

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5356

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS.

Vote Date: 3/10/2020

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/5/2020

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill creates a task force to study the feasibility of establishing a pathways in technology early college high school program in alliance with districts that would enroll students from surrounding towns. The intent is to support the needs of Connecticut's workforce for high-skilled workers.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Mark Ojakian, President, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities: President Ojakian writes that students who participate in early college programs are significantly more likely to graduate from high school, more likely to enroll in college, and more likely to complete a college degree. He notes that Connecticut has relatively few early college options. He believes that certain types of youth and young adults would benefit from a scaled early college or dual enrollment program in Connecticut. He adds that a scaled and coordinated early college or dual enrollment program focused on underrepresented students would provide the most conducive environment for student engagement and connection.

Timothy Larson, Executive Director, Office of Higher Education: Director Larson writes that the Office of Higher Education believes HB 5356 is unwarranted at current because Governor Lamont's Executive Order 4 launched the Governor's Workforce Council (GWC) to study and plan for the state's workforce needs. He states that the responsibility of the GWC both overlaps with and is broader than the proposed task force in this bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Steven Hernandez, Executive Director, Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity (CWCSEO): Mr. Hernandez submitted testimony in support of the bill on behalf of CWCSEO. They believe this bill will promote workforce readiness for public school students, protect civil rights through the establishment of a common framework among higher education institutions, and will be in the best interest of Connecticut's students because it provides them with a structure to establish healthy, sustainable, and fruitful post-secondary education career pathways.

Susan Johnson, State Representative, 49th Connecticut General Assembly District: Representative Johnson submitted testimony in support of the bill. She writes that the ECO program in the Town of Windham school district has the capacity to contribute to the state's need to fill manufacturing positions. She believes expanding the ECO program to regions surrounding the alliance district high schools will help to meet the needs of our advanced manufacturing industries in Connecticut that are facing the retirement of many employees.

Shannon Marimon, Executive Director, ReadyCT: Ms. Marimon submitted testimony in support of the bill. She believes this bill will create a stronger link between K-12 education and preparation for the world of work thus justly educating Connecticut's students and enabling the state to compete economically with other states and countries. She cites the success of similar pathways in technology early college models that have been established in the municipalities of Norwalk, New London, Windham, Danbury, and Stamford. She also cites a study that suggests that a high-quality and specialized technical education in high school can positively impact the lives of male student who might otherwise be disengaged in school.

Carissa Rutkauskas, Outreach and Evaluation Specialist, University of Connecticut Early College Experience Program: Ms. Rutkauskas submitted testimony in support of the bill. She writes that her program seeks to join the task force to be established under the bill due to UConn's deep roots in Connecticut high schools and their expertise in enhancing high school instructor and student opportunities. She opines that student success starts with a robust investment in high school instructors. She further writes that UConn seeks to join the task force to increase college high school programming in alliance school districts.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Justin Boutin, Assistant Clerk

Date: March 11, 2020