



House of Representatives

File No. 592

General Assembly

February Session, 2022

(Reprint of File No. 200)

Substitute House Bill No. 5301
As Amended by House Amendment
Schedule "A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner
April 22, 2022

**AN ACT CONCERNING IN-STATE STUDENT STATUS OF VETERANS,
A POSTSECONDARY PRISON EDUCATION PROGRAM OFFICE, THE
ROBERTA B. WILLIS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM, FOOD INSECURE
STUDENTS AND CHILD CARE CENTERS ON OR NEAR COLLEGE
CAMPUSES.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General
Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 10a-29 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2022*):

3 The following shall determine the status of a student:

4 (1) Every person having [his] such person's domicile in this state shall
5 be entitled to classification as an in-state student for tuition purposes.
6 Except as otherwise provided in this part, no person having [his] such
7 person's domicile outside of this state shall be eligible for classification
8 as an in-state student for tuition purposes;

9 (2) The domicile of an unemancipated person is that of [his] such

10 person's parent;

11 (3) Upon moving to this state, an emancipated person employed full-
12 time who provides evidence of domicile may apply for in-state
13 classification for such person's spouse and unemancipated children
14 after six consecutive months of residency and, provided such person is
15 not [himself or herself] in this state primarily as a full-time student, such
16 person's spouse and unemancipated children may at once be so
17 classified, and may continue to be so classified as long as such person
18 continues such person's domicile in this state;

19 (4) Any unemancipated person who remains in this state when such
20 person's parent, having theretofore been domiciled in this state,
21 removes from this state, shall be entitled to classification as an in-state
22 student until attainment of the degree for which such person is currently
23 enrolled, as long as such person's attendance at a school or schools in
24 this state shall be continuous;

25 (5) The spouse of any person who is classified or is eligible for
26 classification as an in-state student shall [likewise] be entitled to
27 classification as an in-state student;

28 (6) (A) A member of the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103,
29 who is stationed in this state pursuant to military orders shall be entitled
30 to classification as an in-state student.

31 (B) The spouse of any person who is a member of the armed forces
32 and stationed in this state pursuant to military orders shall be entitled
33 to classification as an in-state student. The spouse, while in residence
34 after the spouse's acceptance for matriculation at a constituent unit of
35 the state system of higher education in a course of study leading to an
36 associate, bachelor or advanced degree, shall not lose classification as an
37 in-state student if the member of the armed forces is thereafter
38 transferred on military orders;

39 (7) An unemancipated person whose parent is a member of the armed
40 forces and stationed in this state pursuant to military orders shall be

41 entitled to classification as an in-state student. The student, (A) while in
42 continuous attendance toward the degree for which the student is
43 currently enrolled, or (B) while in residence after [his or her] the
44 student's acceptance for matriculation at a constituent unit of the state
45 system of higher education in a course of study leading to an associate,
46 bachelor or advanced degree, shall not lose classification as an in-state
47 student if [his or her] the student's parent is thereafter transferred on
48 military orders;

49 (8) A student [that] who is from another state, territory or possession
50 of the United States, the District of Columbia or the Commonwealth of
51 Puerto Rico shall be classified as an in-state student, if such student (A)
52 attended for three years and graduated from a high school in this state,
53 and (B) was sponsored, housed and supported during attendance at
54 such school by a program, such as the "A Better Chance" program,
55 established as a nonprofit organization that raises charitable funds on
56 the local level for the purpose of giving students who are minority
57 students, are from single parent homes or live in poverty, an
58 opportunity to attend school in a different environment. For purposes
59 of this subdivision, "minority student" means a student whose racial
60 ancestry is defined as other than white by the Bureau of Census of the
61 United States Department of Commerce; [and]

62 (9) In accordance with 8 USC 1621(d), a person, other than a
63 nonimmigrant alien as described in 8 USC 1101(a)(15)(A) to 8 USC
64 1101(a)(15)(S), inclusive, and 8 USC 1101(a)(15)(V), shall be entitled to
65 classification as an in-state student for tuition purposes, (A) if such
66 person (i) resides in this state, (ii) attended any educational institution
67 in this state and completed at least two years of high school level
68 education in this state, (iii) graduated from a high school in this state, or
69 the equivalent thereof, and (iv) is registered as an entering student, or is
70 enrolled at a public institution of higher education in this state, and (B)
71 if such person is without legal immigration status, such person files an
72 affidavit with such institution of higher education stating that [he or
73 she] such person has filed an application to legalize [his or her] such
74 person's immigration status, or will file such an application as soon as

75 [he or she] such person is eligible to do so; [.] and

76 (10) (A) A veteran who lives in this state, regardless of such veteran's
77 state of residence, shall be entitled to classification as an in-state student
78 for tuition purposes only. As used in this subdivision, "veteran" means
79 any person discharged or released, under conditions other than
80 dishonorable, from a period of ninety or more days of active service in
81 the armed forces.

82 (B) A person who lives in this state, regardless of such person's state
83 of residence, and is entitled to educational assistance pursuant to the
84 Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship, 38 USC
85 3311(b)(8), as amended from time to time, shall be entitled to
86 classification as an in-state student for tuition purposes only.

87 (C) A person who lives in this state, regardless of such person's state
88 of residence, and is entitled to educational assistance pursuant to the
89 Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, 38 USC 3319, as amended from time to time, through
90 transfer of such assistance by virtue of such person's relationship to a
91 veteran or a member described in 38 USC 3319(b), as amended from
92 time to time, who is serving on active duty, shall be entitled to
93 classification as an in-state student for tuition purposes only.

94 Sec. 2. Section 2 of public act 21-132 is repealed and the following is
95 substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

96 (a) There is established a task force to study the costs and benefits of
97 establishing a Postsecondary Prison Education Program Office within
98 the Department of Correction. Such study shall include, but need not be
99 limited to, an examination of (1) any existing office dedicated to
100 postsecondary prison education within the state and, if such office
101 exists, such office's responsibilities, (2) the process and standards for
102 approving education programs at correctional facilities, (3) the ability
103 for virtual education programs at correctional facilities, (4) the
104 administrative process that the department uses for students who
105 submit complaints about the education programs, (5) the process and
106 standards that the department uses to approve curriculum and course

107 materials for students in correctional facilities, (6) whether the
108 department participates in the state's education, workforce and
109 employment longitudinal data system, (7) the space available in
110 correctional facilities to provide prison education programming, (8) the
111 demand for space in correctional facilities for prison education
112 programming, and (9) the strategies utilized by other state or county
113 correctional agencies to increase the number of individuals who will
114 have access to prison education programs using federal Pell grant
115 awards.

116 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

117 (1) [~~Three~~] Two appointed by the speaker of the House of
118 Representatives;

119 (2) [~~Three~~] Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the
120 Senate;

121 (3) [~~Two~~] One appointed by the majority leader of the House of
122 Representatives;

123 (4) [~~Two~~] One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

124 (5) [~~Two~~] One appointed by the minority leader of the House of
125 Representatives;

126 (6) [~~Two~~] One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;

127 (7) The undersecretary for criminal justice at the Office of Policy and
128 Management, or the undersecretary's designee; and

129 (8) The Commissioner of Correction, or the commissioner's designee.

130 (c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (1),
131 (2), (3), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member
132 of the General Assembly.

133 (d) All initial appointments to the task force shall be made not later

134 than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall
135 be filled by the appointing authority.

136 (e) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro
137 tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the task force from
138 among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons shall schedule
139 the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later than sixty
140 days after the effective date of this section.

141 (f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
142 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher
143 education shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

144 (g) Not later than January 1, [2022] 2023, the task force shall submit a
145 report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing
146 committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
147 relating to higher education and the judiciary, in accordance with the
148 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes. The task force shall
149 terminate on the date that it submits such report or January 1, [2022]
150 2023, whichever is later.

151 Sec. 3. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force to
152 make recommendations for proposed changes to the Roberta B. Willis
153 Scholarship program established under section 10a-173 of the general
154 statutes. The proposed changes to such program shall, at a minimum:
155 (1) Provide need-based financial aid to Connecticut residents enrolled
156 at public and independent institutions of higher education in a manner
157 that promotes access and choice to postsecondary education in the state
158 and focuses on the student, (2) ensure prospective and current students
159 are notified of their initial eligibility for a grant based on the completion
160 of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and that an additional
161 application to the Office of Higher Education is not required for such
162 grant, (3) ensure participating public and independent institutions of
163 higher education are aware of the initial student eligibility criteria and
164 corresponding grant award amount for the following academic year on
165 or before December first, annually, the year prior to the grant year, and

166 (4) consider the feasibility of including the participation of private
167 occupational schools in such program and estimate the cost of providing
168 need and merit-based grants or need-based grants for the eligible
169 educational costs of state residents attending such schools.

170 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

171 (1) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;

172 (2) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate;

173 (3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of
174 Representatives;

175 (4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

176 (5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of
177 Representatives;

178 (6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;

179 (7) The Chief Workforce Officer, or the officer's designee; and

180 (8) The executive director of the Office of Higher Education, or the
181 executive director's designee.

182 (c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (1),
183 (2), (3), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member
184 of the General Assembly.

185 (d) All initial appointments to the task force shall be made not later
186 than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall
187 be filled by the appointing authority.

188 (e) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro
189 tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the task force from
190 among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons shall schedule
191 the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later than sixty
192 days after the effective date of this section.

193 (f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
194 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher
195 education shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

196 (g) Not later than January 1, 2023, the task force shall submit, in
197 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes,
198 a report on its recommendations to the joint standing committee of the
199 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher
200 education. The task force shall terminate on the date that it submits such
201 report or January 1, 2023, whichever is later.

202 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2022*) (a) As used in this section, (1)
203 "food insecurity" or "food insecure" means the lack of financial resources
204 needed to consistently access enough food for an active and healthy life,
205 and (2) "fruit and vegetable incentive program" means a program that
206 offers participants matching funds to purchase fruits and vegetables in
207 any increment relative to the cost of such fruits and vegetables.

208 (b) Not later than March 1, 2023, and biennially thereafter, each public
209 institution of higher education in the state shall administer a survey to
210 each student enrolled at such institution for the purpose of collecting
211 data on the number of students who are food insecure and the causes of
212 and reasons for such food insecurity. Such survey shall include, but
213 need not be limited to, questions regarding a student's (1) demographic
214 background, including age, race, ethnicity, gender identity, marital
215 status, income, education and employment; (2) specific barriers to food
216 access; and (3) awareness or use of community or institutional resources
217 to address food insecurity and any barriers to accessing such resources.

218 (c) Not later than October 1, 2023, and biennially thereafter, each
219 public institution of higher education shall evaluate any services and
220 programs offered by such institution to address the needs of food-
221 insecure students. Based on the results of the survey administered
222 pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, each institution shall amend
223 any existing services or programs or establish a new service or program
224 to address the needs of food-insecure students. Such service or program

225 may include, but not be limited to, (1) assistance and support for
226 students to enroll in the supplemental nutrition assistance program
227 pursuant to the federal Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, or any other
228 state or federal program for nutrition assistance or financial aid,
229 including programs for families, if such program is applicable to the
230 student; (2) providing low-cost food or meal plan options on campus;
231 (3) allowing students additional meals through additional card swipes
232 on meal plans; (4) providing financial assistance or other financial
233 student aid; (5) establishing or expanding a food pantry on campus; or
234 (6) initiating a fruit and vegetable incentive program, or making such
235 program available to students through agreement with a community
236 nonprofit organization or governmental agency that provides such
237 program. When amending or establishing any service or program
238 pursuant to this subsection, each institution shall have the goal of
239 providing such service or program to not less than ten per cent of the
240 number of students identified as being food insecure in the survey
241 administered pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

242 (d) Not later than January 1, 2024, and biennially thereafter, each
243 public institution of higher education in the state shall submit a report,
244 in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes,
245 to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
246 cognizance of matters relating to higher education, regarding any food
247 insecurities among the students at such institution, including, but not
248 limited to, (1) results from the survey administered pursuant to
249 subsection (b) of this section, (2) services or programs to address the
250 needs of food insecure students, including any amendments made to
251 such services or programs pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, and
252 (3) the number of students who utilized such services or programs
253 during the preceding two years.

254 Sec. 5. Section 17b-105f of the general statutes is amended by adding
255 subsections (e) and (f) as follows (*Effective July 1, 2022*):

256 (NEW) (e) (1) Not later than July 1, 2023, and annually thereafter, the
257 Board of Regents for Higher Education and the Board of Trustees of The

258 University of Connecticut shall consult with the Department of Social
259 Services for the purpose of identifying any educational program offered
260 at an institution of higher education governed by said boards that
261 qualifies as an employment and training program that increases a
262 student's employability and complies with the requirements for an
263 exemption, as specified in 7 CFR 273.5(b)(11), as amended from time to
264 time, from the supplemental nutrition assistance program eligibility
265 rule in 7 CFR 273.5(a), as amended from time to time. In identifying such
266 educational programs, the department and said boards shall seek to
267 maximize the number and types of employment and training programs
268 offered at the institution of higher education governed by said boards.

269 (2) Any independent institution of higher education in the state may,
270 in such institution's discretion, consult with the Department of Social
271 Services for the purposes set forth in subdivision (1) of this subsection.

272 (NEW) (f) Not later than January 1, 2024, the Department of Social
273 Services, the Board of Regents for Higher Education and the Board of
274 Trustees of The University of Connecticut shall each post, and regularly
275 update, on their Internet web site, the list of educational programs
276 offered at each institution of higher education governed by said boards
277 that has been identified as an employment and training program
278 pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (e) of this section.

279 Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2022*) For the purpose of determining
280 eligibility for the supplemental nutrition assistance program pursuant
281 to the federal Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended from time to
282 time, the Department of Social Services, to the extent permitted under
283 federal law, shall consider any student enrolled in an institution of
284 higher education in the state to be participating in a state or federally
285 financed work-study program if such student receives approval of
286 work-study as part of a financial aid package to attend such institution
287 of higher education, regardless of whether such student has received his
288 or her work-study program assignment.

289 Sec. 7. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2022*) Each public institution of higher

290 education shall annually notify students by any means of
291 communication, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, regarding
292 the supplemental nutrition assistance program pursuant to the federal
293 Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended from time to time,
294 including, but not limited to, (1) the qualification requirements for such
295 program, (2) the application procedure for such program, and (3) where
296 to obtain assistance in completing an application for such program.

297 Sec. 8. (*Effective July 1, 2022*) (a) As used in this section, "child care
298 center" means a facility that is licensed by the Office of Early Childhood
299 as a child care center or a group child care home, both as defined in
300 section 19a-77 of the general statutes.

301 (b) The Board of Regents for Higher Education, in consultation with
302 the Office of Early Childhood, shall develop a plan to increase the
303 number of child care centers on or near each campus of the regional
304 community-technical colleges and the Connecticut State University
305 System with the goals of (1) providing quality child care services for the
306 staff, students and surrounding community of each campus, (2)
307 addressing the child care needs of nontraditional students, and (3)
308 fostering relationships between such colleges and universities and their
309 surrounding communities. Such plan shall include, but need not be
310 limited to, the development, expansion and maintenance of child care
311 centers that (A) are utilized by an early childhood education program
312 for instructional purposes, or (B) provide evening and weekend child
313 care services in accordance with college or university course schedules.

314 (c) Not later than January 1, 2023, the Board of Regents for Higher
315 Education shall submit, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-
316 4a of the general statutes, the plan developed pursuant to subsection (b)
317 of this section to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly
318 having cognizance of matters relating to higher education and
319 appropriations and the budgets of state agencies. Such plan shall
320 include an estimated budget and implementation timeline for the
321 development of additional child care centers.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	10a-29
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	PA 21-132, Sec. 2
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	17b-105f
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	New section
Sec. 7	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	New section
Sec. 8	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	New section

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 23 \$	FY 24 \$
UConn	Tuition Fund - Potential Revenue Loss	Potential Minimal	Potential Minimal

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill contains several provisions regarding higher education and results in a potential minimal annual revenue loss to the University of Connecticut (UConn), beginning in FY 23.

Section 1 results in a potential minimal annual revenue loss to UConn, beginning in FY 23. This potential revenue loss on a per-student basis is equal to the difference between in- and out-of-state tuition at UConn, which in FY 23 will be \$22,668 for full-time undergraduate students. The number of students affected is anticipated to be small because the populations affected by the bill are narrow. It is anticipated that fewer than ten students annually may be affected by the bill. The section's impact on UConn's tuition revenues, which are budgeted to total \$473 million in FY 22, will be minimal. This section is not anticipated to have a fiscal impact to the Board of Regents, under current financial aid practices.

Section 2 extends the reporting date for the task force studying the costs and benefits of creating a Postsecondary Prison Education Program Office within the Department of Correction and makes various

task force changes resulting in no fiscal impact.

Section 3 creates a task force to make recommendations for proposed changes to the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program, which results in no fiscal impact as PA 17-236 prohibits transportation allowances for task force members.

Sections 4 through 7 require the constituent units to perform survey, reporting, program, and other activities regarding food insecurity among their students. These requirements result in no fiscal impact because the constituent units have sufficient expertise and resources to implement them. Section 6 is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact to the Department of Social Services associated with the consideration of work-study requirements for purposes of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility for students. The bill's change (from eligibility based on participation in a work-study program to approval for one) conforms to current practice as allowed under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, for the duration of the public health emergency. SNAP benefits are federally funded and the provision of such is subject to federal regulations.

Section 8 requires the Office of Early Childhood and the Board of Regents to develop and submit a child care center expansion plan, which has no fiscal impact as the agencies have sufficient expertise to create the plan.

House "A" eliminates the original bill and its associated fiscal impact and results in the impact described above.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to changes in the difference between in- and out-of-state tuition at UConn.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 5301 (as amended by House "A")******AN ACT CONCERNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION.*****SUMMARY**

This bill makes various changes in the laws governing workforce development and postsecondary education. Principally, it does the following:

1. entitles veterans living in Connecticut to in-state college tuition rates regardless of their state of residence (§ 1);
2. reduces the membership of the task force studying the costs and benefits of establishing a postsecondary prison education office (§ 2);
3. establishes a 10-member task force to recommend proposed changes to the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program (§ 3);
4. establishes various requirements to assess and address student food insecurity at the state's public colleges and universities (§§ 4-7); and
5. requires the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) to jointly develop a plan to increase the number of child care facilities on or near each regional community technical college and state university campus (§ 8).

The bill also makes several technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2022, except the provisions about the two

task forces are effective upon passage.

*House Amendment "A" replaces the underlying bill language requiring BOR to study workforce development and postsecondary education issues in the state with the provisions summarized above.

§ 1 — IN-STATE TUITION RATES FOR VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE DEPENDENTS

By law, the state's public colleges and universities must waive tuition (not including other charges, like room and board) exceeding federal veterans' benefits via the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill for eligible veterans accepted at an approved institution and living in the state at the time of the acceptance. (The Post-9/11 G.I. Bill generally covers a percentage of in-state tuition costs at public institutions, based on the eligible veteran's length of service, ranging from 50% of these costs for at least 90 days of service up to 100% of costs for at least 36 months of service.) This state tuition waiver benefit applies to (1) wartime veterans and (2) veterans who were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable or for bad conduct and have a "qualifying condition" (i.e., a diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury, or who have disclosed a military sexual trauma experience) (CGS § 27-103).

The bill expands entitlement to in-state student tuition rates to veterans who live in Connecticut, regardless of their state of residence. This allows additional veterans to receive the state tuition waiver that covers the amount of tuition that exceeds their federal tuition benefits. For this the bill defines "veteran" as any person discharged or released, under conditions other than dishonorable, from at least 90 days of active service in the armed forces.

The bill also aligns state law with federal law by extending in-state student classification for tuition purposes only to (1) children and spouses of veterans who are entitled to educational assistance pursuant to the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship and live in Connecticut and (2) eligible dependents to whom Post-9/11 G.I. Bill benefits can be transferred (see BACKGROUND).

§ 2 — POST-SECONDARY PRISON EDUCATION TASK FORCE

The bill reduces, from 16 to 10, the membership of the task force to study the costs and benefits of establishing a Postsecondary Prison Education Program Office. It does so by reducing each legislative appointment by one. By law, the task force must study at least nine topics, including space demands for prison education programming in correctional facilities; processes and standards for approving these programs, their curricula, and course materials; and other states' and counties' strategies for increasing the number of people who can access these programs using federal Pell grants (PA 21-132, § 2). Table 1 outlines the membership reduction for each appointing authority.

Table 1: Task Force Membership Reduction Under the Bill

<i>Appointing Authority</i>	<i>Number of Appointees Under PA 21-132</i>	<i>Number of Appointees Under the Bill</i>
House speaker	Three	Two
Senate president pro tempore	Three	Two
House majority leader	Two	One
Senate majority leader	Two	One
House minority leader	Two	One
Senate minority leader	Two	One
N/A	Office of Policy and Management undersecretary for criminal justice or her designee	
N/A	Department of Correction commissioner or his designee	

By law and unchanged by the bill, appointed members may be legislators, and all initial appointments must be made within 30 days after the bill's effective date. The bill also extends the deadline by which the task force must report its findings to the Higher Education and Judiciary committees by one year, from January 1, 2022, to January 1, 2023. Correspondingly, under the bill the task force must terminate on the later of the date it submits the final report or January 1, 2023, rather than 2022 as under current law.

§ 3 — ROBERTA B. WILLIS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM TASK FORCE

The bill establishes a 10-member task force to recommend proposed changes to the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program, which provides merit- and need-based financial assistance to Connecticut undergraduate students attending a two- or four-year college or university in the state.

Scope

Under the bill, the task force must propose changes in the program that, at a minimum, do the following:

1. provide need-based financial aid to Connecticut residents enrolled at public and independent higher education institutions that (a) promotes access and choice to postsecondary education and (b) focuses on the student;
2. ensure prospective and current students are notified of their initial eligibility for a grant based on their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) without additionally applying to the Office of Higher Education (OHE);
3. annually ensure participating public and independent higher education institutions are aware of the initial student eligibility criteria and corresponding grant award amount for the following academic year on or before December first prior to the grant year, and
4. consider the feasibility of including private occupational schools' participation in the grant program and estimate the cost of providing need and merit-based grants or need-based grants for the eligible costs of state residents attending those schools.

Membership

Under the bill, the task force must have the following ten members:

1. two each appointed by the House speaker and Senate president pro tempore;

2. one each appointed by the House and Senate majority leaders;
3. one each appointed by the House and Senate minority leaders;
4. the Chief Workforce Officer (CWO) or her designee; and
5. the OHE executive director or his designee.

The bill allows any members appointed by legislative leaders to be General Assembly members. Additionally, it requires all appointments to be made within 30 days of the bill's passage and any vacancy to be filled by the appointing authority.

Leadership, Staff, and Deadlines

The bill requires the House speaker and Senate president pro tempore to choose the task force chairpersons from among its members. These chairpersons must schedule the task force's first meeting to be held within 60 days of the bill's passage. The Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee's administrative staff must serve as the task force staff.

Under the bill, the task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee by January 1, 2023. The task force terminates on this date or the date it submits the report, whichever is later.

§§ 4-7 — FOOD-INSECURE STUDENTS AT PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Food Insecurity Student Survey

The bill establishes various requirements to assess and address food insecurity for the state's public college and university students. It defines "food insecurity" or "food insecure" as the lack of financial resources needed to consistently access enough food for an active and healthy life. Specifically, it requires public colleges and universities to do the following:

1. starting by March 1, 2023, biennially administer a survey to

enrolled students to collect data on student food insecurity and the causes and reasons for it;

2. starting by October 1, 2023, biennially evaluate their services and programs addressing the needs of food-insecure students and, based on the survey results, amend any existing services and programs or establish a new service or program to address these needs;
3. starting by January 1, 2024, biennially report to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee on the (a) survey results; (b) food insecurity services and programs offered, including any changes made based on the survey results; and (c) number of students who used the services and programs in the preceding two years; and
4. notify students about eligibility requirements for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

Under the bill, the survey administered by each public college and university must include questions about a student's (1) demographic background, including age, race, ethnicity, gender identity, marital status, income, education, and employment; (2) specific barriers to food access; and (3) awareness or use of community or institutional resources to address food insecurity and barriers to accessing these resources. Under the bill, the services or programs that public colleges and universities establish or modify to address student food insecurity may include the following:

1. giving assistance and support for students to enroll in SNAP or any other state or federal nutrition assistance or financial aid program, including programs for families, if applicable;
2. providing low-cost food or meal plan options on campus;
3. allowing students additional meals through extra card swipes on meal plans;

4. providing financial assistance or other financial student aid;
5. establishing or expanding on-campus food pantries; and
6. starting a fruit and vegetable incentive program or making one available through an agreement with a local nonprofit or government agency.

Under the bill, a “fruit and vegetable incentive program” is a program that offers participants matching funds to purchase fruits and vegetables in any increment relative to their cost.

The bill requires each institution, when amending or establishing services and programs based on survey results, to set a goal of serving at least 10% of the students identified in the survey as being food insecure.

SNAP Eligibility for Public College and University Students

Beginning July 1, 2023, and annually afterwards, the bill requires BOR and BOT to consult with the Department of Social Services (DSS) to identify and maximize the number and type of their offered educational programs that would (1) increase a student’s employability and (2) qualify as an employment and training program under SNAP student eligibility requirements (see BACKGROUND). By January 1, 2024, BOR, BOT, and DSS must post and regularly update the list of these identified programs offered at each institution under the boards’ governance on their respective websites. The bill allows any of the state’s public colleges and universities to consult with DSS to identify these programs.

The bill requires each public higher education institution to annually notify students about SNAP by any means of communication, including electronic mail. This notice must include (1) program eligibility requirements, (2) the program application process, and (3) where to find assistance with application completion.

The bill requires DSS, when determining SNAP eligibility and to the

extent allowed by federal law (7 C.F.R. § 273.5), to consider a state public college or university student to be participating in a state or federally financed work-study program as soon as the enrolled student is approved for the program as part of his or her financial aid package, regardless of whether the student has received his or her work-study program assignment yet. Under federal law, students are eligible to receive SNAP benefits if they are actively participating in a state- or federally-funded work-study program (see BACKGROUND).

§ 8 — CHILD CARE CENTERS NEAR REGIONAL COMMUNITY-TECHNICAL COLLEGE AND STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

The bill requires OEC and BOR to jointly develop a plan to increase the number of OEC-licensed child care centers or group childcare homes on or near each regional community technical college and state university campus. The plan must include the development, expansion, and maintenance of these facilities that (1) are utilized by an early childhood education program for instructional purposes or (2) provide evening and weekend child care services in accordance with college or university course schedules.

Under the bill, the plan's goals are the following:

1. provide quality child care services for the staff, students, and surrounding community of each campus;
2. address the child care needs of nontraditional students; and
3. foster relationships between the colleges and universities and their surrounding communities.

The bill requires OEC and BOR, by January 1, 2023, to jointly submit the developed plan, including an estimated budget and implementation timeline for the development of additional child care facilities, to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement and Appropriations committees.

BACKGROUND

Isakson and Roe Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020

The federal Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 (P.L. 116-315) enhances or expands education benefits for veterans, service members, families, and survivors. Among other things, it expands (1) eligibility for the Fry Scholarship and (2) the transfer of entitlement (i.e., eligibility) for certain dependents under the post 9/11 G.I. Bill.

SNAP Student Eligibility

Students enrolled at least half-time at a higher education institution are generally ineligible for SNAP unless they qualify for an exemption. These exemptions include participating in a (1) state- or federally-financed work-study program during the regular school year or (2) SNAP employment and training program or other eligible program.

A student participating in a federally-financed work-study program is eligible for SNAP under the exemption if (1) he or she is approved for work-study at the time of application for SNAP benefits, (2) the work-study is approved for the school term, and (3) he or she anticipates actually working during that time. The exemption begins the month the school semester starts or the month the work-study is approved, whichever is later (7 C.F.R. § 273.5(b)(6)).

The federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 temporarily extends SNAP eligibility to students enrolled at least half-time at a higher education institution who either (1) are eligible to participate in a state- or federally-funded work-study program during the academic year or (2) have an expected family contribution of zero in the academic year and meet all other SNAP eligibility criteria. This benefit extension will remain in effect until 30 days after the COVID-19 public health emergency ends (P.L. 116-260, § 702(e)(1)(B)(i)).

Related Bills

sHB 5033 (File 23), reported favorably by the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, contains similar provisions on food-insecure students at public higher education institutions.

sHB 5035 (File 14), reported favorably by the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, contains similar provisions on in-state tuition for veterans and eligible dependents.

sHB 5115 (File 271), reported favorably by the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, contains identical provisions on the development of child care centers on or near regional community college and state university campuses.

sHB 5128 (File 24), reported favorably by the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, contains identical provisions on reducing the number of members on the Post-Secondary Prison Education Task Force.

sHB 5137 (File 227), reported favorably by the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, requires the CWO and the OHE executive director to study proposed changes to the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 18 Nay 5 (03/17/2022)