



# House of Representatives

**File No. 829**

General Assembly

January Session, 2023

**(Reprint of File No. 264)**

Substitute House Bill No. 5441  
As Amended by House Amendment  
Schedule "A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner  
May 25, 2023

**AN ACT CONCERNING CLINICAL PLACEMENTS FOR NURSING STUDENTS, REPORTING BY THE OFFICE OF WORKFORCE STRATEGY, PROMOTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY AND CONNECTICUT HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPLEMENTAL LOAN AUTHORITY STUDENT LOAN SUBSIDY PROGRAMS FOR VARIOUS PROFESSIONS.**

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

- 1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force  
2 to develop a plan for establishing clinical placements at state facilities  
3 for nursing students at public and independent institutions of higher  
4 education. The task force shall examine (1) the types of state facilities  
5 that can accommodate such clinical placements, including, but not  
6 limited to, state correctional facilities and facilities operated by the  
7 Departments of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Children and  
8 Families, and Developmental Services, (2) the number and types of  
9 clinical placements that may be established at each state facility, (3) the  
10 staffing requirements for providing such clinical placements and

11 whether state facilities meet such staffing requirements, and (4) the total  
12 and per-student cost to state facilities to provide such clinical  
13 placements.

14 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

15 (1) One appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,  
16 who is a nursing education program administrator at The University of  
17 Connecticut;

18 (2) One appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, who is  
19 a nursing education program administrator at an independent  
20 institution of higher education, as defined in section 10a-173 of the  
21 general statutes;

22 (3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of  
23 Representatives, who is a nursing education program administrator at  
24 a state university within the Connecticut State University System;

25 (4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, who is a  
26 nursing education program administrator at a regional community-  
27 technical college;

28 (5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of  
29 Representatives, who is a nursing education program administrator at  
30 an independent institution of higher education, as defined in section  
31 10a-173 of the general statutes;

32 (6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, who is a  
33 nursing education program administrator at The University of  
34 Connecticut Health Center;

35 (7) One appointed by the Commissioner of Correction, who is a  
36 licensed medical provider employed by the Department of Correction;

37 (8) One appointed by the Commissioner of Public Health, who is a  
38 registered nurse employed by the Department of Public Health;

39 (9) One appointed by the Commissioner of Mental Health and  
40 Addiction Services, who is a registered nurse employed by the  
41 Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services;

42 (10) One appointed by the Commissioner of Developmental Services,  
43 who is a registered nurse employed by the Department of  
44 Developmental Services; and

45 (11) One appointed by the Commissioner of Children and Families,  
46 who is a registered nurse employed by the Department of Children and  
47 Families.

48 (c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivisions (1) to  
49 (6), inclusive, of subsection (b) of this section may be a member of the  
50 General Assembly.

51 (d) All initial appointments to the task force shall be made not later  
52 than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall  
53 be filled by the appointing authority.

54 (e) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro  
55 tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the task force from  
56 among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons shall schedule  
57 the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later than sixty  
58 days after the effective date of this section.

59 (f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the  
60 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher  
61 education and employment advancement shall serve as administrative  
62 staff of the task force.

63 (g) Not later than January 1, 2024, the task force shall submit a report  
64 on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of  
65 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher  
66 education and employment advancement, in accordance with the  
67 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes. The task force shall  
68 terminate on the date that it submits such report or January 1, 2024,

69 whichever is later.

70 Sec. 2. Subsection (b) of section 4-124j of the general statutes is  
71 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
72 *2023*):

73 (b) Not later than October 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, [until  
74 October 1, 2025,] the Chief Workforce Officer shall submit to the  
75 Governor and, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the  
76 joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance  
77 of matters relating to finance, higher education and employment  
78 advancement, education, commerce, and labor and public employees a  
79 report regarding the workforce training programs funded through the  
80 Office of Workforce Strategy account. Such report shall include, but not  
81 be limited to, information on the number of individuals served,  
82 demographic information about such individuals and outcomes of such  
83 individuals after completion of a workforce training program.

84 Sec. 3. Section 38a-8 of the general statutes is amended by adding  
85 subsection (h) as follows (*Effective July 1, 2023*):

86 (NEW) (h) The commissioner shall promote the development and  
87 growth of, and employment opportunities within, the insurance  
88 industry in the state.

89 Sec. 4. Section 10a-247 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
90 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2024*):

91 (a) The Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority  
92 shall establish, subject to available funding pursuant to section 10a-247a,  
93 as amended by this act, an Alliance District [Teacher] Educator and  
94 Counselor Loan Subsidy Program for the purpose of subsidizing  
95 interest rates on authority loans, as defined in section 10a-223, to  
96 teachers, paraeducators and school counselors who are employed in a  
97 district designated as an alliance district pursuant to section 10-262u and  
98 who meet the eligibility criteria as established by the authority and the  
99 Commissioner of Education.

100 (b) The authority shall enter into a memorandum of agreement with  
101 the Commissioner of Education to establish the eligibility criteria and  
102 administrative guidelines for the Alliance District [Teacher] Educator  
103 and Counselor Loan Subsidy Program. Such eligibility criteria and  
104 guidelines shall include, but need not be limited to, (1) applicant  
105 eligibility, (2) interest rate subsidies and principal limits on authority  
106 loans subject to the Alliance District [Teacher] Educator and Counselor  
107 Loan Subsidy Program, (3) the process for verifying the employment of  
108 applicants, and (4) the requirement that an interest rate subsidy through  
109 the Alliance District [Teacher] Educator and Counselor Loan Subsidy  
110 Program shall terminate for any subsidy recipient who ceases to meet  
111 the employment requirements of such program during the term of such  
112 recipient's loan from the authority.

113 Sec. 5. Section 10a-247a of the general statutes is repealed and the  
114 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2024*):

115 The Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority  
116 shall maintain a separate, nonlapsing account to hold funds for the  
117 Alliance District [Teacher] Educator and Counselor Loan Subsidy  
118 Program established pursuant to section 10a-247, as amended by this  
119 act. The account shall contain any moneys required by law to be  
120 deposited in the account, including, but not limited to, any state  
121 appropriation or the proceeds from the sale of bonds issued for the  
122 purpose of section 10a-247, as amended by this act. Moneys in the  
123 account shall be used (1) for the purposes of the Alliance District  
124 [Teacher] Educator and Counselor Loan Subsidy Program and for  
125 reasonable and necessary expenses for the administration of such  
126 program, (2) for the issuance of authority loans to refinance one or more  
127 eligible loans, and (3) to maintain a reserve held by the authority to  
128 cover any losses incurred by the authority from the issuance of such  
129 authority loans. For the purposes of this section, "authority loans" and  
130 "eligible loans" have the same meaning as provided in section 10a-223.

131 Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2024*) (a) As used in this section:

132 (1) "Police officer" means a sworn member of a municipal police  
133 department;

134 (2) "Distressed municipality" has the same meaning as provided in  
135 section 32-9p of the general statutes;

136 (3) "Authority loans" has the same meaning as provided in section  
137 10a-223 of the general statutes; and

138 (4) "Eligible loans" has the same meaning as provided in section 10a-  
139 223 of the general statutes.

140 (b) On and after July 1, 2024, the Connecticut Higher Education  
141 Supplemental Loan Authority shall establish, subject to available  
142 funding pursuant to subsection (d) of this section, a Police Officer Loan  
143 Subsidy Program for the purpose of subsidizing interest rates on  
144 authority loans to police officers who are employed in a distressed  
145 municipality and who meet the eligibility criteria as established by the  
146 authority.

147 (c) The Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority  
148 shall, in consultation with the Police Officer Standards Training Council,  
149 establish the eligibility criteria and administrative guidelines for the  
150 Police Officer Loan Subsidy Program. Such eligibility criteria and  
151 guidelines shall include, but need not be limited to, (1) applicant  
152 eligibility, (2) interest rate subsidies and principal limits on authority  
153 loans subject to the Police Officer Loan Subsidy Program, (3) the process  
154 for verifying the employment of applicants, and (4) the requirement that  
155 an interest rate subsidy through the Police Officer Loan Subsidy  
156 Program shall terminate for any subsidy recipient who ceases to meet  
157 the employment requirements of such program during the term of such  
158 recipient's loan from the authority.

159 (d) The Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority  
160 shall maintain a separate, nonlapsing account to hold funds for the  
161 Police Officer Loan Subsidy Program. The account shall contain any  
162 moneys required by law to be deposited in the account, including, but

163 not limited to, any state appropriation or the proceeds from the sale of  
164 bonds issued for the purpose of the program. Moneys in the account  
165 shall be used (1) for the purposes of the Police Officer Loan Subsidy  
166 Program and for reasonable and necessary expenses for the  
167 administration of such program, (2) for the issuance of authority loans  
168 to refinance one or more eligible loans, and (3) to maintain a reserve held  
169 by the authority to cover any losses incurred by the authority from the  
170 issuance of such authority loans.

171 Sec. 7. Section 1 of substitute house bill 6689 of the current session is  
172 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
173 *2023*):

174 (a) For the purposes of this section, "authority loans" and "eligible  
175 loans" have the same meanings as provided in section 10a-223 of the  
176 general statutes.

177 (b) The Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority  
178 shall establish, subject to available funding in the account established  
179 and maintained pursuant to section 2 of [this act] substitute house bill  
180 6689 of the current session a Nursing, [and] Mental Health Care and  
181 Emergency Medical Service Professionals Loan Subsidy Program for the  
182 purpose of subsidizing interest rates on authority loans issued to  
183 refinance eligible loans for health care professionals who (1) are actively  
184 employed in a clinical or an emergency medical service setting, (2) are  
185 (A) licensed pursuant to chapter 378, 378a, 383, 383a, 383b or 383c of the  
186 general statutes, or (B) certified as an emergency medical responder or  
187 emergency medical technician under the provisions of section 20-206ll  
188 or 20-206mm of the general statutes or as an advanced emergency  
189 medical technician by the Department of Public Health, and (3) meet the  
190 eligibility criteria established pursuant to subsection (c) of this section.

191 (c) The Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority  
192 shall enter into a memorandum of agreement with the Commissioner of  
193 Education to establish eligibility criteria and administrative guidelines  
194 for the program established pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

195 Such eligibility criteria and guidelines shall include, but need not be  
196 limited to, (1) applicant eligibility criteria, (2) interest rate subsidies and  
197 principal limits on authority loans offered under the program, (3) a  
198 process for verifying that applicants are actively employed in a clinical  
199 or an emergency medical service setting, and (4) a requirement that an  
200 interest rate subsidy on an authority loan issued under the program be  
201 terminated if the subsidy recipient fails to meet the requirements of the  
202 program at any time during the term of such loan.

203 Sec. 8. Section 2 of substitute house bill 6689 of the current session is  
204 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
205 *2023*):

206 The Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority  
207 shall establish and maintain a separate, nonlapsing account to hold  
208 funds for the Nursing, [and] Mental Health Care and Emergency  
209 Medical Service Professionals Loan Subsidy Program established  
210 pursuant to section 1 of [this act] substitute house bill 6689 of the current  
211 session. The account shall contain any moneys required by law to be  
212 deposited in the account, including, but not limited to, any state  
213 appropriation and the proceeds from the sale of any bonds issued for  
214 the purpose of section 1 of [this act] substitute house bill 6689 of the  
215 current session. Moneys in the account shall be expended by the  
216 Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (1) for the  
217 purposes of the Nursing, [and] Mental Health Care and Emergency  
218 Medical Service Professionals Loan Subsidy Program established  
219 pursuant to section 1 of [this act] substitute house bill 6689 of the current  
220 session including, but not limited to, for reasonable expenses necessary  
221 to administer said program, (2) to issue authority loans under said  
222 program to refinance one or more eligible loans, and (3) to maintain a  
223 reserve, held by the authority, to cover any losses incurred by the  
224 authority in issuing authority loans under said program. For the  
225 purposes of this section, "authority loans" and "eligible loans" have the  
226 same meanings as provided in section 10a-223 of the general statutes.



This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	4-124jj(b)
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	38a-8(h)
Sec. 4	<i>January 1, 2024</i>	10a-247
Sec. 5	<i>January 1, 2024</i>	10a-247a
Sec. 6	<i>January 1, 2024</i>	New section
Sec. 7	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	HB 6689 (current session), Sec. 1
Sec. 8	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	HB 6689 (current session), Sec. 2

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 24 \$	FY 25 \$
Various State Agencies	Various - See Below	See Below	See Below

Note: Various=Various

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Section 1** creates a task force to develop a plan for establishing clinical placements at State facilities for nursing students at public and independent institutions of higher education, resulting in no fiscal impact to the State because the task force has the expertise to carry out the requirements of the bill.

**Section 2** eliminates the sunset date of 10/1/25 for the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS) to provide an annual report on the workforce training programs funded through the OWS. It is anticipated that OWS can produce this report annually within existing resources. However, the level of funding available for OWS' workforce training programs in is uncertain. The workforce training programs under OWS are primarily funded through \$70 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, which are required to be fully expended by the end of calendar year 2026. In addition, \$40 million in state General Obligation (GO) bond funds have been authorized to support OWS' workforce training initiatives, of which \$5 million has been allocated to date.

**Section 3** requires the Insurance Commissioner to promote the development and growth of the insurance industry in Connecticut, including employment opportunities, which has no fiscal impact because the Insurance Department can comply with the bill within

existing resources.

**Sections 4 and 5** expand eligibility for a loan subsidy program through the Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA), which is anticipated to have no fiscal impact, absent separate legislation providing additional funding for the program. The program was financed through the authorization of \$7 million of GO bonds, which were previously fully allocated by the State Bond Commission in December of 2021. No change to debt service is anticipated as all authorized bonds have been made available to the program. The expanded eligibility could change the individuals able to participate in the program, but not the total cost to the program.

**Section 6** requires CHESLA to establish a new loan subsidy program and **Sections 7 and 8** expand a different loan subsidy program that is being established in pending legislation (sHB 6689). The bill does not appropriate funds or authorize bond funds for either purpose. Without additional funding it is unclear how CHESLA would operate the program, as they do not have funds available for this purpose.

House "A" strikes the underlying bill and its associated fiscal impact and replaces it with the fiscal impact described above.

### ***The Out Years***

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

---

**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 5441 (as amended by House "A")\***

***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 11-member task force to develop a plan to establish clinical placements at state facilities for nursing students at public and private higher education institutions (§ 1);
2. makes permanent a provision due to sunset under current law 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 (§ 2);
3. requires the insurance commissioner to promote the development and growth of, and employment opportunities within, the state's insurance industry (§ 3);
4. extends eligibility to the Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority's (CHESLA) Alliance District Teacher Loan Subsidy Program to paraeducators and counselors, and makes conforming changes (§§ 4-5);

5. requires CHESLA to establish a Police Officer Loan Subsidy Program to subsidize interest rates on CHESLA loans to eligible police officers employed in distressed municipalities (§ 6); and
6. amends sHB 6689 of the current session to expand a CHESLA loan subsidy program for specified health care professionals to also include emergency services professionals (§§ 7-8).

\*House Amendment "A" eliminates provisions (1) creating a state income tax credit for certain licensed health care providers who provide clinical placements for nursing students as part of an agreement with higher education institutions, (2) requiring the Office of Higher Education 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, and (3) requiring CHESLA to establish a Student Loan Subsidy Program to subsidize interest rates on authority loans to eligible individuals employed in high demand professions. The amendment also (1) adds members to the task force and expands its charge to cover clinical placements at private institutions and (2) adds the provisions (a) modifying the Alliance District Teacher Student Loan Subsidy program, (b) establishing a loan subsidy program for police officers employed by distressed municipalities, and (c) amending provisions in sHB 6689 of the current session.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023, except the police officer student loan subsidy program provisions take effect on January 1, 2024, and the task force provision is effective upon passage.

## **§ 1 — NURSING STUDENT CLINICAL PLACEMENT TASK FORCE**

### ***Duties***

The bill creates a task force to develop a plan to establish clinical placements for nursing students at public and private 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 the facilities' compliance with them; and
4. the total and per-student cost to state facilities to provide the clinical placements.

### **Membership**

The task force includes six members appointed by the six legislative leaders. The table below lists the appointees' qualifications and appointing authorities. Members appointed by the legislative leaders may be legislators.

**Table: Task Force Membership**

<b>Appointing Authority</b>	<b>Number of Appointments</b>	<b>Appointee Qualifications</b>
House speaker	One	Nursing education program administrator at UConn
Senate president pro tempore	One	Nursing education program administrator at an independent higher education institution
House majority leader	One	Nursing education program administrator at a state university within the Connecticut State University System
Senate majority leader	One	Nursing education program administrator at a regional community-technical college
House minority leader	One	Nursing education program administrator at an independent higher education institution
Senate minority leader	One	Nursing education program administrator at UConn Health

<i>Appointing Authority</i>	<i>Number of Appointments</i>	<i>Appointee Qualifications</i>
		Center
Department of Corrections (DOC) commissioner	One	Licensed medical provider employed by DOC
Department of Public Health (DPH) commissioner	One	Registered nurse employed by DPH
DMHAS commissioner	One	Registered nurse employed by DMHAS
DDS commissioner	One	Registered nurse employed by DDS
DCF commissioner	One	Registered nurse employed by DCF

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 — 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.

#### **§§ 4-5 — ALLIANCE DISTRICT EDUCATOR AND COUNSELOR LOAN SUBSIDY PROGRAM**

The bill requires CHESLA to extend eligibility for the Alliance District Teacher Loan Subsidy Program to paraeducators and school counselors and renames the program the “Alliance District Educator and Counselor Loan Subsidy Program.” As under current law, this program provides subsidized interest rates on CHESLA loans to eligible borrowers employed in alliance districts, subject to available funding.

#### **§ 6 — CHESLA POLICE OFFICER LOAN SUBSIDY PROGRAM**

The bill requires CHESLA, by July 1, 2024, to establish a Police Officer Loan Subsidy Program to subsidize interest rates on CHESLA loans to eligible sworn members of municipal police departments (“police officers”) employed in distressed municipalities (see BACKGROUND), subject to available funding.

The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) annually designates distressed municipalities based on high unemployment and poverty, aging housing stock, and low or declining rates of job, population, and per capita income growth (CGS § 32-9p). Under the bill, CHESLA must establish a separate, non-lapsing account to hold program funds required by law to be deposited there, including any state appropriation or bond sale proceeds.

#### ***Eligibility Criteria and Administrative Guidelines***

The bill requires CHESLA to establish the program’s eligibility criteria and administrative guidelines in consultation with the Police Officer Standards Training Council. Under the bill, the criteria and guidelines must address at least the following:



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

### ***Account Expenditure Guidelines***

CHESLA must use the funds in the program account to subsidize loans under the program. In addition, CHESLA must spend account funds to cover (1) reasonable and necessary expenses for program administration, (2) the issuance of authority loans to refinance one or more eligible loans, and (3) a reserve for any losses from issuing authority loans.

By law and unchanged by the bill, "authority loans" are education loans by CHESLA or CHESLA loans from the proceeds of bonds to fund education loans. "Eligible loans" are loans in repayment that were issued by (1) CHESLA or (2) another private or governmental lender to finance college or university attendance.

### **§§ 7 & 8 — CHESLA LOAN SUBSIDY PROGRAM FOR SPECIFIED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS**

sHB 6689 of the current session requires CHESLA to establish a Nursing and Mental Health Care Professionals Loan Subsidy Program to subsidize interest rates on CHESLA refinancing loans to certain Connecticut-licensed nurses, nurse's aides, psychologists, marital and family therapists, clinical and master social workers, and professional counselors. This bill amends sHB 6689 to expand the program to emergency medical service (EMS) professionals and makes various conforming changes. Under the bill, to qualify, the EMS professional must (1) be DPH-certified as an emergency medical responder, emergency medical technician, or advanced emergency medical

technician and (2) meet the program's eligibility criteria and administrative guidelines set by CHESLA and the education commissioner.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Distressed Municipalities***

DECD annually designates distressed municipalities based on high unemployment and poverty, aging housing stock, and low or declining rates of job, population, and per capita income growth (CGS § 32-9p). The current (2022) distressed municipalities are Ansonia, Bridgeport, Bristol, Chaplin, Derby, East Hartford, East Haven, Griswold, Groton, Hartford, Meriden, Montville, New Britain, New London, North Stonington, Norwich, Plainfield, Putnam, Sprague, Sterling, Torrington, Waterbury, West Haven, Winchester, and Windham.

### ***Related Bill***

HB 5437 (File 263), favorably reported by the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, requires CHESLA to establish a student loan subsidy program to offer subsidized interest rates on loans it makes to first responders.

sHB 6689 (File 185), favorably reported by the Banking Committee, establishes a Nursing and Mental Health Care Professionals Loan Subsidy Program to subsidize interest rates on CHESLA refinancing loans to certain Connecticut-licensed nurses, nurse's aides, psychologists, marital and family therapists, clinical and master social workers, and professional counselors.

## **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 22    Nay 0    (03/14/2023)