

Labor and Public Employees Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6861

AN ACT ADOPTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE TO

Title: STUDY THE STATE WORKFORCE AND RETIRING EMPLOYEES.

Vote Date: 3/23/2023

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 is intended to implement the recommendations of the task force that has studied the state workforce and retiring employees to better understand how the state is doing in terms of employee retention. It also seeks to study and promote diversity within state agencies and protect state employees from retaliation for reporting discrimination.

The substitute language requires state agencies to take certain steps regarding discrimination and retaliation in the workforce.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Dante Bartolomeo, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Labor: Comments that the agency would not be able to meet a requirement to report career pathway programs in Section 9 of the bill. This would require CT DOL to hire additional staff to study all state agencies to find data on career pathway programs, vocational school programs, and internships.

Michelle Gilman, Commissioner, Department of Administrative Services: DAS expressed interest in working with the committee to develop statutes that help achieve the goal of the Governor to build a strong state workforce that provides services efficiently and equitably to Connecticut residents.

Tanya Hughes, Executive Director, CHRO: Has concerns with this bill because the section allowing for double damages for employment loss is only available for state employees, and

thus unfairly not available for other employees in the state. Also has concerns that the bill would allow state employees to prevent their termination by filing in court rather than going through the administrative process.

External Affairs, Judicial Branch: Asks for clarification on some of the proposed language, specifically whether the Judicial Branch is included in the section about "Commissioners" of the state agencies, and if so, that the section also include "the Chief Court Administrator." Also asks whether the one hour of antiracism training would be required for employees transitioning between different state agencies.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Jody Barr, Executive Director, AFSCME Council 4: Supports this bill because it would help improve workplace equity by giving employees a better way to report discrimination in the workplace. Comments that it will also help the legislature better understand the situation at each state agency by requiring the DOL to study employee retention rates.

Carl Chisem, President, CT Employees Union Independent: Supports this bill because it will assist stakeholders in making the best decisions possible regarding staffing levels in state services. Comments that the bill would also protect employees who allege harassment or discrimination from retaliation.

Travis Woodward, President, CSEA SEIU Local 2001: Supports this bill because it will protect employees alleging discrimination from retaliation and help various stakeholders better understand and address state workforce retention.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

No sources of opposition were provided.

Reported by: Gabriel Marques, Assistant Clerk Date: 3/29/23