

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5115

AN ACT REQUIRING A PLAN TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CHILD CARE CENTERS ON OR NEAR EACH CAMPUS OF THE REGIONAL COMMUNITY-

Title: TECHNICAL COLLEGES AND STATE UNIVERSITIES.

Vote Date: 3/17/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/8/2022

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

State Representative Jason Rojas, 9th District. House Majority Leader.

REASONS FOR BILL:

To allow the Office of Early Childhood and the Board of Regents to develop a number of daycare programs for higher education students and staff, as well as surrounding communities, in an effort to provide quality childcare, especially to nontraditional students.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Sean Bradbury, Senior Director of Government Relations and External Affairs, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities \(CSCU\)](#): Across the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities system, there is a "lack of reliable, affordable" childcare programs that pose "a barrier to success for our students who are balancing the needs of their children and demands of school." In addition to this problem, the few childcare slots on campus create "a challenge for our employees who are parents and must find services that fit their work schedules." There is always more that can be done to "better meet parents' needs," and [H.B. 5115](#) would "help to provide additional resources" to students, staff, and the community. Therefore, CSCU urges the passage of [H.B. 5115](#) and, while working with the Office of Early Childhood, welcomes "the opportunity to...identify ways to expand our services in line with the goals of this legislation."

[Beth Bye, Commissioner, Office of Early Childhood \(OEC\)](#): The Office of Early Childhood "supports the goal of" [H.B. 5115](#), as childcare programs on campuses are "an important resource to support student success." Governor Lamont has assigned federal funding to Care 4 Kids, which helps college students pay for childcare, and the OEC has also launched a

College Lab School initiative, "which sends funding to child care programs on campuses designed to support teacher preparation and child development study." Together with these initiatives, [H.B. 5115](#) would work "to support campus-based early childhood programs and child care for students," as the field of Early Childhood Education is both "a wonderful career path" and requires "more high-quality teachers."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Representative Jason Rojas, House Majority Leader, Connecticut General Assembly](#): Not only does the pursuit of a college education cause financial strains, as well as physical and mental health issues, but "when parenting is factored in, the commitment to pursue a degree becomes even more daunting, if not impossible." With "over 22 percent of all undergraduate students" being parents, "over half of those students will drop out" prior to obtaining their degree, citing a "lack of time to study or [an] inability to find childcare as the main hurdle." Through the passage of [H.B. 5115](#), "we can begin to provide more assistance to nontraditional students," and it will also allow "college[s] to offer expanded program[s] in Early Childhood Education" by making sure that "we have a workforce sufficient to meet expected demand."

[Hartford Foundation for Public Giving](#): In 2016, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving launched the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI), which "integrated education programs, support services, and career development to assist adult learners and expand their academic and job skill levels as a way of reaching self-sufficiency." From an "extensive evaluation" of the investments that CPI had made, it "identified childcare as the most frequent and costliest barrier to employment." Therefore, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving supports [H.B. 5115](#) and appreciates "the legislature's recognition of the vital role childcare plays in supporting working families and nontraditional students by providing quality childcare services." The Foundation is also willing to work with the legislature to "ensure that all residents have an opportunity to participate in the workforce and every family has access to quality affordable childcare."

[Lauren Ruth, Research & Policy Director, Connecticut Voices for Children](#): Connecticut Voices for Children "support[s] the intent of" [H.B. 5115](#), as "Working parents and students in our universities and colleges...are faced with the burden of paying for child care while also trying to find slots for their children in a market with a high turnover rate" due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This decrease in childcare slots and closing of preschool centers has meant that many parents are forced to "shoulder the responsibility of child care and work simultaneously." [H.B. 5115](#) reinforces the belief that "child care is infrastructure, a societal necessity like roads and bridges that help us get to where we want and need to go," and it will also help to "close equity gaps" and "be of great service to Connecticut families." In conclusion, [H.B. 5115](#) will allow more residents to "have the opportunity to enter the labor force and support the State economy."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None provided.

Reported by: Austin Hyatt

Date: 3/18/2022