
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5300

AN ACT REQUIRING LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL FOR THE MERGER OR CLOSING OF INSTITUTIONS WITHIN THE CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AND PROHIBITING THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE REGIONAL COMMUNITY-TECHNICAL COLLEGES.

SUMMARY

This bill eliminates the Board of Regents for Higher Education's (BOR's) authority to merge or close institutions within the Connecticut State University and regional community-technical college systems and Charter Oak State College. The bill instead authorizes BOR to make merger or closing recommendations to the legislature, except as described below. Relatedly, the bill (1) creates new legislative notice requirements that BOR must follow when recommending an institutional merger or closure and (2) establishes mechanisms for the legislature to approve or reject BOR's recommendations.

The bill prohibits BOR from pursuing merger, closure, or consolidation of the community colleges into a single community college through a U.S. Department of Education-approved regional accrediting association. (The New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) is Connecticut's regional accrediting body.) BOR is currently pursuing this type of consolidation with NECHE with the goal of operating as a single institution beginning in the fall 2023 semester.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

BOR'S MERGER AND CLOSURE AUTHORITY

Under current law, BOR may merge or close the above institutions upon a two-thirds vote of its members and after notifying the General Assembly and the Education Committee about the recommended merger or closure. The bill instead requires (1) BOR to notify only the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee and (2) a

majority vote of both the House and Senate to approve a BOR-recommended merger or closure.

Under the bill, if the legislature fails to act within one year after receiving notice or by adjournment of the next regular legislative session, whichever is later, then the merger or closure is deemed approved. Conversely, the merger or closure may be rejected by a majority vote of at least one chamber.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 19 Nay 4 (03/17/2022)