

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-274

AN ACT REQUIRING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LEARN HERE, LIVE

Title: HERE PROGRAM.

Vote Date: 3/14/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/28/2019

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Sen. Hwang, 28th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

Substitute language on line 11 bumps out the date in current law for student eligibility to 2020. Lines 12-14 specify that eligible graduates must not have an adjusted gross income of more than \$125,000. Lines 55-64 require the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) commissioner to file a lien against program participant's property to secure repayment.

An amendment was made on the floor to change the number of \$125,000 to \$75,000.

SB 274 would help Connecticut graduates establish their roots in the state and encourage students to stay in Connecticut after they finish their education. The incentive that this bill provides would strengthen the state's educated workforce, thus strengthening the economy.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

David A. Lehman, Acting Commissioner, Department of Economic and Community Development:

David Lehman testified on behalf of the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) in opposition to the Learn Here, Live Here program. DECD states, "While we are generally supportive of efforts to keep young graduates here in the state, we are concerned that DECD is not the appropriate agency to administer this program." SB 274 would put the DECD in charge of issuing the payments to the participants of this program; therefore the department does not wish to be a part of the program.

Nathan Fuerst, Vice President for Enrollment Planning and Management, University of Connecticut: Nathan Fuerst testified in support of SB 274, stating that the bill “adds further incentive for graduates to lay down roots, creating financial encouragement for home ownership in the state.” While UConn already has had much success in addressing Connecticut’s ‘brain drain,’ Mr. Fuerst commends the efforts of SB 274 which could help UConn graduates save towards a down payment on their first home.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Tony Hwang, State Senator, 28th District, Connecticut General Assembly: Senator Tony Hwang testified in favor of SB 274, stating that the bill would “help curb Connecticut’s ‘brain drain’ by allowing graduates to more easily save money for their first Connecticut home.” Connecticut faces a shocking negative population growth, especially in the 18-34 age demographic. Sen. Hwang believes that this bill will help solve this issue, as well as improve our state’s housing market.

Themis Klarides, State Representative, 114th District, Connecticut General Assembly: Representative Themis Klarides testified in support of SB 274. Rep. Klarides states that “Under current law, the Commissioner MAY establish a Learn Here, Live Here program, but does not require him to do so. In order for the program to be implemented and to benefit recent college graduates, the law needs to be amended to REQUIRE the Commissioner to establish the program.”

Several speakers testified in full support of SB 274, stating that this bill would encourage more students from Connecticut to remain in the state, and for out-of-state students to come to Connecticut for their higher education, and then live and purchase a home here after graduating. The Learn Here, Live Here program would benefit the future of our state by incentivizing more young educated people to stay here. This program will also boost our state’s housing industry. Our state is currently too expensive to maintain a stable living, and it is argued that we must pass this bill in order to help residents afford to live here.

- **Peter G. Arakelian**
- **Bryan R. Bonina, President, Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges**
- **Connecticut Realtors**
- **Brianna Cully**
- **Jacob Martillotti**
- **Patricia O'Neill, President, Connecticut State University - American Association of University Professors**
- **John J. Petillo, President, Sacred Heart University**
- **Michelle Rakebrand, Assistant Counsel, Connecticut Business and Industry Association**
- **Neil Randle**
- **Samantha Traub**
- **Jennifer Widness, President, Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges**

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

See RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/ AGENCY

Reported by: Beatrice O'Neil

Date: 03/25/2019