



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 209

February Session, 2022

Substitute Senate Bill No. 17

Senate, March 30, 2022

The Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement reported through SEN. SLAP of the 5th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT PROHIBITING AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION FROM WITHHOLDING TRANSCRIPTS.

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2022*) (a) As used in this section,
2 "debt" means an obligation, claim or sum that is due or alleged to be due
3 to an institution of higher education from a student. "Debt" does not
4 include a fee, if any, charged for the actual cost of providing a transcript
5 to a student.

6 (b) No institution of higher education in the state shall (1) upon
7 receiving a request or permission from a student who is currently or was
8 formerly enrolled at such institution, refuse to provide a transcript to an
9 employer or prospective employer of such student because such student
10 owes a debt, (2) condition the provision of a transcript to an employer
11 or prospective employer on the payment of a debt, (3) charge a fee for
12 the provision of a transcript to an employer or prospective employer
13 that is higher than the actual cost of providing the transcript because

14 such student owes a debt, or (4) use the issuance of transcript as a
15 method to collect a debt.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	New section

HED *Joint Favorable Subst.*

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 \$
Board of Regents for Higher Education	Other - Revenue Loss	Minimal	Minimal
UConn	Other - Revenue Loss	See Below	See Below

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill, which establishes requirements regarding postsecondary transcripts sought by employers or potential employers, is anticipated to result in an annual revenue loss to the University of Connecticut and the Board of Regents beginning in FY 23.

The bill is likely to reduce the amount of debt from current and past students that institutions collect. The University of Connecticut currently require students to pay off institutional debts, or in some cases to make progress payments, before a transcript is issued for any reason, while the Board of Regents institutions may release transcripts directly to employers when a student has debt. The bill requires all institutions of higher education to provide a transcript to an employer or prospective employer: (1) regardless of any student debt to the institution, and (2) on the same terms as other transcript requests related to students who do not owe the institution.

The extent of the constituent units' revenue loss associated with the bill depends on to what extent employer-driven transcript needs

currently result in students paying off institutional debt, which is unknown. The impact to the Board of Regents institutions is likely to be minimal, given current practices, while the impact to the University of Connecticut may be higher but cannot be determined.

Employment-related transcript requests received by the University of Connecticut totaled 2,052 over the last year (to date), approximately 11 percent of all transcript requests. In the 2020-21 academic year, 10,849 current and former UConn students collectively had debts to the institution totaling \$19.3 million. Comparable information for the Board of Regents institutions is unavailable.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation in transcript fees, changes in the number of transcript requests for employment reasons, and the level of institutional debt held by students.

OLR Bill Analysis**sSB 17*****AN ACT PROHIBITING AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION FROM WITHHOLDING TRANSCRIPTS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill prohibits Connecticut higher education institutions from:

1. refusing to provide a transcript to a student's employer or prospective employer upon the request or permission of a current or formerly enrolled student because he or she owes the institution a debt,
2. conditioning a transcript's release to an employer or prospective employer upon debt payment,
3. charging a higher fee for providing a transcript to a student's employer or prospective employer because the student owes a debt, or
4. using transcript release as a debt collection method.

Under the bill, "debt" is an obligation, claim, or sum that the student owes or allegedly owes to a higher education institution. The bill specifies that "debt" excludes any fee that may be related to the actual cost of releasing a transcript to a student.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2022

COMMITTEE ACTION

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 20 Nay 3 (03/17/2022)