

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7257

AN ACT CONCERNING FOOD-INSECURE STUDENTS AT PUBLIC

Title: INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

Vote Date: 3/14/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/5/2019

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Higher Education and Employment Advancement

REASONS FOR BILL:

Substitute language has been made for this bill in line 18, which specifies that fiscal year boards must report on regarding emergency grants. Line 24 clarifies the due date for the boards' reports to the Higher Education Committee. Lines 39-42 specifies that boards may include study findings if the study is conducted for months in addition to the month of October 2019.

HB 7257 would study policies and issues regarding food-insecure students at Connecticut public colleges and universities, and understand what needs to be addressed in order to decrease the number of food-insecure students at these institutions.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Eleanor JB Daugherty, Associate Vice President of Student Affairs, Dean of Students, University of Connecticut](#): Eleanor Daugherty testified on behalf of the University of Connecticut in support of HB 7257, stating that food-insecurity is an issue of increasing concern in Connecticut colleges and universities. "UConn agrees with HB 7257 that it is important for institutions to define the scope of the problem and identify impacted and at-risk populations." UConn suggests an amendment that would involve a minor revision to the timeline of the proposed plan.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Multiple people testified in favor of HB 7257, stating that the issue of food-insecure students must be faced in order to improve students' success rate. When students do not have enough food, it can have a significant impact on their academic performance. "Students who dealt with hunger 'felt less on-track, confident, in control, focused, and interested in their school work. They also felt that college was less worthwhile, felt less welcomed by faculty, and felt less engaged both inside and outside the classroom.'" The Connecticut Food Bank states that "This bill can help us understand the prevalence in Connecticut and what combination of services best meet the needs of students facing hunger and food insecurity."

- [Bryan R. Bonina, President, Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges](#)
- [Jaime S. Foster, Connecticut Food Bank](#)
- [Wanjiku Gatheru](#)
- [Jason Jakubowski, President, CEO, Foodshare](#)

Trenton Wright and Gary Lambert testified in support of HB 7257 based on their first-hand experience working in the Magic Food Bus (MFB) on-campus food pantry. "Many low-income students are forced to choose between their educational needs and necessities, such as food... There is a lack of social services available. The federal government does not collect any information on hunger issues experienced by students that would create social service programs to address this issue." The success of MFB has proven that food-insecurity is in fact an issue that students face in Connecticut; therefore the state government needs to become well-versed in the problem in order to know how to solve it.

- [Trenton Wright, Coordinator of Institutional Advancement, Middlesex Community College](#)
- [Gary S. Lambert](#)

[Gordon Plouffe, Manchester Community College Cougar Pantry](#): Gordon Plouffe testified in favor of HB 7257. Mr. Plouffe is currently working on his project, the Manchester Community College Cougar Pantry, where he has seen first-hand the need for food pantries on campus in Connecticut. The Cougar Pantry distributes as much as 5000 pounds of food for less than a thousand dollars a month. Through his project, Mr. Plouffe has become very aware of the amount of food-insecure students in Connecticut and encourages the rest of the state to acknowledge and understand the issue as well, with the goal of eliminating it entirely.

[Marlene B. Schwartz, Director, Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity](#): Marlene Schwartz testified on behalf of the UConn Rudd Center in favor of HB 7257, stating that "food insecurity among college students is a significant issue that has received relatively little research or policy attention... There are serious consequences of food insecurity for students, including lower academic achievement, and poor physical and mental health." The UConn Rudd Center recommends a wider range of inclusion for those that can qualify for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed for Raised Bill No. 7257

Reported by: Beatrice O'Neil

Date: 04/02/2019