

Commerce Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6585

AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY TO PROMOTE WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT USING THE GLOBAL ENTREPRENEUR IN RESIDENCE

Title: PROGRAM AS A MODEL.

Vote Date: 3/9/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/10/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Commerce Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

For the past few years, graduates of Connecticut's public and private universities have taken the skills, expertise, and working potential back to their home countries due to the H1-B visa cap, which limits new H1-B visa issuance to only 85,000 per year selected by a registration and lottery process. In multiple fields, Connecticut is suffering from a workforce shortage despite numerous efforts to attract qualified employees and does not have a pathway to keep qualified international students to fill these open positions. HB-6585 intends to address this via the establishment of a working group that would help determine the feasibility of finding ways to leverage the H1-B visa cap to promote workforce development in the state. In addition, HB-6585 was inspired by the successes of the Massachusetts' Global Entrepreneur in Residence Program, which has attracted and maintained qualified international entrepreneurs and their companies.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Ashley Zane, Government Affairs Associate, CBIA

The CBIA **supports** this bill. The CBIA believes HB-6585 would address Connecticut's previously overlooked labor markets to expand the workforce and would be a "creative solution" to the existing workforce shortage issues. The CBIA views Massachusetts' Global Entrepreneur in Residence Program as very successful, citing that 74% of GEIR Entrepreneurs were still active in the U.S. today.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Dana Bucin, Partner & DEI Chair at Martha Cullins LLP

Dana Bucin submitted testimony in **support** of the bill. Bucin believes there are many opportunities to create H1-B cap workarounds, such as through exempt zones on university campuses, residency programs, and H1-B sponsorships. She thinks that HB-6585 would help create multiple pathways to keep international talent in the state.

Rae Alexander, Associate Vice President for Global Affairs, UCONN

Rae Alexander submitted testimony in **support** of the bill. Alexander cited statistics that international students have a desire to work in Connecticut, and how H1-B cap workarounds would build upon existing efforts at UCONN to attract more global talent and develop them into valuable members of the workforce.

Garrett Sheehan, President and CEO, Greater New Haven & Quinnipiac Chambers of Commerce

Garrett Sheehan submitted testimony in **support** of the bill. Sheehan believes the workforce challenges facing Connecticut are serious and that HB-6585 would help retain and attract businesses to the state.

Connecticut Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (CT AILA)

CT AILA submitted testimony in **support** of the bill. They believe HB-6585 would be very beneficial in retaining talented graduates to meet the state's workforce needs.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Colin DeCure

Date: 3/20/2023