
OLR Bill Analysis

SB 407

AN ACT GRANTING VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STUDENTS ACCESS TO WORKERS' COMPENSATION.

SUMMARY

This bill explicitly makes students of a regional agricultural science and technology education center (i.e., regional vo-ag program) “employees” covered by the state workers’ compensation law if they are enrolled in a work-study program, the Connecticut Career Certification Program, or an internship. It appears that students in a work-study program, the career certification program, or paid internship are already covered by workers’ compensation (see BACKGROUND).

Under the workers’ compensation law, an “employee” includes any person who has entered into or works under any contract of service or apprenticeship with an employer (CGS § 31-275(9)(A)).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2024

BACKGROUND

Connecticut Career Certification Program

The career certification program law specifically says all state and federal laws relating to employment and apprenticeships, except unemployment compensation law, apply to the work experiences and that they must be paid employment, with limited exceptions (e.g., community-service type activities) (CGS § 10-20b).

Internship

By law an “internship” is supervised practical training of a high school student or recent high school graduate that is comprised of curriculum and workplace standards approved by the departments of Education and Labor (CGS § 31-23(c)).

Regional Vo-Ag Programs

Regional vo-ag programs are hosted at high schools and students are enrolled in the regular comprehensive high school curriculum while also taking agricultural science courses and participating in supervised agricultural experiences.

Work-Study Program

By law a “cooperative work-study program” is a program of vocational education, approved by the education and labor commissioners, in an arrangement between the school and employers, where students receive instruction, including required academic courses and related vocational instruction by alternating between study in school with a job in the occupational field. The two experiences must be planned and supervised by the school and employers so that each contributes to the student’s education and employability (CGS § 31-23(c)). A student with a job in this scenario would be covered by workers’ compensation.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Labor and Public Employees Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 12 Nay 0 (03/21/2024)