

# Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5001

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY WORKFORCE TRAINING

**Title:** NEEDS IN THE STATE.

**Vote Date:** 3/12/2019

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 2/5/2019

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

To assess Connecticut's existing workforce skills training and certificate programs, ensuring that said programs that are already put in place meet our standards. Our state's workforce is continuing to grow, which increases the demand for properly trained personnel. This task force will study industries that may lack in training programs to then, in turn, better the future of Connecticut. If existing programs are not effective, the state needs to be aware in order to know where improvements need to be made.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[John Volin, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, University of Connecticut](#): The University of Connecticut (UConn) supports HB 5001, and hopes that with the work done by the task force, the state will increase its budget towards workforce development programs. "Currently, UConn provides 51% of Connecticut's Engineering graduates." Engineering enrollment recently increased by 61%. This number could easily grow significantly from year to year; however, UConn doesn't have the financial resources to do so. More faculty and staff must be hired in order to recruit and enroll even more students. UConn believes that investments from the state will help reach toward the common goal of building our manufacturing industry workforce

### NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Steven Hernandez, Executive Director, Connecticut Commission on Women, Children and Seniors](#): Connecticut Commission on Women, Children and Seniors (CWCS) testified in

support of HB 5001. CWCS administers Connecticut's two-generational initiative (2GEN), which acknowledges and addresses the issue that the well-being and future of a child is dependent upon their family's income. Therefore, "it is imperative that we adequately provide avenues to train for the jobs available in our state today." CWCS stated that the act would provide a comprehensible understanding of Connecticut's workforce development and better prepare students for the well-paying jobs our workforce so desperately demands.

Multiple people testified in support of the establishment of a task force to observe our state's workforce training needs, stating an interest in recruiting retired manufacturers who could apply their real world skills to the classroom. The advanced Manufacturing Technology Center at Connecticut State Colleges and Universities collaborated with a Stakeholder Coalition of employers, several associations and educators to survey manufacturing instructors and find ways to increase the number of instructors in Connecticut's workforce training. They found that we can achieve this by expanding the opportunities for retired potential instructors in our state by offering more instructor training and guidance.

- [Nora Duncan, State Director, American Association of Retired Persons](#)
- [Donna Fedus, Gerontologist, Founder, Borrow My Glasses, LLC](#)

[David Downes, Program Manager, The Connecticut Association for Adult & Continuing Education](#): The Connecticut Association for Adult & Continuing Education (CAACE) supports the implementation of a task force to study Connecticut's workforce training needs. While the state's unemployment rates continue to decrease, it has become increasingly difficult for participants to be prepared for the education and training necessary for their jobs. Not only are there not enough people enrolling in certificate programs and skills training, but also the curriculums and services needed to ensure the achievements of participants. CMC proposes recommendations to lead to success – counselors are needed to help direct learners towards achieving their goals. Career pathways should be put in place, setting up the necessary steps towards an ultimate occupational goal. Programs should be streamlined and effective through the use of contextualized instruction and labor market information (LMI). Partnership between health and human service agencies as well as increased funding must be put towards workforce development efforts. Finally, certificate programs and skills training oftentimes have strict regulations on qualifications such as income and age. Programs should make their regulations more reasonable.

[Connecticut Manufacturers' Collaborative](#): Connecticut Manufacturers' Collaborative (CMC) held several strategic planning sessions with their own task force to better understand the specific challenges that Connecticut's manufacturing workforce faces and to find solutions to address the issues. They concluded that the root of the challenge stems from "curriculum development and teacher shortages, to educational access and technology development and deployment." Their proposed solution to the issue is to create a Secretary of Manufacturing in Connecticut in order to move the manufacturing industry forward.

[Elizabeth Fraser, Policy Director, Connecticut Association for Human Services](#): Elizabeth Fraser testified on behalf of Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS) in support of HB 5001. In order to enable economic mobility in the state, we must make additional 'developmental education' opportunities for the students of our future workforce. Without access to quality training, students are excluded from potential opportunities of high-paying jobs, and are "left to piece together a 'survival income' in low-skill, low-pay jobs." Ms.

Fraser addresses the struggles of our poor and low-income students and states that we could benefit from a mentorship program. She also wants the task force to consider the effects that a low-paying job can have within a family. “The economic well-being and stability of parents is essential for children’s early development.” Being a parent puts limitations on the involvement in certification and skills training programs and recommends the inclusion of childcare in the equation of workforce development.

**Chris Fryxell, President, Associated Builders and Contractors of Connecticut:** Chris Fryxell testified in support of HB 5001. He understands and agrees with the discussion revolving around Connecticut’s manufacturing industry, however, he believes it is important that the legislature considers the construction industry as well when forming legislation to address this issue. Over 40,000 construction jobs are ready to be filled in Connecticut, and this number is projected to grow exponentially over the next several years. Mr. Fryxell states that “we must do a better job of promoting apprenticeship in construction, removing barriers to training and hiring and developing a pipeline of students exploring a career in the trades.”

**Ed Leavy, President, State Vocational Federation of Teachers:** Ed Leavy testified in support of HB 5001, stating that this bill represents Connecticut’s commitment to our workforce. Mr. Leavy believes that the state must make the investment it needs in order to provide competent and qualified workers to companies in our manufacturing industry, thus allowing our economy to grow and thrive. While technical high schools have proven to be successful for generations, more than half of their supply budget has been slashed over the years. “High-need but high-cost trade such as welding have been phased out over the past two decades and replaced by trades that are less expensive, and now we face a shortage in welders.” Mr. Leavy highlights the idea that the state’s financial investment in technical schools could improve Connecticut’s problem within the manufacturing industry,

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

None Expressed for House Bill No. 5001

**Reported by: Beatrice O’Neil**

**Date: 03/15/2019**