

# Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5013

AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESS TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION

**Title:** ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BY ELIGIBLE COLLEGE STUDENTS.

**Vote Date:** 3/3/2020

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 2/13/2020

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill seeks to increase the number of college students eligible for SNAP benefits by removing disqualifications for low income students.

Substitute language allows the Board of Trustees of The University of Connecticut to consult with the Department of Social Services to identify programs that deem students eligible for benefits.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Connecticut Department of Social Services](#): The Department of Social Services is in support of this bill, because it increases the number of students eligible for SNAP benefits. Currently, students enrolled in a Connecticut college or university are not eligible for benefits because most of them do not satisfy a qualified federal exemption.

[Alexandra Pilon, Dir. of Government Relations, CSCU](#): The Connecticut State Colleges and Universities are in support of this bill, noting that they have already created programs to educate SNAP recipients and have partnered with the Department of Social Services to ensure that access to benefit information is readily available to those who need it.

### NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Maureen Chalmers, President, Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges](#): The Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges is in support of this bill. They note that food insecurity is

a growing problem on Connecticut college campuses, and support efforts to ensure that students can access SNAP benefits if eligible.

[Robin Lamott Sparks, Executive Director, End Hunger Connecticut](#): End Hunger Connecticut is in support of this bill, because the current criteria to be deemed eligible for benefits is too narrow to cover the number of students who need them. They note that food insecurity is a common issue among Connecticut students. They suggest alternative language to expand student eligibility by increasing the number of educational and training programs which exempt students from the 20-hour work requirement.

[Lucy Potter, Attorney, Greater Hartford Legal Aid](#): Attorney Potter submitted testimony in support of this bill, and notes that SNAP rules are restrictive when it comes to college student eligibility. She suggests alternative language in Section 1 to more broadly reference the Food Stamp Act provision so that the state can identify programs within the community college system that target low income students and increase employability.

[UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity](#): The Rudd Center submitted testimony in support of this bill, noting that a recent survey of 43,000 college students found that 36% of students reported experiencing food insecurity in the last month, and that in 2016, 2 million students in the United States who were potentially eligible for SNAP did not report receiving benefits. They note that the eligibility rules are complex and burdensome to college students, and that food insecurity is a significant barrier to student success.

[Jennifer Widness, President, Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges](#): The CCIC supports the intent of this bill, but suggests that the scope of the bill should not be limited to public colleges, and that programs at independent colleges should be considered as well.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None expressed.

**Reported by: Assistant Clerk Krystin DeLucia**

**Date: March 4, 2020**