



David Lehman,
Commissioner

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE COMMERCE COMMITTEE

February 27, 2020

*David Lehman, Commissioner
Department of Economic and Community Development*

*House Bill 5162: An Act Requiring the Establishment of the Learn Here,
Live Here Program*

Good afternoon Senator Hartley, Representative Simmons, Senator Martin, Representative Cummings and members of the Commerce committee. My name is David Lehman, and I am commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). I appreciate this opportunity submit testimony on House Bill 5162 An Act Requiring The Establishment of The Learn Here, Live Here Program.

As you know, our mission at DECD is to develop and implement strategies to increase the state's economic competitiveness. We do this by attracting and retaining businesses and jobs, revitalizing neighborhoods and communities, and preserving and promoting Connecticut's arts, cultural and tourism assets.

House Bill 5162 would require DECD, in consultation with the Department of Revenue Services and the State Colleges and Universities, to establish a Learn Here, Live Here program. While we are generally supportive of efforts to keep young graduates here in the state, we are concerned that we lack the personnel and funding to carry out this program. Specifically, it would be extremely difficult and costly for our agency to track potentially thousands of graduates' addresses and occupations over a five to ten year period. Further, state income taxes and citizens' addresses are currently housed in the Department of Revenue Services while information about individuals' occupations are housed in the Department of Labor. Not only would it be difficult to obtain that information, additional legislation and/or multiple Memorandums of Understanding may need to be passed in order to do so. Additionally, we believe the large fiscal cost to the state would not necessarily provide a return on investment as it could potentially only end up supporting a very small number of graduates, many of whom were already planning to live here in our state.

I would look forward to continued discussions on this legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration.