

Education Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5416
AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION
Title: STATUTES.
Vote Date: 3/18/2024
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference to Appropriations
PH Date: 3/11/2024
File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Education Committee

Rep. Hector Arzeno, 151st Dist.
Rep. Eleni Kavros DeGraw, 17th Dist.
Rep. Jennifer Leeper, 132nd Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill makes various revisions to the education statutes in 14 sections. These revisions include but are not limited to: inclusion of the Greek Genocide within genocide curricula, requiring the SDE to develop a plan to replace the statewide mastery examination, requiring the SDE to study the efficacy of crisis response drills in schools, and specifying that the training program for administration of emergency first aid to students experiencing an allergic reaction is for students who do not have prior medical or parental authorization. These revisions are informed by outreach from the public, community stakeholders and state agencies. This bill serves to address their various concerns through relevant statutory adjustments.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language for this bill (LCO 3150) removes five sections from the original draft. These include Sec. 1 dealing with the inclusion of the Greek Genocide in genocide curricula, Sec. 4 - 6 dealing with crisis response drills in schools and Sec. 13 dealing with the administration of a survey by the Special Education Task Force.

Additionally, this substitute language added two new sections to this bill, requiring same day notice rather than 24-hour notice for instances of restraint and seclusion of students in school as well as requiring a behavior and intervention team within schools.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

CT State Department of Education, Commissioner, Charlene Russell-Tucker; expresses general support for this bill yet has reservations regarding a few sections. In regard to Sec. 1, they state that the approved SBE Social Studies Standards assure learning experiences dealing with the genocide of many groups across history. Regarding Sec. 2, they express disagreement with the need to replace the current statewide mastery exam, stating that the current exam follows federal law, costs less and are shorter than previous iterations. Regarding Sec. 4 and 5, they state that the current number of crisis response drills are important to generate compliance amongst students, yet also states that SDE will continue this conversation going forward. They state that SDE is in favor of Sec. 7, yet caution that funding for its proposed adjustment is not included in the biennial budget as currently passed nor the Governor's midterm budget. Regarding Sec. 8, they state that SDE does not possess the expertise to be able to analyze and provide recommendations regarding other factors impacting racial imbalance. In reference to Sec. 9, they state that it is redundant of existing regulations. For Sec. 13, they state that SDE is unclear as to the purpose of the survey delineated in the section. Finally, regarding Sec. 14, they state that the December 31, 2024 reporting deadline is not feasible for providing municipalities with accurate data regarding an estimate of the equalization aid grant amount they each will receive in the following fiscal year.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Private Citizen, Mia Ausiello; supports this bill, providing their own personal experience of the effect of multiple lockdown drills. They state that making it mandatory to announce drills before they occur will reduce panic amongst young students and allow the drills to run more smoothly and effectively.

Private Citizen, Steve Baklas; expresses general support for the provision of this bill regarding the inclusion of the Greek Genocide in school curricula.

Private Citizen, Erin Barthel; expresses support for the section of this bill which would limit lockdown drills in schools. They state that these drills can cause emotional trauma for students and suggests including trauma informed specialists in the discussion on how to adjust these practices.

Private Citizen, Gregory Bosch; writes in support of lines 387-404 of this bill and provides some relevant suggestions. They suggest that while the current law is being studied, redistricting of students should be paused in order to ensure that action is not taken that is later deemed to be inappropriate.

CREC, Nurse, Matthew Cushing; expresses support for Sec. 12 of this bill. They state that many children's first allergy attack happens in schools when undiagnosed. Allowing EpiPens to be used in situations like these will ensure that students have the resources available to them to deal with these issues when they arise.

Private Citizen, Vasilios Diakogeorgiou; expresses support for the inclusion of the Greek Genocide within this bill. They state that education on genocide is incredibly crucial, and that this education must encompass all instances of this throughout history.

State Representative, Connecticut General Assembly, Rep. Nicole Klarides-Ditria; expresses support for lines 4-13 of this bill, stating that teaching about the Greek Genocide in schools will help students understand 'othering', which itself can form a precursor to genocide.

SEEK, President, John M. Flanders; supports this bill in general yet provides multiple comments and suggestions relating to specific sections. They express reservation with Sec. 1, as state testing is the only way parents can see the level of achievement of special education students. They suggest adding more safeguards to Sec. 5 to aid special education students who may be traumatized by fire/crisis drills. They suggest paying attention to racial imbalance when considering a review of education policy in reference to Sec. 8, among other recommendations.

CT Against Gun Violence, Member, Sara Gratton; expresses support for Sec. 4 - 6 of this bill. They state that fire/crisis drills in school now happen too frequently and can cause intense fear and emotional harm to students. They specifically emphasize how these drills can be damaging especially for the youngest students.

Private Citizen, Laura Kabel; expresses support for Sec. 4 - 6 of this bill, stating that the current structure of crisis drills in school lead children to spend time in school thinking about how they could escape a possible attack rather than focusing on their learning. They state that school should be a place for learning, not for fear, and as such the number of crisis drill students should be mandated to participate in each year should be one.

Private Citizen, Lazaros Karipedes; expresses support for lines 11 through 13 of this bill dealing with the inclusion of the Greek Genocide in the public school curriculum.

Private Citizen, Amy Ford Keohane; expresses support for Sec. 4 - 6 of this bill, stating that reducing the number of fire/crisis drills in schools will minimize psychological harm to children. They state that these drills must be constructed in a manner which do more good than harm to the children they affect.

Private Citizen, Jennifer Hoffman Lee; supports Sec. 4 - 6 of this bill, stating that the discussion of these activities (crisis drills, etc.) must shift from reactive solutions such as lockdown drills and armed guards to more preventative solutions, such as increased access to mental health resources and ensuring that firearms remain locked at home.

Private Citizen, Claire Matthews; expresses general support for this legislation, and suggests that the best way to protect children is at the source: strong gun control legislation and a reduction of social media usage. They also suggest ensuring that school personnel are well trained and well resourced in order to fend off any possible threats.

Felician Franciscan Sisters, JPIC Coordinator, Sister Maryann Mueller; expresses support for Sec. 4 - 6 of this bill, stating that these provisions will ensure that crisis response drills will minimize psychological harm to the children affected. They also state that these measures should be secondary to actions that prevent armed assailants in schools, such as ensuring that firearms remain locked at home and that mental health resources are readily available to all that need them.

CT Against Gun Violence, Member, Diana Norris; expresses general support for this bill, stating that it is imperative to maximize the benefits of crisis response drills in order to mitigate the harm that these drills may inflict on students' emotional health.

Reverend, Peter Orfanakos; expresses support for Sec. 1 of this bill. They provide some personal family experience related to the Greek Genocide and then state that it is not permissible to hide areas of history like this from school instruction and that the inclusion of this area of history within the school curriculum is not an attempt to censure or denigrate any particular ethnic group.

CT Against Gun Violence, Director of Communications, Jonathan Perloe; expresses support for Sec. 4 - 6 of this legislation, stating that these sections will ensure that crisis response drills in schools follow trauma-informed best practices. They state that many mental health professionals caution about the efficacy of crisis drills, stating that when conducted incorrectly can be the cause of emotional harm.

Private Citizen, Marianna Schorer; expresses general support for this bill, highlighting the provisions which would reduce the number of crisis drills in schools. They state that health professionals have noted the adverse impacts of these drills if conducted incorrectly.

Essex Board of Education, Chair, Lon Seidman; expresses general support for this bill, yet states that a single crisis drill per school year is not enough to properly set the correct procedures in place and suggests that components of the procedures could be reviewed separately outside the context of a live drill.

AMPHRC, Board Member, Anastasia Skoupas; expresses support for this bill's first section dealing with the Greek Genocide. They state that by including this in school curricula, students will gain a better understanding of the Greek contributions to society originating outside mainland Greece and will better understand patterns and similarities that the Greek experience shares with the Armenian and Assyrian genocides.

The following private citizens submitted testimony in support of this bill:

They express support for Sec. 1 of this bill, stating that the goal of genocide education is to ensure similar atrocities do not happen again. They state that the inclusion of the Greek Genocide within this curriculum will cause it to become more well-rounded and inclusive.

Private Citizen, Michael Skoupas;

Private Citizen, Pantele Skoupas;

Private Citizen, Themistoklis Skoupas;

Private Citizen, Anastasia Spiridis;

Private Citizen, Elizabeth Spiridis;

Private Citizen, Kiriaky Spiridis;

Pan Pontian Federation, President, Gus Tsilfides;

Private Citizen, Irene Skrybalio; expresses support for this bill, stating that active shooter drills in schools are not a solution to school violence, and actually cause more harm than good.

Private Citizen, Leslie Weinberg; expresses support for this bill, stating that mass shooting drills in schools are disturbing and traumatizing for children.

CT Against Violence, Facilitator, Rev. Terri Williams; expresses support for this bill, stating that there is certainly a need for crisis drills, but that the level of exposure to these today leaves lasting scars on children's mental wellbeing. They state that legislators cannot ignore the impact of trauma on children and that legislation must prioritize prevention measures to protect youth.

Teacher, Erica Wilson; expresses support for Sec. 4 - 6 of this bill, stating that everyone, teachers and students, should be able to opt out of a lockdown or crisis response drill. They state that the state should refocus its energy on initiatives that help all students and do not cause emotional harm.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

The following private citizens submitted testimony in opposition to this bill:

They express opposition to lines 11-13 of this bill, which mandate the inclusion of the Greek Genocide in instruction on genocide within public schools. They state that this inclusion is legally and historically incorrect and will possibly cause students of Turkish heritage to be bullied in school.

The substitute language for this bill addresses these concerns.

Private Citizen, Almila Abban
Private Citizen, Sabriye Abban
Private Citizen, Tolga Abban
Private Citizen, Umut Can Acar
Private Citizen, Saliha Ahmedi
Private Citizen, Nazife Akca
Private Citizen, Ali Akdeniz
Private Citizen, Filiz Akdeniz
Private Citizen, Mete Akdeniz
Private Citizen, Pelin Akdeniz
Private Citizen, Mehmet Akin
Private Citizen, Akin Akinci
Private Citizen, Burcu Akkaya
Private Citizen, Levent Aksoy
Private Citizen, Gizem Aksu
Private Citizen, Baris Alan
Private Citizen, Ezgi Alanlar
Private Citizen, Ismayil Aliyev
Private Citizen, Rakif Aliyev
Private Citizen, Betul Alpaydin
Private Citizen, Murat Alpaydin
Private Citizen, Gulay Altun
Private Citizen, Salim Altun
Private Citizen, Begum Apeadu
Private Citizen, Alp Arslan
Private Citizen, Nese Arslan
Private Citizen, Aflatun Asadov
Private Citizen, Aslihan Asadov
Private Citizen, Bora Atav
Private Citizen, Yelda Atav
Private Citizen, Engin Ates
Private Citizen, Muammer Avci
Private Citizen, Yusuf Avci
Private Citizen, Ahu Avsar
Private Citizen, Haydar Avsar
Private Citizen, Ayse Aydin
Private Citizen, Ismail Aydin
Private Citizen, Sami Aydin
Private Citizen, Yesim Azakli
Private Citizen, Lilly Bay
Private Citizen, Bulent Bayik
Private Citizen, Ozgur Baykal
Private Citizen, Oksan Bayulgen
Private Citizen, Melih Bektas
Private Citizen, Merve Bektas
Private Citizen, Nermin Bektas
Private Citizen, Semih Bektas
Private Citizen, Efe Berk
Private Citizen, Gizem Bhambhani

Private Citizen, Sahin Boluk
Private Citizen, Semiha Bozkurt
Private Citizen, Betul Bulca
Private Citizen, Selen Bulca
Private Citizen, Yusuf Bulca
Private Citizen, Tahsin Bulut
Private Citizen, Talha Bulut
Private Citizen, Furkan Burak
Private Citizen, Eyup Buyuksolak
Private Citizen, Demet Cabbar
Private Citizen, Oktak Cakir
Private Citizen, Mubeccel Catalbas
Private Citizen, Saban Catalbas
Private Citizen, Zafer Catalbas
Private Citizen, Zehra Catalbas
Private Citizen, Nurcan Cayan
Private Citizen, Burcu Celik
Private Citizen, Erkan Celik
Private Citizen, Yakup Celik
Private Citizen, Ziya Celik
Private Citizen, Funda Cergis
Private Citizen, Bora Cete
Private Citizen, Ipek Cete
Private Citizen, Ecem Cevik
Private Citizen, Gonul Ceyhan
Private Citizen, Huseyin Ceyhan
Private Citizen, Hakan Coban
Private Citizen, Merve Coban
Private Citizen, Muhammet Copur
Private Citizen, Sencer Cucuk
Private Citizen, Hasan Cure
Private Citizen, Filiz Dalo
Private Citizen, Betul Demir
Private Citizen, Emine Demir
Private Citizen, Fatma Demir
Private Citizen, Hac Demir
Private Citizen, Israfil Demir
Private Citizen, Mehmet Demir
Private Citizen, Cetin Demirel
Private Citizen, Ozgul Demirel
Private Citizen, Figen Demiroz
Private Citizen, Ilhami Demiroz
Private Citizen, Frank Depay
Private Citizen, John Doe
Private Citizen, Cristos Dougleris
Private Citizen, Serdar Durdu
Private Citizen, Eren Durmaz
Private Citizen, Gokhan Durmaz
Private Citizen, Isil Durmaz

Private Citizen, Bayram Dumraz
Private Citizen, Metin Durmus
Private Citizen, Sebahattin Durmus
Private Citizen, Cevik Ecem
Private Citizen, Tugba Efendigil
Private Citizen, Tufan Eker
Private Citizen, Ahmet Ekin
Private Citizen, Mustafa Ekmekcioglu
Private Citizen, Hulya Eevli
Private Citizen, Irem Eevli
Private Citizen, Nuray Eevli
Private Citizen, Zeliha Eevli
Private Citizen, Haydar Eevulu
Private Citizen, Emine Elik
Private Citizen, Fatma Elik
Private Citizen, Ilayda Elik
Private Citizen, Seher Elik
Private Citizen, Neslihan Elmali
Private Citizen, Znur Emine
Private Citizen, Birol Emir
Private Citizen, Nurhak Erbas
Private Citizen, Halil Ercelik
Private Citizen, Koray Erdoqan
Private Citizen, Tarik Ersan
Private Citizen, Perihan Ersoy
Private Citizen, Umit Ertin
Private Citizen, Ezqi Eser
Private Citizen, Aybuke Fincan
Private Citizen, Mustafa Fincan
Private Citizen, Jim Fitzgerald
Private Citizen, Gozde Fryc
Private Citizen, Fatma Furkan
Private Citizen, Muhammed Furkan
Private Citizen, Matt Gasimzade
Private Citizen, Christine Gencer
Private Citizen, Mehmet Gencer
Private Citizen, Doga Gezer
Private Citizen, Ipek Gezer
Private Citizen, Elif Gurdal
Private Citizen, Nisa Gurz
Private Citizen, Bayhan Hacisalihoglu
Private Citizen, Ismail Hakki
Private Citizen, Ferda Hatiboglu
Private Citizen, Zqr Horuz
Private Citizen, Ramazan Horuz
Private Citizen, Sezgin Ilitli
Private Citizen, Hakan Iskif
Private Citizen, Mujde Jason
Private Citizen, Guney Jones

Private Citizen, Senol Kahraman
Private Citizen, Sevki Kanca
Private Citizen, Emre Kandemir
Private Citizen, Nuray Kandemir
Private Citizen, Ahmet Kangal
Private Citizen, Mehmet Kangal
Private Citizen, Mustafa Kangal
Private Citizen, Nazim Kangal
Private Citizen, Asli Kara
Private Citizen, Hakan Karaali
Private Citizen, Hummet Karaarslan
Private Citizen, Sevket Karaarslan
Private Citizen, Yalcin Karagoz
Private Citizen, Zeynep Kaya
Private Citizen, Oguz Kilic
Private Citizen, Cengiz Kirca
Private Citizen, Songul Kirca
Private Citizen, Harun Kizilirmak
Private Citizen, Busra Koc
Private Citizen, Cemalettin Koc
Private Citizen, Hasan Koc
Private Citizen, Nevziye Koc
Private Citizen, Suat Koc
Private Citizen, Yasemin Koc
Private Citizen, Tuba Kockar
Private Citizen, Ceyhun Koles
Private Citizen, Mehmet Koles
Private Citizen Remzi Korkmaz
Private Citizen, Dalma Kucuk
Private Citizen, Meltem Kucuk
Private Citizen, Serdar Kucuk
Private Citizen, Alex Kumas
Private Citizen, Buket Kupuc
Private Citizen, Engin Kupuc
Private Citizen, Hamza Kupuc
Private Citizen, Hatice Kupuc
Private Citizen, Necmettin Kupuc
Private Citizen, Rana Kupuc
Private Citizen, Serdar Kupuc
Private Citizen, Ahmet Kurak
Private Citizen, Fatma Kurak
Private Citizen, Mehmet Kurak
Private Citizen, Meryem Kurak
Private Citizen, Mustafa Kurak
Private Citizen, Ali Ishan Kuruca
Private Citizen, Fahrettin Kuruca
Private Citizen, Hasan Kuruca
Private Citizen, Mimine Kuscu
Private Citizen, Ferla Kuter

Private Citizen, Nese Lortlar
Private Citizen, Tulay Luciano
Private Citizen, Sevilay Marr
Private Citizen, Goknur Mcavov
Private Citizen, Emir Mus
Private Citizen, Esgji Mus
Private Citizen, Hasan Mus
Private Citizen, Samiye Mus
Private Citizen, Tayfun Mus
Private Citizen, Meltem Musa
Private Citizen, Cavid Nasibov
Private Citizen, Ayna Nasibova
Private Citizen, Batya Natan
Private Citizen, Gizem Nemutlu
Private Citizen, Munire Nilson
Private Citizen, Vedat Obuz
Private Citizen, Osman Odabas
Private Citizen, Calgar Oksuz
Private Citizen, Dilara Onur
Private Citizen, Dina Onur
Private Citizen, Ozgur Onur
Private Citizen, Shantal Onur
Private Citizen, Ali Ortak
Private Citizen, Alpen Ortug
Private Citizen, Sert Ovun
Private Citizen, Demet Ozbay
Private Citizen, Fatma Ozbay
Private Citizen, Necla Ozbay
Private Citizen, Senay Ozbay
Private Citizen, Tanju Ozbay
Private Citizen, Ilkay Ozdemir
Private Citizen, Muzaffer Ozdemir
Private Citizen, Nevin Ozdemir
Private Citizen, Onur Ozdemir
Private Citizen, Turkey Ozdemir
Private Citizen, Berra Ozkan
Private Citizen, Busra Ozkan
Private Citizen, Coksun Ozkan
Private Citizen, Hatice Ozkan
Private Citizen, Kubra Ozkan
Private Citizen, Nur Ozkan
Private Citizen, Zumra Ozkan
Private Citizen, Gultekin Ozsoyoqlu
Private Citizen, Gultekin Ozsoyoqlu
Private Citizen, Ozlem Ozturk
Private Citizen, Lin Ozu
Private Citizen, Fatma Pakdil
Private Citizen, Haluk Pelit
Private Citizen, Burak Perk

Private Citizen, Sema Piantino
Private Citizen, Jeff Saatchi
Private Citizen, Aygun Safarova
Private Citizen, Ebru Sahin
Private Citizen, Eylul Sahin
Private Citizen, Jale Sahin
Private Citizen, Sam Sahin
Private Citizen, Serdar Sahin
Private Citizen, Serpil Sahin
Private Citizen, Matt Sahintepe
Private Citizen, Melek Sahintepe
Private Citizen, Erdal Sarac
Private Citizen, Kemal Saray
Private Citizen, Tarak Saray
Private Citizen, Suha Sari
Private Citizen, Yasemin Sari
Private Citizen, Serkan Sen
Private Citizen, Ahmet Silistre
Private Citizen, Elcin Silistre
Private Citizen, Ahmet Tanriverdi
Private Citizen, Eymen Tanriverdi
Private Citizen, Onur Tanriverdi
Private Citizen, Serhat Tarhan
Private Citizen, Mehmet Tavan
Private Citizen, Yucel Tavolara
Private Citizen, Serdar Tayhan
Private Citizen, Zafer Tirnik
Private Citizen, Eleni Tsapralis
Private Citizen, Yorgos Tumanis
Private Citizen, Eyup Turan
Private Citizen, Hamza Turan
Private Citizen, Isa Turan
Private Citizen, Said Turan
Private Citizen, Zeynep Turan
Private Citizen, Proud Turk
Private Citizen, Yildiray Turk
Private Citizen, Serdar Turkmen
Private Citizen, Yeter Turkmen
Private Citizen, Aykut Turkoglu
Private Citizen, Sevil Turkoglu
Private Citizen, Ertugrul Turkseven
Private Citizen, Enis Ucuncu
Private Citizen, Abdullah Ugurlu
Private Citizen, Musa Ugurlu
Private Citizen, Mehmet Ulutas
Private Citizen, Mustafa Umar
Private Citizen, Selim Unlu
Private Citizen, Sibel Uzgur
Private Citizen, Ayhan Uzun

Private Citizen, Aysegul Uzun
Private Citizen, Elif Uzun
Private Citizen, Ercan Uzun
Private Citizen, Hava Uzun
Private Citizen, Ilyas Uzun
Private Citizen, Irem Uzun
Private Citizen, Melih Uzun
Private Citizen, Musa Uzun
Private Citizen, Nilgun Uzun
Private Citizen, Fatih Uzuner
Private Citizen, Mehmet Uzunkaya
Private Citizen, Fotios Varelis
Private Citizen, Ozge Vargel
Private Citizen, Oktay Verdi
Private Citizen, Gokhan Vural
Private Citizen, Alev Yagan
Private Citizen, Handan Yagan
Private Citizen, Neda Yagan
Private Citizen, Ahmet Yaqlidere
Private Citizen, Ali Yaqlidere
Private Citizen, Burhan Yaqlidere
Private Citizen, Mustafa Yalcin
Private Citizen, Halil Yanbul
Private Citizen, Hatice Yaz

Private Citizen, Ibrahim Yazici
Private Citizen, Cezmi Yeniay
Private Citizen, Reyhan Yeter
Private Citizen, Derya Yildirim
Private Citizen, Esat Yildirim
Private Citizen, Emine Yildiz
Private Citizen, Engin Yildiz
Private Citizen, Fadime Yildiz
Private Citizen, Fatma Yildiz
Private Citizen, Isik Yildiz
Private Citizen, Kemal Yildiz
Private Citizen, Lutfi Yildiz
Private Citizen, Mehmet Yildiz
Private Citizen, Miray Yildiz
Private Citizen, Nazire Yildiz
Private Citizen, Ayse Yilmaz
Private Citizen, Ismsil Yilmaz
Private Citizen, Jack Yilmaz
Private Citizen, Aysen Yoldaygecti
Private Citizen, Cansu Yurduseven
Private Citizen, Recep Yurduseven
Private Citizen, Fathee Zafer
Private Citizen, Ibrahim Zdemir

Reported by: Benjamin Lee

Date: 4/9/24