

# Education Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5280

AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN

**Title:** CONNECTICUT.

**Vote Date:** 3/11/2022

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Change of Reference to Appropriations

**PH Date:** 3/4/2022

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Emmanuel Sanchez, 24<sup>th</sup> Dist.

Rep. Anthony Nolan, 39<sup>th</sup> Dist.

### REASONS FOR BILL:

Increases the maximum grant amount that a bilingual education program may apply to the State Board of Education to receive. The bill also establishes a dual language seed grant program to be administered by the Department of Education to provide grants to local and regional boards of education to establish new or expand existing dual language programs.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker, CT State Dept. of Education](#): “The Department would be supportive of an increase in funding for the Bilingual grant program as we understand that this is an area of growing need for districts. However, the necessary funds are not included in the current FY 2023 appropriation or in the Governor's midterm adjustments. While not specifically required to spend the funds on programming for bilingual education, the changes made to the ECS formula last session included an increase in the weight for English Language Learners, demonstrating the state's commitment to supporting students from non-English speaking backgrounds. The bill also establishes a non-lapsing grant meant to support the development of language immersion programs. Funding for this grant is not in the enacted FY 2023 budget. Between these two grants the bill proposes over \$3.4 million in unbudgeted, new spending.”

[State of CT Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities](#): “The CHRO also supports HB 5280, An Act Concerning the Provision of Bilingual Education in Connecticut. One of the greatest tools in the fight against discrimination is language learning. Immersion in a different

language broadens the mind, exposing learners to different cultures and ways of thinking. Supporting programs like those funded by this bill is crucial in eliminating discrimination in our state. The bill's provision to increase funding for multiple fiscal years will also help schools budget more effectively, ensuring rigorous bilingual education can become a permanent program."

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

[Megan Baker, Thomas Nuccio & Werner Oyanadel, Policy Analysts, Connecticut General Assembly's Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity](#): "CWCSEO strongly believes that high-quality, comprehensive, and effective English as a Second Language (ESL) and bilingual education programs are essential to acquire English language proficiency and academic proficiency for students who are English Learners (ELs) and as result CWCSEO supports increases the per pupil grant amount for bilingual education and enhance dual language seed grant programs in Connecticut as recommended by HB 5280. CWCSEO would highly recommend that the appropriations committee increase the funding provided in this bill from \$3.8 million to \$9 million and the seed grant program should also be increased."

[Mary Yordon, Divisional Vice President PreK-12, AFT Connecticut, AFL-CIO](#): "Bilingual education and dual language programs are important and effective. Dual language programs are costly, require TESOL and bilingual teachers which are statewide shortage area teachers. An increase in funding is one way to support the MLLs in our districts."

[Chris Wilson, Executive Committee Member, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc](#): "HB 5280, An Act Concerning the Provision of Bilingual Education in Connecticut, CABA supports an increase in funding for English language learners and the seed grant program for up to 5 districts. In data from the Department of Education, there are 47 districts whose English learners spoke 20 or more different non-English languages! To support that many students is a challenge that districts continue to need assistance meeting."

[Orlando Rodriguez, Policy Analyst, Connecticut Education Association](#): "CEA wholeheartedly supports HB 5280. The proposed increase in funding for bilingual education in Connecticut is sorely needed. However, the requirements for qualifying for bilingual education funds are limited to schools with more than 20 students who speak the same foreign language. Consequently, funding in the bilingual education line item only reaches English learners (ELs) in about 20 school districts while statewide there are over 140 dominant languages spoken by students in over 170 school districts. Increasing funding to bilingual education is not sufficient to serve the over 40,000 English Learners who account for 1 out of every 10 K-12 public school students statewide. Additional funding should be appropriated to teach English to existing and future U.S. citizens."

[Dr. Madeline Negrón, Co-Founder and Past President, Connecticut Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents](#): "The Connecticut Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents strongly supports the changes recommended in Raised Bill 5280, 'to increase the per pupil grant amount for bilingual education and to establish a dual language seed grant program.' The appropriation increase from one million nine hundred sixteen thousand one hundred thirty (\$1,916,130) to three million eight hundred thirty two thousand two hundred sixty (\$3,832,260) is a welcomed financial support. However, the allocation is not sufficient to truly supplement high-quality education for our bilingual students across the state."

[Phyllis Hardy, Executive Director, Multistate Association for Bilingual Education – Northeast, Inc:](#) “The seed grant program as stated in H.B. No. 5280 will help grow DLE programs in Connecticut, especially in districts with the highest percentage of diverse students, which are also the districts and populations that would most benefit from such programs. DLE programs have the potential to narrow opportunity gaps for bilingual learners, and so it is our responsibility to urge you to report this bill favorably out of Committee, so that more students in Connecticut can reach their full potential. We thank you for your attention to this important matter.”

[Subira Gordon, Executive Director, ConnCAN:](#) “In the Education Cost Sharing formula, there exists a weight for English Language Learners (ELL), largely due to the demonstrated support required to teach English to children who may not possess proficiency. But, we can do more. Bilingual education, along with dual language programs have been popular for ELL students, and families seeking exposure to non-English languages. By increasing the funding for and the understanding of bilingual and dual language programs, Connecticut can learn valuable, and scalable lessons.”

[Sasha Davis, Policy Analyst, School State and Finance Project:](#) “While we support the tenets of H.B. 5280 and its increased financial support for EL students, the bill does not go far enough. H.B. 5280 proposes to double the total funding to the Bilingual Education Program Grant, but this still only amounts to approximately \$150 per student for eligible districts, which account for approximately 60 percent of Connecticut’s EL students. The Bilingual Education Program Grant eligibility criteria also creates possible inconsistencies year over year by not allowing for continued supports for districts with previously eligible schools that may fall below the 20 students of the same language threshold in a given year. This may limit the ability of our districts to provide consistent and effective bilingual education services to EL students.”

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

There was no noted opposition to HB-5280, aside from individuals and organizations that supported the bill, but believed it needs to do even more.

All other testimony on HB-5280 can be found on the [CGA website](#).

**Reported by: Matthew Boucher**

**Date: 3/18/11**