

# Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5467

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A "FEE-FREE DAY" AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF

**Title:** HIGHER EDUCATION.

**Vote Date:** 3/22/2021

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 2/18/2021

**File No.:** 332

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

REP. HAINES, 34th Dist.

### REASONS FOR BILL:

To establish November 1<sup>st</sup> as a "Fee-Free Day" at public institutions of higher learning, where application fees are waived for high school students in the state who complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

#### [Sean Bradbury, Senior Director of Government Relations and External Affairs, Connecticut State Colleges & Universities \(CSCU\):](#)

On behalf of CSCU, Mr. Bradbury says, "We appreciate the attention to initiatives such as this to drive more cost-conscious enrollment efforts at our public institutions. The CSCU system already offers a number of fee-free application opportunities including completely fee-free applications at Connecticut's community colleges. We are currently working with the Governor's Office to expand these opportunities with an application fee-free guaranteed admissions program for the state universities. We look forward to working with the committee to find ways to incorporate this with our ongoing efforts, including the Governor's proposal to require FAFSA completion as a condition of graduation from a Connecticut high school, while mitigating possible administrative concerns."

#### [Nathan Fuerst, Vice-President for Enrollment Planning & Management, University of Connecticut \(UConn\):](#)

Submitted written testimony in opposition. Mr. Fuerst says, "we have concerns about whether the bill as proposed is feasible due to how the college application process works. ... For logistical reasons the proposed legislation is unlikely to result in meaningful progress towards

the elimination of barriers for students. Students tend to apply for admission prior to submitting a FAFSA. This is because the admissions applications deadlines typically precede priority filing deadlines for the FAFSA. This sequencing is important since by asking students to apply for admission first, institutions then have opportunities to conduct targeted outreach to students to encourage them to submit a FAFSA."

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

##### **John Board**

Submitted written testimony in support with substitute language. Mr. Board says, "Passage and implementation of this policy will provide relief to our students and will boost enrollment at our public institutions of higher education." He explains how similar legislation has succeeded in Colorado and suggests removing the FAFSA completion "hurdle."

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

None expressed.

**Reported by: Jeremy Salyer**

**Date: 04/09/2021**