
OLR BILL ANALYSIS

SB 1011

AN ACT CONCERNING A REORGANIZATION OF CONNECTICUT'S SYSTEM OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION.

SUMMARY:

This bill reorganizes the state system of higher education by replacing the Board of Governors of Higher Education (BOG) with a newly-created Board of Regents (BOR). It also makes BOR the governing body for all public higher education institutions except for UConn.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2011, except for the section requiring a study by OPM, which is effective upon passage.

BOARD OF REGENTS

Composition (§ 4)

The bill creates an 11-member BOR, nine of whom (including the chairperson) are appointed by the governor for staggered three-year terms. The other two members are the chairperson and vice-chairperson of the board's student advisory committee (see Student Advisory Committee below). The terms of existing BOG members will expire on the act's effective date.

Governance of Constituent Units (§§ 4, 8, 15-22, 28-29)

The bill makes the BOR the governing body for the Connecticut State University System (CSUS), the community-technical colleges (CTC), and Charter Oak State College and allows it to appoint and remove staff responsible for the operation of these constituent units. BOR replaces the existing CSUS and CTC boards of trustees and the Board of State Academic Awards. The bill maintains UConn's Board of Trustees.

Duties Assumed by BOR (§§ 3, 7-12, 30-31)

The bill transfers most, but not all duties of the BOG to the BOR. Most of the duties not transferred are those relating to UConn (see UCONN below). The bill adds a new goal for BOR of maximizing the use of financial and educational resources for instruction and learning.

Under current law, the Department of Higher Education (DHE) serves as staff to the BOG. The bill places DHE staff within the BOR and eliminates the term "Department of Higher Education" from the statutes. It also renames the Commissioner of Higher Education as President of the Board of Regents.

With respect to higher education block grants, the bill requires them to be made to the BOR (rather than the constituent units), which will allocate them to the individual institutions. It also requires the BOR to develop a plan for performance budgeting.

The bill also requires the BOR, in cooperation with UConn, to complete a strategic plan for higher education that was to have been done by a blue ribbon commission, which the bill eliminates. The plan development must include participation from stakeholders and the public before and after the development of a proposed draft. The plan must be completed by March 1, 2013.

Student Advisory Committee (§§ 5-6)

The bill renames the standing advisory committee to the BOG as the student advisory committee to the BOR. It reduces the committee's membership from 22 to 17: one member from each CSUS school (a total of four), one from each CTC institution (a total of 12), and one from Charter Oak, all elected by the respective student governments (but the bill does not specify whether the members must be students). Committee members elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson to serve two-year terms.

UCONN

Removed From Definition of Constituent Unit (§§ 1-3, 13-14, 27, 32-34)

The bill removes UConn from the definition of a constituent unit of

higher education. Since the term “constituent unit” appears throughout the statutes, this change has potentially far-reaching consequences; any statute referencing the constituent units would no longer be applicable to UConn. Thus, the bill requires OPM, in consultation with the co-chairs of the Higher Education Committee, to study the impact on the statutes of removing UConn from the definition of constituent unit. The report must be completed by May 1, 2011.

Not Subject to BOR Policies (§§ 8, 11, 23-25)

Many BOG duties concerning UConn are not transferred to the BOR. For example, current law requires UConn’s Board of Trustees to establish policies and fulfill its duties in conformance to BOG guidelines. The bill eliminates this requirement and a requirement for UConn to submit an annual accountability report to the BOG.

Current law also requires UConn to submit its budget request to BOG. The bill instead requires UConn to submit the request to OPM.

PRELIMINARY