

Labor and Public Employees Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5385

AN ACT STUDYING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FULL EMPLOYMENT TRUST

Title: FUND.

Vote Date: 3/7/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/5/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor and Public Employees Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would direct the CT Department of Labor to create a study on creating a full employment trust fund. A full employment trust fund would help create employment opportunities and training programs for CT workers and disadvantaged youth. The study would inform the Labor Committee the benefits, costs, and logistics on creating a full employment trust fund. With this information the committee will be able to decide whether it is beneficial/possible to implement a full employment trust fund in CT.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Danté Bartolomeo, Commissioner, CT Department of Labor: Commissioner Bartolomeo explains the study which required the CTDOL to investigate the "establishment of a full employment trust fund." The Commissioner believes that this study should not fall under the responsibility of the CTDOL as she does not believe every job and training program falls under their scope. Additionally, she does not believe the CTDOL has the tools to carry out a study and does not have any workforce housing experts on staff.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Kathleen Callahan, Policy Civic Engagement Director, CT Cradle to Career Coalition: Callahan voices her support of the study as she believes that creating a full employment trust fund would eliminate inequities and create opportunities of success. Callahan strongly support the expansion of work-study opportunities and is specifically concerned with disconnected youth who are unable to graduate and find jobs. Callahan emphasizes the

benefits of such job creation, the racial inequity that exists in unemployment, and the damages unemployment and underemployment have on individuals and their families. Callahan believes that a full employment trust fund would help address all these issues and is in strong support of its potential creation.

Gertrude Goldberg, Chair, National Jobs for all Network: Goldberg voices her support of the bill, believing that it is important to study the creation of permanent well-paying jobs. Despite CT's relatively low unemployment many families are damaged by joblessness and would be benefited by a full employment program. Goldberg believes if this program was established CT would benefit from the increase of goods and services and the reduce in need for public welfare while simultaneously saving unemployed families.

Stephen Monroe Tomczak, Ph. D., L.M.S.W., National Jobs for All Network: Tomczak voice his support of the bill, stating that he believes employment is an important right. Tomczak believes that unemployment is a problem within the state with the amount of people who are out of work or underemployed being 183,453. These individuals are likely to have poorer mental and physical health than their employed counterparts. Unemployment also damages economic inequality and leads to social exclusion and inequity among factors like race or ethnicity while also putting a burden on government services. Tomczak believes that full employment policies address all these issues and creates improved outcomes for those who participate and their families.

Aziz Dehkan, Executive Director, CT Roundtable on Climate and Jobs: Dehkan voices his general support of the bill, summarizing the main points of the bill favorably.

Jennifer Perez, L.M.S.W., National Jobs for All Network: Perez voices her support of the bill, emphasizing the damages unemployment can have on a city. Perez specifically mentions how Bridgeport was thriving in the early 20th century when it had factory work with workforce housing. The lack of employment Bridgeport has now is a direct correlation for many of the problems the city faces today. Perez believes working is a human right and this bill is a step towards fulfilling this right while also helping us with problems related to lack of wages.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Provided

Reported by: Noah Gulla

Date: 3/14/2024