

Labor and Public Employees Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6860

AN ACT EXTENDING CONNECTICUT PREMIUM PAY TO CERTAIN

Title: ESSENTIAL WORKERS.

Vote Date: 3/21/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/9/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor and Public Employees Committee.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would allow frontline and essential workers not previously eligible for Connecticut Premium Pay to access the program, by defining an eligible applicant as any person who meets the income criteria, was not a federal, state, or municipal employee, and was not employed in a capacity where they worked or could have worked from home. Additionally, this bill addresses the previous exclusion of “1C” workers as designated by the Center for Disease Control and allows them to apply for payments under the Premium Pay Program.

The substitute language would require any applicants in 1C meet all the same eligibility criteria as other applicants.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

No response was provided from the administration or relevant state agencies.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Jeff Shaw, Senior Public Policy Advisor, CT Nonprofit Alliance: They offered testimony in support of this proposal. They stated that this legislation would include essential workers designated as “1C” such as housing and homelessness workers and hunger response workers who were not included under the original Premium Pay Program. They emphasized that these workers served on the frontlines during the pandemic and were critical for the states long-term recovery effort. Furthermore, they stated that \$30 Million funded into the

original program has been determined to be insufficient due to the high volume of applicants and more funding should be included.

Ed Hawthorne, President, CT AFL-CIO: They offered comments in favor of this legislation. They stated that this legislation corrects the past mistake of not including essential workers designated as “1C” in the Connecticut Premium Pay Program. They strongly urged the committee to pass this legislation.

Kate Dias, President, CEA: They offered support for this legislation, but stated that this legislation should be coupled with a program compensating essential local public sector workers, such as teachers. They suggested this compensation could be funded from the surplus and come in the form of direct funding or pension credit.

Jody Barr, Executive Director, AFSCME Council 4: They offered support for this legislation, stating that all workers on the frontline during the pandemic deserve pandemic pay. Additionally, they requested that the bill be amended to include municipal workers.

Dr. Raymond Sullivan, Brookfield Health Dept: He stated that during the COVID-19 pandemic local health department employees were on the front lines providing essential duties such as administering vaccinations but were not included in “hero pay”. He urged the legislature to include local public health employees under this proposal.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Jason Sewell: He expressed general opposition towards HB-6860.

Reported by: Sebastian Musante, Assistant Clerk Date: 3/27/2023