

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-953

Title: AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE LEARN, WORK, PAY PROGRAM.

Vote Date: 3/22/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Change of Reference to Appropriations

PH Date: 3/4/2021

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee.

REASONS FOR BILL:

Connecticut does not have enough highly skilled, creative, educated residents to maintain our needed workforce. This bill will help retain residents who attend and graduate from Connecticut's colleges and universities.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Nathan Fuerst, Vice-President for Enrollment Planning & Management at the University of Connecticut](#) submitted written testimony in support of this bill stating that "any initiative that creates incentive for our graduates to stay in greater numbers will be a success." He went on to say that this bill "could help UConn graduates save toward a down payment on their first home in the state by segregating a portion of their state income tax payments for up to ten years after they graduate."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Michele Ridolfi O'Neill, Educational Issues Specialist for the Connecticut Education Association](#) submitted written testimony in support of the bill stating "Regarding SB 953, the proposed Learn, Work, Pay program would encourage college graduates to remain in Connecticut, and would also help our state attract and retain new teachers."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Jennifer Widness, President Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges](#) submitted written testimony regarding this bill indicating "The loan reimbursement offered under Section

one of this bill is intended to counteract the “brain drain” and keep graduates of our public institutions of higher education in state.” She continued “, a policy targeted exclusively to a population that already stays in state at a very high rate, will not move that needle.”

Ms. Widness asked that the bill be “expanded to include graduates of the independent colleges or, given limited resources, focus on retaining those graduates of in-demand programs such as engineering, computer science, bioscience and health sciences, like Rhode Island has done with its WaveMaker program.”

She does not support removing Section 2 of the bill stating that “Supporting companies to offer student loan relief to students that stay and work in Connecticut is a win-win.”

Reported by: Jeanie Phillips, Clerk

Date: March 24, 2021