

# Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-106  
AN ACT CONCERNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN THE  
**Title:** STATE.  
**Vote Date:** 3/7/2024  
**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable  
**PH Date:** 2/22/2024  
**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill would have the Board of Regents for Higher Education study workforce development initiatives in the state. This would inform the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee of obstacles faced by certain industries, any issues regarding an aging workforce, accessibility and availability of workforce development initiatives, and any shortages of labor in the state to more efficiently and effectively address these problems.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

None expressed.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

[Connecticut General Assembly, 8<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, Deputy Republican Leader At-Large, Representative Tim Ackert](#): supports this bill and states that they have submitted proposed bills in past legislative sessions that contain expanded opportunities for apprenticeships in the trades. They also submitted proposals to expand reciprocity with licensures for those who move to Connecticut and already have a license in another state for their trade.

[Connecticut Hospital Association](#): supports this bill and state some of the challenges faced by Connecticut hospitals in a post-pandemic healthcare system, specifically pertaining to treating sicker patients, hiring, and retaining staff, and financial problems. They request that the Committee consider:

- Updating existing state laws to enhance protections for the healthcare workforce against violence in healthcare settings.
- Providing direct state funding to hospitals and health systems for recruitment, retention, and training for healthcare workers and for relief from the increased costs of contract labor and staffing premium pay
- Supporting approaches to create healthcare career pathways that reduce barriers to careers in healthcare.
- Supporting state approval of interstate licensing compacts
- Examining how modifications to regulations regarding education and experience would increase the number of healthcare educators and candidates for employment.

[Connecticut General Assembly, 34<sup>th</sup> District, Deputy Republican Leader, Senator Paul Cicarella, 31<sup>st</sup> District, Chief Deputy Republican Leader, Senator Henri Martin, and 30<sup>th</sup> District, Senate Republican Leader, Senator Stephen Harding](#): support this bill stating that employers and jobseekers in their district have given them feedback stating they don't know what programs are offered by the state to help them or how to access said programs. This could also address a concern they hold over duplication of services. The information gathered should be used to create greater efficiencies and collaboration for the benefit of Connecticut Residents.

[Town of Berlin, Economic Development Department, Economic Development Director, Christopher D. Edge](#): supports this bill but believes that it doesn't attempt to find out what is missing from workforce development initiatives. They state that finding out what's missing is vital to the growth of our state as well as the best long-term investments into our higher education system.

[Connecticut Society of Radiologic Technologists](#): supports this bill stating that this would be a way to address the shortage of Radiologic Technologists, Nuclear Medicine Technologists, and Respiratory Therapists. They also request that the Connecticut Society of Radiologic Technologists be included in the development of the Workforce Development Initiatives.

[Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Connecticut, CEO, Jim Perras](#): supports this bill and states that housing affordability and housing production have become big issues and little attention is being given to the impact of their aging workforce on the current housing crisis. They then point out several factors that illustrate the urgency with which these issues should be addressed. They recommend an amendment to compel the Governor's Workforce Council, along with the HBRA of CT and licensed trade associations, to explicitly study the skilled labor shortage in the residential construction industry. They also recommend including language in the bill to require the study of; the adequacy of investment in vocational training programs; the adequacy of collaboration between state and residential construction stakeholders to attract and retain skilled residential construction labor; a review of restrictive labor regulations that limit local businesses from hiring enough apprentices to meet their needs.

[Prospective Student, J'Waka Steele](#): supports this bill.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

[Adjunct Professor, Jill Priam](#): opposes this bill because they believe more people should be going to college.

[Connecticut Society of Respiratory Care, Respiratory Therapist, Ashley Weiss](#): opposes this bill and is encouraging an amendment to the bill's language to exclude respiratory therapy, radiology, and nuclear medicine on the basis that they have established their own task force in alignment with [SB1228](#).

**Reported by: Patrick Buckley**

**Date: 3/19/2024**