

Labor and Public Employees Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5440

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING STATE EMPLOYEES AND EQUITABLE HOLIDAYS.

Vote Date: 3/22/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/15/2022

File No.: 233

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SPONSORS OF THE BILL

Labor and Public Employees Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Non-Christians are not given time off to recognize their own personal religious holidays.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY

State of CT., Commission on Human Rights: Supports the bill because it recognizes the fact that each year our State is becoming more diverse and heterogeneous with race, ethnicity, and religious issues. Each religion celebrates their own holidays, fast days, and other special occasions. The only religious holiday now recognized by the State is Good Friday, which is only observed by about 1/3 of CT's residents. Connecticut should be welcoming to all citizens and foster differences. Individuals should be allowed to designate their religious holidays as days off in lieu of one of the other current 12 State holidays.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

State of CT, State Representative, Jillian Gilchrest: Supports the bill because current law provides full-time permanent State employees with three days of paid personal leave per calendar year "for the purpose of conducting private affairs, including observance of religious holidays". This gives preferential treatment to Christian observances. There are two paid Christian holidays, Good Friday and Christmas. State employees should be allowed to swap out at least two current State holidays for religious observances of their choosing. These floating holidays should be used as whole days within the fiscal year.

Jewish Federation Association of CT., Executive Director, Supports the bill because State employees who are not Catholic, must take personal time to observe their major holidays. This is an issue of fairness and worthy of study by the Dept. of Administrative Services.

Administrative and Residual Employees Union, Treasurer, Ally Sexton: Supports the bill because the State workforce has grown more diverse. It makes sense and would be more equitable to recognize holidays observed by all members of the workforce. The federal government recognized Juneteenth as a federal holiday and many State employees could elect to use this as a day off in exchange for one of their unrecognized religious holidays.

SEIU, Lobbyist, Stacey Zimmerman: Supports all bills on the agenda.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Self, David Godbout: Opposes all bills on the agenda stating they are a violation of his Fourth Amendment Rights.

Reported by Marie Knudsen

Date: April 5, 2022