

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5338

AN ACT CONCERNING THE ADMISSION OF STATE RESIDENTS TO

Title: VETERINARY SCHOOLS.

Vote Date: 3/14/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/5/2024

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Mike Demicco, 21st District.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This would require the president of The University of Connecticut to enter into an agreement for the admission of state residents to out-of-state veterinary schools and to fund the Kirklyn M. Kerr grant program. Currently, students seeking a veterinary medicine education are forced to take on enormous amounts of student debt to attend expensive, out-of-state institutions. This would allow students to get a quality education at Iowa State University for nearly the same cost as in-state tuition. This would also help to combat the shortage of veterinarians faced by veterinary clinics in the state, forcing clinics to work understaffed and leading to delays for pet owners in getting appointments for their animals and exorbitant wait times in veterinary emergency rooms.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[University of Connecticut, College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, Dean and Director, Indrajeet Chaubey](#): supports this bill because of how effective the Kirklynn Kerr program from 2008-2018 was in providing quality veterinarian education to Connecticut students. They state that over the life of that now defunct program, it became apparent that Connecticut needed to provide the full cost of attendance for each student to ensure students could be assured of stable funding throughout their veterinary education. They request an increase from the \$10,000 per semester over four years, totaling \$80,000, to \$15,000 per semester over four years, totaling \$120,000, to reflect Iowa State University's increase in cost of attendance in the years since the program ended. They also request an additional 10% of the total appropriation be allocated to the College of Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources to fund costs involved with the administration of this program. They state that the

support and commitment from the state secured admission for up to five students per year and reduced the fee and tuition burden to align with in-state costs.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association, Mark Albin](#): supports this bill and states that many veterinary clinics work understaffed which forces pet owners to face delays in getting their animals appointments. They state that the only veterinary school in New England is Tufts, which is a private institution and among the most expensive in the country, along with there being no slots reserved for Connecticut students. Depending on the school, student debt for students in Connecticut seeking to become a veterinarian could easily surpass \$400,000 due to those students being forced to go to expensive, out-of-state institutions. Under the Kirklynn Kerr program, students were required to return to Connecticut upon completion of their education to practice veterinary medicine. They had spoken with the Dean of Tufts Veterinary School, Dr. Alastair Cribb, who reportedly stated that he could envision as many as 30 reserved seats for Connecticut students.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Patrick Buckley

Date: 3/20/2024