

Public Safety and Security Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-139

AN ACT CONCERNING DEVELOPMENT OF A FORENSIC SCIENCE
LABORATORY AND PROGRAMS FOR TRAINING POLICE DETECTIVES AND
OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL AT CENTRAL CONNECTICUT

Title: STATE UNIVERSITY.

Vote Date: 3/1/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/20/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Greg S. Howard, 43rd District
Rep. Craig C. Fishbein, 90th District
Rep. Ben McGorty, 122nd District
Rep. Patrick S. Boyd, 50th District

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill seeks to establish a memorandum of understanding between the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and Central Connecticut State University (CCSU), for the university to develop a forensic science laboratory and courses to train police officers seeking to become detectives and who are also currently police officers. They will be trained in investigative techniques, supervision or executive leadership, and have access to high quality training locally. Currently students in search of forensic science offerings must go outside of Connecticut's state university system, as there is no professional development program in CT for detectives, per President Zulma Toro's testimony. The sum of one \$1,017,000 is appropriated to CCSU from the General Fund for FY ending June 30, 2025.

Substitute Language: "Training" was added to the Forensic Science Laboratory to indicate that it is a training facility for students. Now reads "... Forensic Science **Training** Laboratory..." to clearly state that is a lab for training purposes only.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

David Cruickshank, CJPS Department Head – CTECS: Testified via correspondence in support of this bill. He stated that the program will strengthen Connecticut's law enforcement education system and also become the perfect next step in complimenting the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) and aid in increasing applicants in just a few years' time. He added that this will be an amazing program that will rival other private universities at a fraction of the cost.

Eric Dlugolenski, Assistant Professor - Central Connecticut State University: Testified via correspondence in support of this bill. He testified that he spent his professional life working alongside law enforcement from midnight shifts to studying police science at the University of New Haven and rose through the ranks. He also stated that this legislation has massive potential to elevate the professionalism of law enforcement in CT. He testified that policing is a science and its policies require an evidence-based approach and in order to occur there needs to be access to high quality training corresponding with immensely demanding mandates.

Damon Mitchell, Professor - Central Connecticut State University: Testified via correspondence in support of this bill. He testified that in his scope as faculty of CCSU in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice his experience working closely with officers at all ranks has helped to shed light on the need for quality education, training and applied research to assist them in their roles. He also testified that students in need and in search of forensic science offerings must go outside of Connecticut's state university system and that the only option in CT is University of North Haven.

Robert, Wolff, Dean – Central Connecticut State University: Supports this bill via correspondence in its entirety. Dean Wolffe reinforced the University's commitment to the development of a forensic science laboratory and innovative training opportunities for law enforcement and the commitment to community engagement in New Britain, the State of Connecticut, and the wider region.

Dr. Julie Davis, Professor and Detective Program Coordinator – Central Connecticut State University: Supports this bill in its entirety via correspondence. Testified that this legislation will bring enormous potential for training and educating law enforcement in our state. He also testified that the establishment of a forensic crime lab opens the possibility for many additional opportunities. He also stated that with his experience working with officers at all ranks has helped to illuminate the need for quality education, training and applied research into areas that assist these officers in their roles.

Patrick Griffin, Chief States Attorney – Division of Criminal Justice: Testified in support of this bill correspondence. The development of these continuing education programs requires an investment of money and energy and an investment in our public university system will no doubt provide future dividends to the citizenry that are immeasurable.

Zulma Toro, President – Central Connecticut State University: Testified via correspondence in support of this bill. She stated that Central's commitment to the development of a forensic laboratory and innovative profession development opportunities for law enforcement exemplify the commitment to community engagement in New Britain. She also stated that with no professional development program in CT for detectives, which is comparable to that offered by URI in forensic sciences, this

program will address this issue as currently Rhode Island State Crime Lab (RISCL) allows URI to have the space, equipment and expertise needed to offer detective courses in forensic science.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed

Reported by: Michelle Adams

Date: 3/8/2024