



Office of Governor Ned Lamont
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Testimony in Support of House Bill 6445 – An Act Expanding Economic Opportunity
in Occupations Licensed by the Department of Consumer Protection

Senator Maroney, Representative D’Agostino, Senator Witkos, Representative Rutigliano, and
Honorable Members of the General Law Committee:

My name is Jonny Dach, and I serve as Governor Lamont’s policy director. Thank you for hearing
this bill and providing me an opportunity to support the governor’s proposal to expand economic
opportunity in licensed occupations.

Governor Lamont’s first priority is getting Connecticut’s economy growing again and guaranteeing
it’s an economy that works for everyone.

[Twenty-five percent of the jobs in that economy are in licensed occupations, up from five percent in
the 1950s and more than in any other New England or Mid-Atlantic state.](#) People who wish to work
in those occupations must first obtain the permission of our state government.

In general, that system of occupational licenses preserves public health and safety, as well as
consumer confidence and employee welfare. At times, however, unnecessarily high barriers to entry
deter workers from promising careers and skilled workers from moving to Connecticut. HB 6445
addresses those barriers and benefits workers, employers, consumers, and the economy at large.

Section 1 makes licenses more portable between states.

Connecticut is an incredible place to live, work, and raise a family. Every person who moves here
not only benefits from life in our great state, but also makes life richer for the rest of us. New
residents mean new customers for our small businesses and newly vibrant communities for
ourselves and our children.

But people considering a new life in Connecticut who work in licensed occupations have to navigate
intricate, job-specific requirements to determine whether calling Connecticut home is even an
option. In many cases, our agencies can only recognize your license if you’re from a state that
reciprocates our policies and has initial education and training requirements similar to or higher than
our own—no matter how many years you’ve spent mastering your skills on the job.

Those requirements discourage people who would otherwise move to Connecticut. A [landmark
Obama administration report](#) concluded “licensing constitutes a significant barrier to relocation”
and recommended states “harmonize licensing requirements to the maximum extent possible.”
Scholars at the Federal Reserve [subsequently found](#) licensed workers are up to 36% less likely to

move to a new state than comparable unlicensed workers. Those would-be residents are not only missing from our neighborhoods, they're missing from our data. Connecticut doesn't deny their licenses; it deters them from even applying.

HB 6445 and its [twin in the Public Health Committee](#) replace the current patchwork of occupation-specific licensing requirements with a clear, consistent, and welcoming policy that will make it much easier to attract people and employers to our state. Under those proposals, new residents, as well as military spouses, will be able to apply for a license from DCP or DPH if they are licensed in another state and have practiced in good standing for at least a year. The departments—which license occupations from accountants and architects to veterinarians and vascular surgeons—will uphold Connecticut's high standards by demanding applicants pass any appropriate Connecticut examination, determining the practice level at which any Connecticut license is issued, and denying applications that are not in the best interest of the state. They will also apply the same strict definition of “resident” that DRS uses to determine state income tax liability. [Bipartisan majorities in other states passed similar laws in 2019 and 2020.](#)

For the first time in a generation, and unlike when we last discussed this proposal, tens of thousands of young families are choosing Connecticut. Passing this bill could encourage thousands more.

Sections 2 and 3 clarify the path to licensure for people with criminal convictions.

Connecticut can be proud of its current laws, which narrowly tailor the circumstances under which people with criminal records can be denied an occupational license. This bill tasks our agencies with considering ways to pre-clear applicants who can then invest in their education and training confident of eventual eligibility. It also replaces an old-fashioned requirement that applicants in some occupations possess “good moral character” with language, borrowed from the Public Health title, that clarifies DCP can only deny applicants based on its case-specific consideration of a felony conviction. With moral character requirements as with interstate licensure, a [law journal article](#) found that “although the number of applicants formally denied admission has always been quite small, the number deterred, delayed, or harassed has been more substantial.”

Governor Lamont appreciates the opportunity to work with the committee and other stakeholders as this proposal continues through the legislative process.