Bill No.: SB-1029
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING PUBLIC UTILITY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.
Vote Date: 3/19/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 3/12/2019
File No.: 383

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Commerce committee

REASONS FOR BILL:
S.B. 1029 establishes extensive workforce development in fields considered to be public utility. Such fields include electricity, tolls and roads, waste disposal, and more. The advancement of the public utility workforce will increase employment opportunities to a larger population, and address solutions to several issues raised within the public utility employment community.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:
None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

1. Lori Vitagliano, Government and Public Relations Specialist, Regional Water Authority: testified in support of the bill and spoke about several local universities and colleges that offer programs to help and encourage students pursue careers in public utility and stated “We believe S.B. 1029 will help these programs reach more Connecticut students so that we can meet the coming need for new employees in the utility industry”.

2. Guy Russo, former Director of Water Infrastructure, Middletown Water and Sewer Department: states the bill will help attract employees at a younger age and nurture their careers in public utility.
3. **David Kuzminski, Town of Portland**: supports the concept presented in S.B. 1029 by expressing the notion that it will attract students to the public utility industry and help meet the industry’s demands: “The passage of SB No. 1029 is important as it would encourage increased cooperation between technical high schools, colleges, universities, and utilities”.

4. **Patricia Smith**: touches on the importance of this bill to those with intellectual or developmental disability that benefit from workforce programs the bill could help fund. Smith also spoke about her personal experience regarding the effect the lack of funding and attention may have on such programs, and continued to reiterate “Our community needs legislators who understand the complexities of our IDD community and the diverse needs of its children and adults”.

5. **Jaye Carlson**: explains his son has down syndrome and greatly benefits from being employed in several ways and fully supports S.B. 1029

6. **Elizabeth Gara, Connecticut Water Works Association**: expresses the need for S.B. 1029 to attract new employees, and implement public utility programs in technical high schools, and colleges as the amount of retiring employees increases.

7. **Albert Carbone, UIL Holdings Corporation**: provides the committee with statistics and examples of why he supports S.B. 1029, stating “According to the US Department of Energy, 25% of employees currently working in the electric and natural gas utility field will be ready for retirement within five years”. Carbone continues to provide insight as to how S.B. will be able to help make the employee transition smoother.

8. **Maureen Belden, and Kim Beckett**: also submitted testimony in support of S.B. 1029

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

1. **Ed Leavy, President, State Vocational Federation of Teachers**: does not believe S.B. directly correlates to the modern school system and says “I do know this bill cannot achieve its goal by utilizing the process it describes”.

2. **Utility Contractors Association of Connecticut**: express the need for S.B. 1029 to include representation of “utility contracting and construction industry and representatives from state colleges and universities offering courses in utility contracting and construction or construction management”.

3. **Shannon Jacovino, Director of Advocacy & Public Policy, the Arc of Connecticut**: generally supports the concept of S.B. 1029 but would like the committee to amend the bill to include language representing those with intellectual and developmental disorders.

Reported by: Ginger Rodriguez  Date: 3/28/19