

Labor and Public Employees Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1124

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF PATHWAYS TO STATE EMPLOYMENT.

Vote Date: 3/16/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/2/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Labor and Public Employees Committee.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This legislation mandates the Department of Administrative Services, led by the Commissioner, to conduct a study regarding the hiring practice of state agencies. The study shall include but is not limited to; the feasibility of eliminating requirements for college degrees for certain state classified services and the feasibility of establishing a program to provide alternative pathways for appointments to state classified service positions. The intent of this would be determine possible ways to increase the paths of entry into state service, and potentially open up positions to candidates from more diverse backgrounds.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Michelle Gilman, Commissioner, Department of Administrative Services & Nicholas Hermes, Chief Human Resource Officer, DAS: She offered testimony in opposition of this legislation. She stated that this legislation would be redundant of current practices and would divert resources away from hiring efforts within the Human Resources Unit. She further stated that Section 1 regarding “eliminating college degrees” is unnecessary because similar policy has been implemented decades ago, and that 90% of Connecticut state jobs already do not require college degrees. Furthermore, she stated that the jobs that do require degrees typically require a degree to obtain a license or certification to perform their work, such as engineers, nurses, doctors, and attorneys. She urged the committee to oppose this legislation so they could remain focused on assisting state agencies' efforts to build and maintain their workforces.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Ed Hawthorne, President, CT AFL-CIO: He offered testimony in favor of this legislation. He stated that he appreciates the intent of this legislation but urges the committee to require the Department of Administrative Services to collaborate with SEBAC. He argued that this addition would ensure that those with a complete understanding of the issue at hand can provide solutions that deliver the most effective result.

Carl Chisem, President, CT Employees Union Independent: He offered testimony regarding S.B. 1124 and stated that this legislation would serve as a necessary step towards creating a pipeline partnership within the Connecticut Higher Education system. He stated that with the shortage of qualified workers, the public sector workforce gap continues to widen due to private sectors hiring incentives such as schooling and licensing. Furthermore, he argued that for the state to be able to compete with the private sector, they must encourage young people to go into state service while providing them with a clear path through education and the training that is required. Lastly, he urged the committee to acknowledge the importance of workers and expect that they will be among some of the appointees to the taskforce.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

No additional sources of opposition were provided.

OTHER TESTIMONY:

Daniel Livingston, General Counsel and Chief Negotiator, SEBAC: He offered comments stating that he does not believe this legislation will serve its intended purpose. He stated that it is essential that the voices of the workers who already provide these services are included in the study. Additionally, he offered substitute language which would allow the State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition to conduct the study of hiring practices by state agencies, in “concert” with the DAS Commissioner.

Reported by: Sebastian Musante, Assistant Clerk Date: 3/20/2023