
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5441

AN ACT CONCERNING CLINICAL PLACEMENTS FOR NURSING STUDENTS, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS FOR TEACHERS, REPORTING BY THE OFFICE OF WORKFORCE STRATEGY, PROMOTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY AND A STUDENT LOAN SUBSIDY FOR HIGH-DEMAND PROFESSIONS.

SUMMARY

This bill makes various unrelated changes affecting higher education statutes and programs. Principally, it does the following:

1. creates an eight-member task force to develop a plan to establish clinical placements at state facilities for nursing students at public higher education institutions (§ 1);
2. creates a state income tax credit of up to \$4,000 per tax year for certain licensed health care providers (“preceptors”) who provide clinical placements for nursing students as part of an agreement with a higher education institution (§ 2);
3. requires the Office of Higher Education (OHE) executive director and the labor and education commissioners to jointly develop a plan to establish a registered apprenticeship program to allow certain students to work as apprentice teacher’s aides (§ 3);
4. makes permanent a provision set to sunset on October 1, 2025, that requires the Chief Workforce Officer to annually report to the governor and certain legislative committees on the Office of Workforce Strategy’s workforce training programs (§ 4);
5. requires the insurance commissioner to promote the development and growth of, and employment opportunities within, the state’s insurance industry (§ 5); and

6. requires the Connecticut Higher Education Student Loan Authority (CHESLA) to establish a Student Loan Subsidy Program to subsidize interest rates on authority loans to eligible people employed in high-demand professions (§§ 6-8).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023, except that the task force provision is effective upon passage, and the tax credit provision takes effect January 1, 2024, and applies to tax years beginning on or after that date.

§ 1 — NURSING STUDENT CLINICAL PLACEMENT TASK FORCE

Duties

The bill establishes a task force to develop a plan to establish clinical placements for nursing students at public colleges and universities. In developing the plan, the bill requires the task force to examine the following:

1. the types of state facilities that can accommodate these clinical placements, including state correctional facilities and facilities operated by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), the Department of Children and Families (DCF), and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS);
2. the number and type of clinical placements that may be established at each state facility;
3. the staffing requirements for providing the clinical placements and whether the facilities meet them; and
4. the total and per-student cost to state facilities to provide the clinical placements.

Membership

The task force includes eight members appointed by the six legislative leaders. The table below lists the appointees' qualifications and appointing authorities. Members appointed by the House speaker and Senate president pro tempore may be legislators.

Table: Task Force Membership

Appointing Authority	Number of Appointments	Qualifications
House speaker	Two	One must have expertise in clinical nursing; one must be a nursing education program administrator at a public higher education institution
Senate president pro tempore	Two	One must be a nurse administrator at a state agency or a state facility; one must have expertise in nursing student clinical placements
House majority leader	One	Department of Public Health (DPH) representative who is a registered nurse
Senate majority leader	One	DMHAS representative who is a registered nurse
House minority leader	One	DDS representative who is a registered nurse
Senate minority leader	One	DCF representative who is a registered nurse

The bill requires appointing authorities to make their initial appointments within 30 days of the bill's passage and fill any vacancies.

Leadership, Staff, and Meetings

Under the bill, the House speaker and Senate president pro tempore must select the task force chairpersons from among its members. The chairpersons must schedule the task force's first meeting to be held within 60 days after the bill's passage.

The bill requires the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee's administrative staff to serve in this capacity for the task force.

Report

The bill requires the task force to report its findings and recommendations to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee by January 1, 2024. It terminates on this date or the date it submits the report, whichever is later.

§ 2 — TAX CREDIT FOR PROVIDERS OF CLINICAL NURSING EXPERIENCES

Credit Established

Starting with the 2024 tax year, the bill creates a state income tax credit for preceptors who provide clinical placements for nursing students enrolled in bachelors, masters, or doctorate programs in Connecticut. Under the bill, a “preceptor” is a licensed health care provider who directs and supervises nursing students in clinical placements under an agreement with a higher education institution.

Specifically, the bill allows preceptors to claim a \$1,000 credit against the state income tax (but not the withholding tax), for every 100 clinical placement hours the preceptor worked, up to a maximum credit of \$4,000 per tax year. It caps at \$1.5 million the total amount of credits that may be awarded in each fiscal year.

Eligibility

Under the bill, to qualify for the tax credit, the preceptor must do the following:

1. provide the clinical placement hours at no cost to the nursing student or the student’s higher education institution,
2. not claim any other credit against his or her state tax liability for the same 100 clinical placement hours,
3. only claim the credit if no other preceptor has done so for the same 100 clinical placement hours,
4. use the credit to reduce his or her tax liability only in the tax year the clinical placement hours were provided, and
5. apply to the DPH commissioner to claim the credit.

Application Process

The bill requires preceptors to apply to the DPH commissioner to receive the tax credit in a form and manner she prescribes. The application must contain sufficient information, as the commissioner requires, including (1) documentation of completed clinical placement hours and (2) the agreement between the preceptor and the higher education institution to provide clinical placements.

The bill requires the DPH commissioner to make a written decision on each completed application within 30 days after receiving it. The commissioner must approve the application and issue a certification letter to the preceptor indicating that the credit is available for the preceptor to claim if she finds that the (1) preceptor meets the requirements listed above and (2) total credit amounts claimed in that fiscal year have not exceeded the \$1.5 million limit (it does not specify how the commissioner must determine this).

§ 3 — REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM FOR APPRENTICE TEACHER’S AIDES

The bill requires the OHE executive director and the education and labor commissioners to jointly develop a plan to establish a registered apprenticeship program for teachers. The program must allow school districts to hire students in education preparation programs as apprentice teacher’s aides while the students complete their coursework and apprenticeship hours, for up to three years.

Under the bill, the plan must do the following:

1. develop, in consultation with education preparation program administrators at state higher education institutions, a framework for a program where students can earn a bachelor’s degree and qualify for teacher certification by completing a required number of apprenticeship hours and related coursework within three years;
2. assess, in consultation with local and regional boards of education, school districts’ capability and interest in establishing and providing these programs in partnership with higher education institutions;
3. assess supports that state agencies may provide to help local and regional boards of education and higher education institutions establish the programs; and
4. provide a fiscal analysis of the costs and benefits of establishing the programs, including the feasibility of providing state grants

to local and regional boards of education to offset the initial costs of developing and registering a program.

The bill requires the OHE executive director, by January 1, 2024, to report to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee on the plan and any legislative recommendations needed to implement it.

§ 4 — OFFICE OF WORKFORCE STRATEGY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The bill makes permanent the requirement that the chief workforce officer annually report to the governor and the Commerce; Education; Finance, Revenue and Bonding; Higher Education and Employment Advancement; and Labor and Public Employees committees on Office of Workforce Strategy workforce training programs. Under current law, the reporting requirement sunsets on October 1, 2025.

Under the bill and existing law, the report must include information on the number, demographics, and outcomes of program participants.

§§ 6-8 — STUDENT LOAN SUBSIDY PROGRAM FOR HIGH DEMAND PROFESSIONS

The bill requires CHESLA to establish a Student Loan Subsidy Program, subject to available funding, to subsidize interest rates on authority loans given to eligible people employed in high-demand professions. Under the bill and existing law, “authority loans” are education loans by CHESLA or CHESLA loans from the proceeds of bonds to fund education loans.

Under the bill, “high-demand professions” include:

1. registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and home health aides;
2. providers of programs or services for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities employed by a state agency or nonprofit organization; and
3. child care providers employed by a child care center or group or

family child care home.

Eligibility and Administrative Guidelines

The bill requires CHESLA to set the program’s eligibility criteria and administrative guidelines, which must include at least the following:

1. applicant eligibility;
2. interest rate subsidies and principal limits on authority loans subject to the program;
3. the process for verifying applicants’ employment; and
4. the requirement that an interest rate subsidy provided through the program terminates for a subsidy recipient who no longer meets the program’s employment requirements during the loan’s term.

Program Account

The bill requires CHESLA to establish a separate, non-lapsing account for the program, which must contain any money required by law to be deposited into it (e.g., state appropriations and proceeds from bond sales (see below)).

Under the bill, CHESLA must spend account funds on the program’s purposes (i.e., student loan interest rate subsidies) as well as any reasonable and necessary expenses to administer it.

The bill also authorizes up to \$7 million per year in general obligation bonds and requires CHESLA to use the proceeds for the program.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable
Yea 22 Nay 0 (03/14/2023)