



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 227

February Session, 2022

Substitute House Bill No. 5137

House of Representatives, March 31, 2022

The Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement reported through REP. ELLIOTT of the 88th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT STUDYING AND FUNDING THE ROBERTA B. WILLIS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) Not later than forty-five days after
2 the effective date of this section, the Chief Workforce Officer and the
3 executive director of the Office of Higher Education shall develop and
4 issue a request for proposals for a third party to make recommendations
5 for proposed changes to the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program
6 established under section 10a-173 of the general statutes. The Chief
7 Workforce Officer and the executive director shall consult with the
8 Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and representatives
9 from public and independent institutions of higher education in the
10 state in developing such request for proposals. The third party shall be
11 a national organization with expertise in financial aid programs for
12 institutions of higher education.

13 (b) The proposed changes to such program shall, at a minimum: (1)

14 Provide need-based financial aid to Connecticut residents enrolled at
 15 public and independent institutions in a manner that promotes access
 16 and choice to postsecondary education in the state and focuses on the
 17 student, (2) ensure prospective and current students are notified of their
 18 initial eligibility for a grant based on the completion of the Free
 19 Application for Federal Student Aid and that an additional application
 20 to the Office of Higher Education is not required for such grant, (3)
 21 ensure participating public and independent institutions of higher
 22 education are aware of the initial student eligibility criteria and
 23 corresponding grant award amount for the following academic year on
 24 or before December first, annually, the year prior to the grant year, and
 25 (4) consider the feasibility of including the participation of private
 26 occupational schools in such program and estimate the cost of providing
 27 need and merit-based grants or need-based grants for the eligible
 28 educational costs of state residents attending such schools.

29 (c) Not later than December 1, 2022, the Chief Workforce Officer and
 30 the executive director of the Office of Higher Education shall jointly
 31 submit a report of the recommended changes to the Roberta B. Willis
 32 Scholarship program, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a
 33 of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General
 34 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher education.

35 Sec. 2. (*Effective from passage*) The sum of thirty-three million three
 36 hundred eighty-eight thousand six hundred thirty-seven dollars is
 37 appropriated to the Office of Higher Education from the General Fund,
 38 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, for the Roberta A. Willis
 39 Scholarship Program established under section 10a-173 of the general
 40 statutes.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 1(c), "jointly" was added for clarity.

HED *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 23 \$	FY 24 \$
Various State Agencies	GF - Cost	See Below	None

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill requires the Office of Workforce Strategy and the Office of Higher Education to consult with various other state agencies to issue requests for proposals (RFP), for a third party to study various issues related to the Roberta Willis Scholarship Program. There will be a cost to the state to hire a third party. The bill is unclear on who would be responsible for covering the costs to the third party, who is awarded the RFP. The cost to the state would be dependent on the scope of the study and the entity hired.

The Out Years

There are no costs in the out years as the study is one-time in nature.



OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5137

AN ACT STUDYING AND FUNDING THE ROBERTA B. WILLIS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Research does not analyze Special Acts.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 22 Nay 0 (03/17/2022)