

---

## **OLR Bill Analysis**

**sHB 5239 (as amended by House "A")\***

### ***AN ACT EXPANDING THE CONNECTICUT COLLEGIATE AWARENESS AND PREPARATION PROGRAM.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Connecticut collegiate awareness and preparation program (ConnCAP), which is part of the Office of Higher Education's (OHE's) Minority Advancement Program, to target disadvantaged students, including low-income and first-generation college students, rather than "underachievers" as under current law. Under the bill, a "collegiate awareness and preparation program" is a program that provides outreach and services to middle school and high school students to prepare them to successfully complete postsecondary education at a higher education institution.

The bill requires OHE, as part of its Minority Advancement Program, to establish the Preparation for Academic Transition to a Higher Education program (PATH). Beginning FY 25, the bill also requires OHE, within available appropriations, to annually award grants up to \$100,000 to any nonprofit community-based organization in Connecticut that provides assistance to 11th and 12th grade students who live in the state with the following:

1. completing applications to postsecondary education programs;
2. completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or an application for institutional financial aid for students lacking legal immigration status, including through informational events and presentations about financial aid applications; and
3. securing education scholarships and grants to finance postsecondary education attendance.

It also makes technical and conforming changes.

\*House Amendment "A" strikes the underlying bill and replaces it with provisions that require OHE to establish the PATH program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

**GRANT ELIGIBILITY**

Under the bill, OHE must award PATH program grants on a competitive basis to any nonprofit community-based organization that (1) provides the types of assistance specified above during the prior academic year and (2) together with Connecticut public high school administrators, provides assistance during the academic year for which the grants will be awarded.

**GRANT APPLICATIONS**

The bill requires OHE to establish grant application submission procedures for the program and review applications based on an evaluation format the office develops. The bill specifies that this format must include a preference for nonprofit community-based organizations that provide assistance in school districts designated as alliance districts for the academic year in which the grant is awarded.

**PROGRAM AWARDS**

Under the bill, grants must be awarded in amounts from \$15,000 up to \$20,000 to grant recipients for the duration of the academic year in which the grant is awarded. The bill also gives OHE the authority to require the recipient to repay the grant to the state if the office finds that the grant is being used for any purpose that does not conform with the program's purposes.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 22 Nay 0 (03/14/2024)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 53 Nay 0 (04/15/2024)