

**#Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT**

Bill No.: SB-1099

AN ACT AUTHORIZING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR A RESEARCH FACULTY RECRUITMENT AND HIRING PROGRAM BY THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT TO ENCOURAGE THE CREATION OF NEW BUSINESS

Title: VENTURES.

Vote Date: 4/22/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 4/20/2021

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The purpose of the bill is to allow State Bonding for the University of Connecticut to start a Research Faculty Recruitment and Hiring Program. The purpose of the program is to hire faculty with demonstrated excellence in their field who are interested in research and turning their discoveries into new technologies, products and the creation of new companies in order to expand the University's entrepreneurial ecosystem to help fuel the State's economy. The State Bonding also allows for related faculty compensation and construction and equipment costs.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Tom Katsouleas, President of the University of Connecticut

Mr. Katsouleas testified that state investments have been instrumental in the dramatic growth of UConn and are largely responsible for UConn's meteoric rise to its place among the top 25 public universities in the nation as evidenced by the U.S. News & World Report rankings. He testified that more than 38,000 students applied to UConn last year for 6,000 spots and the University welcomed its most diverse freshman class ever, including 175 valedictorians and salutatorian and that the University is proud that nearly 73% of our in-state graduates and

22% of our out-of-state students stay in Connecticut after graduation, where they go on to live, work and contribute to their local communities. He noted that 149,000 UConn alumni are currently working in Connecticut and that UConn is currently home to 51 new startups and 132 companies have been part of their Technology Incubation Program (TIP) since 2003. He stated that start-ups raised over \$463 million in private equity and created 208 jobs last year. In 2020, our faculty also filed 102 invention disclosures and were issued 25 patents. He closed by stating that this bill goes a long way to providing resources to higher education in the state that is geared towards building a state-wide entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Carl Lajuez, Provost- University of Connecticut

Mr. Lajuez testified that this proposal works to support our efforts to expand resources for research commercialization; have great potential for increasing our research and development (R&D) base; and provide career opportunities for our talented graduates while supporting the State with a more skilled workforce. They, at the University believe that their aspirations to compete nationally as a regional economic hub will be successful as the FACULTY + RESEARCH = JOBS formula kicks in.

Mr. Lajuez testified that UConn is eager to partner with the state on the Faculty Innovation Hires initiative because faculty innovators are able to create new and sustainable business ventures in the shortest time possible. As part of this approach, the University is requesting additional resources to support faculty as they begin to develop new business ventures based on their discoveries.

Included in Mr. Lajuez's testimony was a copy of the University's Faculty Hiring Plan which was approved by UConn's Board of Trustees on February 26, 2020 which required the University to create a blueprint for hiring faculty interested in research that meets societal needs or the commercialization of discoveries, innovations or technologies with the ultimate goal of generating long-term economic growth for our state. He stated that the plan was developed prior to the COVID-19 crisis and the resulting financial challenges and that the University is now facing unprecedented revenue losses and emergency expenditures that threaten its core financial stability. While they had hoped to begin working on implementing this plan in FY21, their ability to do so in the midst of this current budgetary situation may be limited. However, hiring excellent research faculty as this bill aims to do continues to be his top priority.

Dawn Hocevar, President & CEO of BioCT

Ms. Hocevar testified that while the bioscience industry in CT is continuing to grow it is critical that the University of Connecticut be able to invest in faculty recruitment in order to increase the pipeline of bio startups every year which in turn will help fuel economic growth and help Connecticut as a viable cluster of innovation. Ms. Hocevar testified that the key economic drivers for a sustainable bio ecosystem/cluster are as follows: • Academic Centers of Excellence- innovation to commercialization/Startups • Access to Financing • Talent • Entrepreneurs • Lab Space Startups are the lifeblood of innovation. She noted that currently there are two main sources of commercialization in Connecticut, Yale and the University of Connecticut.

She stated that Connecticut's neighboring states have grown their bio clusters with multiple academic centers that collectively spin out hundreds of startups each year and CT must

increase commercialization to be competitive- this proposal seeks to help achieve this goal for the State.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed

Reported by: Dawn Silveira

Date: 4/29/21