

Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-420

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TAX CREDIT FOR EMPLOYERS WHO HIRE

Title: PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.

Vote Date: 3/7/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Change of Reference to Finance, Revenue and Bonding

PH Date: 2/28/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Human Services Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Individuals with disabilities tend to have limited access to employment opportunities. Incentivizing employers to hire persons with disabilities will allow them to fulfill their dreams and aspirations within their community. It will expand opportunities for people with disabilities to gain valuable skills and experience and allow them to contribute to society. This bill seeks to expand employment opportunities for persons with disabilities by providing a tax credit for employers who hire persons with disabilities.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS, Commissioner, Amy Porter: opposes the bill stating a revenue expenditure, in the form of the tax credit, as well as the proposed \$1 million appropriation in Section 2, are not consistent with the Governor's recommended budget currently before the legislature. It is stated they can continue their work around employment for people with disabilities within the current budget and would be happy to work with the committee to address any specific concerns.

Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Commissioner, Jordan Scheff; opposes this bill stating the Department has certain questions on what type of employer would be able to access this tax credit. It is stated that the proposed \$1 million appropriation in Section 2, are not consistent with the Governor's recommended budget currently before the legislature. It is also stated that the JobsCT tax rebate program through the Department of Economic and Community Development allows qualified businesses to receive rebates for each full time equivalent (FTE) employee that they hire who meet the tax rebate program's criteria. It is stated the Department questions if the proposed tax credit program will supplement or replace this existing program.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

The Arc of Connecticut, Inc., Director of Advocacy, Carol Scully; supports the bill stating it will provide an incentive to employers to hire qualified persons with disabilities who are currently receiving benefits and services from the Department of Developmental Services and employment support services from the Bureau of Rehabilitation or the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind at the Department of Aging and Disability Services. It is stated that the tax credit will provide a potential increase in hours by setting a minimum of hours worked to earn the tax credit.

The Alliance, Senior Public Policy & Division Advisor, Julia Wilcox; supports the bill stating it has the potential for significantly positive impact on the lives of persons with disabilities. It is stated that this bill seeks to enhance the state's efforts to place people with disabilities in gainful, competitive employment, by offering incentives to employers in communities across the state. It is stated individuals with disabilities will gain valuable skills and experience while addressing the growing workforce needs of the business community.

Christian Allyn; supports this bill stating that more individuals with disabilities would feel more open about disclosing their disability in the application and interview processes. It is stated that this bill will incentivize employers to look past the applicant's disability and instead look at their qualifications and abilities rather than their limitations. It is stated that individuals with disabilities deserve the opportunity to have a meaningful and enriching career where they can live a life where they feel a sense of self-worth and dignity.

Parent, Kathryn Strout; supports this bill stating that most companies do not hire someone like her son since he is not a typical employee. It is stated that this bill would give individuals with disabilities a chance to prove what they can do and allow them to live their lives with dignity by allowing them to work a meaningful job and allow them to be a contributing member of society.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Connecticut Legal Rights Project, Executive Director, Kathy Flaherty; opposes this bill and questions why financial incentives are being provided to employers to follow the law that already states they should not be discriminated against disabled job applicants or disabled employees. It is stated that the extent of this bill may lead employers who otherwise would not be incentivized to hire someone for the \$5,000 federal tax credit.

Jamie Lazaroff; opposes the bill stating if people with disabilities can do the job that they interview for they should be considered for the position period. It is stated the government should not be incentivizing business for doing the right thing.

One person submitted testimony anonymously in opposition of this bill.

Reported by: Isaac Agyemang-Duah

Date: March 14, 2023