

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-304

AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSPORTATION SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO STUDENTS AT INSTITUTIONS OF

Title: HIGHER EDUCATION.

Vote Date: 3/10/2020

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/3/2020

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill seeks to give the transportation commissioner the ability to create contracts with institutes of higher education to increase transportation options for students. It requires these contracts to specify, at a minimum, (1) effective dates for student transportation passes, (2) terms of use for the passes, (3) specific services the pass can be used for, (4) terms for institutional payments to DOT, and (5) other necessary terms and conditions.

Substitute language was added to include private occupational schools as eligible to participate in contracting with DOT.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Jennifer Widness, President, CT Conference of Independent Colleges](#): Ms. Widness submitted testimony in support of this bill on behalf of the CCIC. They believe that expanding DOT's authority to expand the UPASS program to the fifteen private colleges in Connecticut will give students in the state more access to school, work, and internship opportunities.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Don Soja, Vice President, CT Bus Association: Mr. Soja submitted testimony in opposition to this bill. He notes that the current UPASS program comes with a significant loss of revenue to private transportation companies – notably Peter Pan, the company he works for. This loss of revenue caused them to drastically reduce service and reduce fares to compete with subsidized state services. If this bill were passed, he believes that most if not all private transportation companies would experience the same revenue loss.

Jean Cronin, Executive Director, CT Bus Association: Ms. Cronin submitted testimony in opposition to this bill on behalf of the CBA. They believe that this bill could jeopardize the existing contracts that their member companies currently have with private colleges and universities, and effectively eliminate private sector contracts by replacing them with state contracts that could be more costly and less efficient. In addition, adding the Metro North to the UPASS system would overcrowd the trains and affect commuters who use the system to get to and from work on a daily basis.

Reported by: Assistant Clerk Krystin DeLucia Date: March 10, 2020