

Labor and Public Employees Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-984

Title: AN ACT ACCELERATING THE STATE HIRING PROCESS.

Vote Date: 3/23/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/2/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor and Public Employees Committee
Governor Ned Lamont

REASONS FOR BILL:

The purpose of this bill is to streamline the state hiring process to make it easier for state agencies to hire qualified candidates and ensure that adequate staffing levels are achieved and maintained.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Seila Mosquera-Bruno, Commissioner, CT Department of Housing: Supports this bill because the current state hiring process can be lengthy, which has resulted in some applicants withdrawing to find a job in the private sector. Comments that this bill gives the state agencies flexibility by shortening timelines and speeding up the process.

Jim Carson, Legislative Program Manager, CT Insurance Department: Supports this bill because it has been difficult recently for the department to hire due to the competitive labor market. Comments that this bill will increase flexibility for appointing authorities and help the department better position itself to hire the staff necessary to accomplish their mission of consumer protection.

Alexandra Daum, Commissioner, CT DECD: Supports this bill because it would allow the agency to hire staff more swiftly and reduce the likelihood for them to miss out on top-tier talent during the hiring process.

Katie Dykes, Commissioner, CT DEEP: Supports this bill because it would allow state agencies to more easily recover from the "retirement cliff" of 2022 by streamlining the hiring

process and allow the agencies to fill the positions that have recently been left open. Comments that the bill allows agencies to immediately hire qualified candidates from any candidate list.

Nancy Navarretta, Commissioner, CT DMHAS: Supports this bill because the agency must be more ready to provide important state services, and the streamlined hiring process that the bill creates would accomplish that. Comments that this will allow the agencies to compete effectively for attracting talented employees to help provide their important services.

Michelle Gilman, Commissioner, CT Department of Administrative Services & David Krayeski, Undersecretary, Office of Labor Relations at OPM: Supports this bill because several societal factors have made it difficult recently to hire qualified candidates to fill positions in the state agencies. Comments that this bill adds new proposals to a previous proposed bill that would give more flexibility to appointing authorities responsible for hiring new employees.

Angel Quiros, Commissioner, CT Department of Correction: Supports this bill because it gives the Department of Correction the opportunity to make an offer to applicants earlier than they are currently able to and would give them the ability to hire from previous applicant pools if the candidate is qualified.

James Rovella, Commissioner, CT DESPP: Supports this bill because it would allow for the streamlining of the state hiring process and help the agencies fill vacancies in key positions quicker than they are currently able to. Comments that one way the bill achieves this is allowing agencies to continuously post job openings to speed up the hiring process.

Charlene Tucker, Commissioner, CT Department of Education: Supports this bill because it will help address the recent retirements across various state agencies and create a more streamlined and less burdensome hiring process that will improve their ability to recruit new employees.

Beth Bye, Commissioner, CT Office of Early Childhood: Supports this bill because state agencies have experienced recent difficulties with recruiting and hiring staff and believes that this bill gives the state agencies leeway in terms of hiring timelines and the way that candidates are selected.

Vanessa Dorantes, Commissioner, CT Department of Children and Families: Supports this bill because DCF, along with other state agencies, made these recommendations to the governor regarding how the agencies can be given a better process to hire employees.

Garrett Eucalitto, Commissioner CT Department of Transportation: Supports this bill because it gives the state agencies more flexibility to hire new employees quicker while still respecting applicant rights and existing employees. Comments that this will also improve the hiring process for managers who process applications to further streamline the process.

Manisha Juthani, Commissioner, CT Department of Public Health: Supports this bill because it will increase the rate at which the department will be able to hire new staff and therefore ensuring that the needs of the public for important services are met.

Andrea Reeves, Commissioner, CT Department of Social Services: Supports this bill because, as a result of various factors, the agency is having difficulty hiring for various units and divisions. They believe that this bill will help improve the situation by making practical changes such as allowing the agency to immediately hire from a candidate list and to hire from a candidate list in a different job class.

Jordan Scheff, Commissioner, CT Department of Developmental Services: Supports this bill because it would reduce the timeline for filling vacancies and improve the state agency hiring process by giving them more flexibility and options for how they are able to hire from candidate lists.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Daniel Livingston, General Counsel & Chief Negotiator, SEBAC: Supports this bill because the state agencies are understaffed, especially in the areas critical to the public well-being. Comments that the bill does not go far enough in some cases and may create unintended consequences that could reduce opportunities for current employees and worsen the issues with employee recruitment and retention.

Carl Chisem, President, CT Employees Union Independent: Supports this bill and believes that it would be a step in the right direction by reducing the time it takes to fill vacancies in state positions and giving the appointing authorities more flexibility in hiring. Comments that it would attract more job seekers to work for the State of Connecticut.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Ed Hawthorne, President, Connecticut AFL-CIO: Opposes this bill as written because it could create a system of nepotism in the hiring process and reduces preferences for internal applicants, which could limit opportunities for the career advancement of existing state employees. They suggest that the proponents work in collaboration with DAS and SEBAC to create a better approach that honors existing collective bargaining agreements.

Reported by: Gabriel Marques, Assistant Clerk Date: 3/31/23