particularly the

licensed trades including plumbing, electrical, heating and air conditioning where there is a shortage of manpower.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None submitted.

Reported by: Marie Knudsen

Date: March 27, 2019