

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5668

AN ACT REQUIRING THE OFFICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO ESTABLISH A

Title: MICROCREDENTIAL PILOT PROGRAM.

Vote Date: 3/22/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/9/2021

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY, 133rd Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

To establish a microcredential pilot program.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Kelli Vallieres, PhD, Executive Director of the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS) and the Vice Chair of the Governor's Workforce Council (GWC):

Submitted written testimony. Dr. Vallieres says OWS and GWC are tasked with developing the state's workforce from Pre-K through retirement. With this in mind, the GWC's 2020 strategic plan highlighted four central pillars: partnerships, employer and educational alignment, barrier removal, and dispersed data. HB 5668 is aligned with these goals and is complemented by SB 881, introduced by Gov. Lamont. Dr. Vallieres says Connecticut should seek to leverage the existing network of microcredential providers in order to expand the credentials offered in the state.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Peter Glovin:

Submitted written testimony in support. Mr. Glovin says the Pandemic has shown us the value of varied approaches to learning, and "that micro credentials will help the citizens of Connecticut gain better and more equitable access to learning opportunities." He says that micro credentials also benefit workers and employers by expanding access, reducing education costs, and verifying specific skills.

Patrick Leonard, COO and Co-founder of MIDAS Education:

Submitted written testimony in support. Mr. Leonard advocates for a mastery-based learning system. His company has partnered with the state of Utah, "offering Microcredentials to teachers throughout the state so educators can show evidence of teaching mastery and improve their classroom instruction." Utah will soon expand their offerings to students. MIDAS has similar programs in Wyoming and Washington.

Shannon Marimón, Executive Director, ReadyCT:

Submitted written testimony in support. Ms. Marimón says "microcredentials are of tremendous value to students and employers," and 70% of workers will need some form of postsecondary education in the next four years. She says encouraging microcredentials in the ever-evolving job market will provide to workers a "competitive edge over neighboring non-resident job applicants." ReadyCT urges acceptance of existing standards under the GWC 2020 strategic plan, section 1.2, to avoid duplication of efforts. Further, by placing microcredentials under the purview of OWS, Connecticut residents can benefit from "a true one-stop experience for both microcredentials and full credential programs."

Jennifer Widness, President, Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC):

Submitted written testimony in support. Ms. Widness says, "many CCIC institutions offer short-term, for-credit credential programs," they increasingly serve as "on-ramps" to post-secondary education, and a statewide platform with "basic standards would benefit students and their families." CCIC urges close collaboration with OWS to ensure alignment between strategy and in-demand careers.

Ashley Zane, Government Affairs Associate, Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA):

Submitted written testimony in support. CBIA views this bill as a way improve access to post-secondary skills and credentials. They specifically support "line 36 through 37 which requires the credential provider to indicate if it is industry recognized." CBIA believes this bill will provide a competitive advantage to Connecticut residents over regional counterparts.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Jeremy Salyer

Date: 04/05/2021