

General Law Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6445

AN ACT EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IN OCCUPATIONS

Title: LICENSED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION.

Vote Date: 3/23/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/23/2021

File No.: 342

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Introduced by:

Request of the Governor Pursuant to Joint Rule 9

Co-sponsor: Rep. Robin E. Comey, 102nd District

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would allow for persons who hold an out of state occupational license to move to the state and be eligible to take their licensing exam in the state providing they have practiced their occupation for at least one year. Under the state of Connecticut's current law, it makes it difficult for companies and people who hold occupational licenses to move into the state, this also impacts military families. If a military family is transferred to Connecticut and the spouse has a license, they are restricted in their ability to practice their occupation. This bill also would clarify which background issues can result in denial of an applicant and makes the way the state agencies conducts background checks and make licensing decisions based on those results. One of the requirements of getting licensed in Connecticut is the requirement that a person be of good moral character, good moral character is subjective. This bill eliminates that wording. By changing the current law, it would promote job growth and allow for companies and people to move into Connecticut.

Substitute language

The substitute language would change the time that a person practices their occupation in another state from one year to four years.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

OFFICE OF GOVERNOR NED LAMONT, STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Mr. Jonny Dach on behalf of Governor Lamont supports this bill. The system of occupational licenses preserves public health and safety, as well as consumer confidence and employee

welfare. At times, the unnecessarily high barriers to entry deter workers from promising careers and skilled workers from moving to Connecticut. People wanting to call Connecticut home have to navigate intricate, job-specific requirements to even consider the move. HB6445 and its twin in the Public Health Committee replace the patchwork of occupational specific licensing requirements with a clear, consistent and welcoming policy that will make it easier to attract people and employers to our state.

SUSAN BYSIEWICZ, LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, STATE OF CONNECTICUT

The Lieutenant Governor supports this bill. The Council of Women and Girls is supporting this legislation, particularly Section 1 impacting military spouses, over 90% are women. She is grateful for Military Affairs Executive Director Robert Ross for raising the issue of military spouses and the difficulty they have working within their occupation after moving to a different state. We thank the Governor for proposing and supporting this bill. It is important that Connecticut removes unnecessary barriers for the spouses of those serving in the military to have gainful employment.

MICHELLE SEAGULL, COMMISSIONER, CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION, STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Commissioner Seagull is in support of this bill. This bill would allow those who move to Connecticut, or those who are married to an active duty member of the armed forces who are stationed in Connecticut to obtain an occupational or professional license, registration or certification from DCP under certain conditions. This bill also clarifies the way state agencies do background checks to make it more equitable, consistent and efficient.

CHRISTOPHER R. ARNOLD, NE REGION LIAISON, US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, STATE LIAISON OFFICE

Christopher Arnold is in support of this bill. The Department is grateful for the effort that Connecticut has made to support military members and their families. We are also grateful to the Governor for introducing this bill. The short duration of military spouse's stay in Connecticut coupled with the lengthy relicensing requirements can be discouraging and prompt a military spouse to quit an occupation or cause the member to quit the military. Neither outcome is satisfactory. Occupation licensing has been an enduring problem for military spouses.

MELISSA McCRAW, SECRETARY, OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT, STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Ms. McCaw is in support of this bill. This legislation would expand and expedite access to licensed occupations for the current and incoming residents. Ms. McCaw highlighted her support for Section 1 of the bill regarding military spouses. This would also allow military families to stay together when they are asked to move to Connecticut.

FRANCIS J EVON, JR. MAJOR GENERAL, THE ADJUTANT GENERAL, MILITARY DEPARTMENT, STATE OF CONNECTICUT

General Evon is in support of this bill. HB6445 seeks to ease the burden on new Connecticut residents and military spouses relocating to the state. The CTNG stands to benefit from this bill in two ways. HB6445 may attract qualified out of state personnel to the national guard and also help military spouses obtain their occupational licenses in the state. HB6445 stands as a positive incremental step towards assisting your National Guard in competing for federal resources and bringing associated capabilities, personnel and funding into our state.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

JENNIFER HUNT, PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS

Professor Hunt is in support of this bill. One restriction to this hearing is workers with criminal records. By contrast, Connecticut does not have unreasonable barriers to workers with criminal records. The changes proposed in this bill aim to equalize opportunity to make this better known. Most states, as does Connecticut make it difficult to transfer out of state licenses. It is not the case that that Americans are best served by the most restrictive licensing requirements.

KELLY McCONNAY MOORE, INTERIM SR. POLICY COUNSEL, ACLU, CONNECTICUT

Ms. Moore is in support of this bill with change. The ACLU believes in a society where all people including those who have been convicted of a crime, have equal opportunity to contribute to society and build successful and meaningful lives. This bill is a step towards that goal. Although much more needs to be done to ensure the vision. Providing a clear path process for licensing agencies to follow when issuing licenses to those with criminal records is a good idea. They would like a clarify to Section 2 (c) and make a change, with the changes noted in testimony ACLU would support this bill.

ALLIE FRENCH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INDEPENDENT ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS OF NEW ENGLAND

BETSY GARA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CT COUNCIL OF SMALL TOWNS

SAFELITE GROUP

ASHLEY ZANE, GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS ASSOCIATION, CBIA

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

PETER ALFIERI, BUSINESS AGENT, UA LOCAL 777 PLUMBERS AND PIPEFITTERS

Mr. Alfieri is in opposition of this bill. This bill will have unintended consequences and will result in potential damage and or injuries to the consumer, installer and or end user. It would also be a dilution of the CT Apprenticeship, occupational licensing, workplace standards and CT construction standards. This bill is a disservice to the consumers in Connecticut. It is a slap in the face to the skilled tradesman and woman in CT.

CAMERON CHAMPLIN, REPRESENTING PLUMBERS AND PIPEFITTERS LOCAL UNION 777

Mr. Champlin is in opposition to this bill. The State of Connecticut Apprenticeship Programs are second to none in the United States. Why would anyone want to grant a person that doesn't reside in CT the avenue to obtain a license with less time in that occupation than what we require our apprentices to complete? If a person from another area applies for one of our occupational licenses his application is reviewed by a person from the appropriate licensing board, a person from DCP and DOL. Any qualifications they have are considered by that group and that person is allowed to take the appropriate licensing test. We believe this to be fair and equitable.

PAUL FARNSWORTH, ELEVATOR SERVICE COMPANY, INC.

Mr. Farnsworth is in opposition to this bill. The health, safety and welfare of the general public and tradesperson working in the occupations licensed by DCP will be jeopardized by HB6445. The standards in Connecticut result in highly trained, skilled and licensed tradespersons. These standards have resulted in fewer deaths and injuries than other states.

BILL FINCH, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION, CT LABOR MANAGEMENT COOPERATION COMMITTEE

Mr. Finch is in opposition to this bill. The name on this bill is deceptive. The bill would not expand economic growth opportunity. It would be a job killer. We would lose jobs to other states. About 30% of electricians are out of work. Why would you want workers from other states to come here? Electricity is dangerous to work with and the building trades are some of the most dangerous jobs in America.

JAY MORE, UNITED ASSOC. OF JOURNEYMEN AND APPRENTICES LOCAL 777

Mr. More is in opposition to this bill. The construction industry has means, methods, codes and standards that vary from state to state. It varies largely from region by region. CT has an incredible apprenticeship program and the most well educated and safety conscious construction workers in the country. Why would such a bill be proposed to erode the standards and quality of the skilled tradesmen and women in our state?

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN, DIRECTOR, FOUNDATION FOR FAIR CONTRACTING OF CONNECTICUT, INC.

Ms. Glassman is in opposition of this bill. There are many instances where reciprocity of licensure is appropriate, but construction trades is not one of them. This proposal is not grounded in fact or data.

SAL LUCIANO, PRESIDENT, CONNECTICUT AFL-CIO

Mr. Luciano is in opposition to this bill. We are dismayed that Gov. Lamont would participate in billionaire Koch network's legal, legislative and public relations crusade against occupational licensure. This bill lowers the bar for workers from out-of-state. With unemployment as high as 30% in our licensed construction trades, finding appropriately licensed professionals is not a problem. We are losing our licensed professionals to Massachusetts and New York where they can find work. This is poorly conceived legislation.

DAVID A ROCHE, PRESIDENT, CT BUILDING TRADES CONNECTICUT

Mr. Roche is in opposition to this bill. Mr. Roche is not in opposition to allowing more workers into the state, but he opposes allowing out-of-state workers performing highly skilled trades which they may not be qualified to obtain licensing. He commends Gov. Lamont's efforts to bring more workers into the state, but we have a system in place. As the saying goes, "if it ain't broke don't fix it."

JOSEPH P. TONER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CT STATE BUILDING TRADES

Mr. Toner is in opposition to this bill. Between January 1, 2018 and January 1, 2021, 1,188 out-of-state applicants applied to sit for a construction-related occupational licensing exam, including military applications through DOL. Of that number only 11 were fully denied for some reason. By looking at these numbers' opportunities are being provided.

KEITH BROTHERS, BUSINESS MANAGER/SECRETARY-TREASURER, CT LABORS DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANTHONY CAMILLUCCI, UNITED ASSOCIATION OF JOURNEYMEN AND APPRENTICES OF THE PLUMBING AND PIPEFITTING INDUSTRY, UA LOCAL, LOCAL 777

DAVE DEROEHN, BUSINESS AGENT DISTRICT 41, LOCAL UNION 669

JOHN DEROSA, INTERNATIONAL UNION OF ELEVATOR CONSTRUCTORS LOCAL 91

MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT

MICHAEL ROSARIO, UNITED ASSOC. OF JOURNEYMEN AND APPRENTICES OF THE PLUMBING AND PIPEFITTING INDUSTRY OF THE US AND CANADA

MICHAEL THOMPSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ASMRCC

VINNIE VALENTE, CT PLUMBERS AND PIPEFITTERS, LOCAL 777, J.A.T.C.

JEROME WHITE, LOCAL UNION 488, IBEW

Reported by: Bonnie Gray, Asst.Clerk

Date: 3/29/2021