

# Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6580

**Title:** AN ACT CONCERNING AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

**Vote Date:** 3/11/2021

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/9/2021

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee.

### REASONS FOR BILL:

Many young people today do not know the farm to table connection, they do not know where their food comes from. This bill requires UConn to study establishing or expanding food agricultural literacy programs of study and community outreach programs by increasing interactions with rural, suburban, and urban farms.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Dr. Indrajeet Chaubey, Dean, College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, UConn](#) testified and submitted written testimony in support of this bill.

Dr. Chaubey indicated “three key points have arisen this year, which bring this issue to the forefront for our College.

- “• The COVID pandemic created a crisis in the area of food availability and food access;
- “• The Governor’s Council on Climate Change (GC3) has deliberated how to best address food and plant production in a sustainable manner; and
- “• The College embarked on a strategic visioning process where we conducted surveys and held forums around the state and asked CT citizens what they wanted to see the College offer with regard to agriculture, health and natural resource research/experiment station needs, teaching and outreach.”

There is a great need to start young and introduce preschoolers to where their fruit and vegetables come from before they eat them at home or school. The COVID pandemic has

shown us we need to get back to basics and create more community gardens. This will also help with “health disparities that are impacted by food choices.”

High school students need to know there are choices in our “state agri-science and aquaculture schools to assist with career exploration.”

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

[Bruno Venero](#) supports this bill stating that “agriculture is not only about farming but living a sustainable lifestyle.” He indicated that agriculture is required to sustain our basic needs for food and clothing and that “this bill would pave the way for students to understand and respect the process of the agricultural industry.”

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None.

**Reported by: Jeanie Phillips, Clerk**

**Date: March 12, 2021**