

# Education Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-957

AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF COMPUTER SCIENCE INSTRUCTION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM, PROGRAMS OF TEACHER PREPARATION AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR

**Title:** TEACHERS.

**Vote Date:** 3/25/2019

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/6/2019

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Education Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill aims to give Connecticut students in-school Computer Science training. Both state and nationwide there is an influx of Computer Science based job opening and not nearly enough trained professionals to fill them. This bill aims to give our students the basic computer skills necessary to pursue a career in the field.

Substitute Language:

Substitute language removes computer science from a list of required in-service training offerings, per the Departments recommendations.

Section 3: Substitute language expands the Office of Higher Education's Alternate Route to Teacher Certification (ARC) to include a program for computer science teachers.

Section 4: Gives the State Board of Education (SBE) authority to allow for part-time computer science teachers and mandates that the teachers have 1) a Bachelor's degree, 2) have three years of work experience in computer science teaching or one year of work experience and two years of specialized computer science schooling, and 3) achieve a satisfactory score on the appropriate SBE-approved assessment.

Section 5: Modifies existing law to require SBE to adopt regulations regarding certification for Computer Science teachers.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner, Department of Education: The Department supports including Computer Science instruction to the school curriculum. They do not support any additions to in-service professional development/training requirements for teachers. Three years ago the Department chaired a task force aiming at reducing the amount of mandated teacher training and they do not support moving in the opposite direction.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Senator Kevin Witkos, 8<sup>th</sup> District:** Senator Witkos supports this bill as it prepares our students for career opportunities in the computer science field and aligns our curriculum with the needs of our economy. He would also like to see a computer science instruction plan for grades K – 12, and require computer science count towards a graduation requirement.

**Senator James Maroney, 14<sup>th</sup> District:** Senator Maroney strongly supports this bill and reiterated the importance of preparing our students for a changing career field and giving them the computer science based training they will need.

**Subira Gordon, Executive Director, ConCANN:** Ms. Gordon supports this bill as we need to support our students and train them to fill computer based jobs. She also states that as men outnumber women in jobs in the Computer Science field 4:1, expanding access to CS training can create equity.

**Heather Sutkowski, Elementary School Computer Science Teacher:** Ms. Sukowski supports this bill but requests mandated funding with the bill.

**Norm Sondheimer, a member of the State Department of Education Computer Science Advisory Committee:** Mr. Sondheimer strongly supports the need for teaching Computer Science however he respectfully requests the committee to create a temporary advisory committee to facilitate and best educate administrators and teachers on the creation of a Computer Science curriculum.

**James Vareesi:** Supports this bill but thinks it should be strengthened by including more Professional Development so teachers can adequately teach computer science.

**Chinma Uche, Ph.D., Math & Computer Science Teacher, CREC's Academy off Aerospace and Engineering:** Dr. Uche strongly supports teaching Computer Science in schools but respectfully requests funding with this mandate so that all students gain access to Computer Science.

**Winnie Yu, Computer Science Faculty, Southern Connecticut State University:** Ms. Yu supports this bill and speaks to the need to invest in our talent pipelines. She would like to see the bill go further by 1) requiring computer science training for future teachers, 2) fund said required training, and 3) extend the Alternate Route to Certification to include Computer Science education.

*The Education Committee received over 25 similar pieces of testimony which support this bill but request state funding and Professional Development to best accomplish this mandate.*

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Jan Hochadal, President, AFT CT:** While AFT supports the goal of this bill, they are concerned that implementing these classes in the 2019-2020 school schedule is not possible. They are also concerned that adding another mandated class is extremely difficult to fit into students' already full schedules. Lastly they are concerned that their current funding cannot support these mandates.

**Reported by: Garnet McLaughlin**

**Date: 4/4/2019**