

Education Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5285

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM.

Vote Date: 3/11/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Change of Reference to Appropriations

PH Date: 3/4/2022

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Education Committee

Rep. Bobby G. Gibson, 15th Dist.

Rep. Aimee Berger-Girvalo, 111th Dist.

Rep. Michael A. Winkler, 56th Dist.

Rep. David Michael, 146th Dist.

Rep. Geraldo C. Reyes, 75th Dist.

Rep. Tammy R. Exum, 19th Dist.

Rep. Juan R. Candelaria, 95th Dist.

Sen. Patricia Billie Miller, 27th Dist.

Rep. Christine Palm, 36th Dist.

Rep. Eleni Kavros DeGraw, 17th Dist.

Rep. Frank Smith, 118th Dist.

Rep. Emmanuel Sanchez, 24th Dist.

Rep. Corey P. Paris, 145th Dist.

Rep. John-Michael Parker, 101st Dist.

Rep. Josh Elliott, 88th Dist.

Rep. Jillian Gilchrest, 18th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill requires public schools to provide program instruction on various topics including: climate change, citizenship, economics, geography, government, history, and Holocaust and genocide education and awareness, African-American and black studies, Puerto Rican and Latino studies, computer programming, and on the secondary level, American Sign Language. Also, the bill establishes a personal financial management pilot program to be administered by the Capitol Region Education Council. And lastly, the bill creates a Connecticut Civics Education Task force to study and develop strategies to improve how

public schools provide instruction on civics, citizenship and American government to students.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Katie S. Dykes, Commissioner, CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection](#)

"The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) supports the requirement that all school districts provide climate change instruction as part of the science curriculum "may" include climate change to it "shall including climate change. Climate change education in school, along with fostering a connection to nature and the outdoors, is a key foundation to building environmentally literate adults, able to meet the generation challenge of climate impacts and actions."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

**[Aziz Dehkan, Executive Director, Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs](#)
[Allison Pilcher, Policy Director, Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs](#)**

"We strongly support requiring all public school districts to provide climate change instruction as part of the science curriculum. Although the science of climate change has been politicized, the scientific consensus unequivocally states that climate change is real, happening now, and caused by human activity. Requiring climate change education ensures equitable access to information that will affect students' lives. Climate change has fairly been called the greatest issue facing young generations and understanding climate change is an important facet of graduating scientifically literate citizens. Allowing students to graduate without at least a basic understanding of climate change science is a disservice to them."

[Hugh D. Birdsall, Education Coordinator, Reforest the Tropics](#)

"I am writing to you in support of HB 5285 that would give equal access to science-based climate and energy education in our schools. Mandated climate crisis education is an urgent need if we are to save human civilization from the ravages of unchecked climate change that we are already experiencing in the world. The latest report from the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) leaves no doubt. It is time for all-hands-on-deck, and that includes our children, who will have to live with the choices we make right now."

[Patrick M. Comins, Executive Director, Connecticut Audubon Society](#)

"For more than 120 years the Connecticut Audubon Society has been working to protect and enhance the state's natural environment. Much progress has been made but we are all too well aware that the fate of the planet's natural ecosystems and human communities depends on serious, sustained action to control, mitigate and adapt to climate change. Therefore we appreciate your strong support for H.B. No. 5285 An Act Concerning the Public School Curriculum now being considered before your committee. This act would require that all school districts provide climate change instruction as part of the science curriculum."

[Dwayne David Paul, Director, Collaborative Center for Justice](#)

[Rachel Lea Scott, Associate Director, Collaborative Center for Justice](#)

"We believe that all schoolchildren in Connecticut public schools should have access to science based climate education. Science curriculum should align with the Next Generation Science Standards so that every child will be adequately prepared to engage in employment, higher education, or other endeavors in a world marked by a rapidly changing climate. We

will need our children to understand climate change in order for them to understand what can be done about it, and more specifically, how they can contribute to solutions."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Mike Muszynski, State and Federal Relations Manager, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities](#)

"CCM has concerns with HB 5285. The bill would require that all school districts provide climate change instruction as part of the science curriculum, in addition explore other issues associated with mandated curriculum. New curriculum mandates on local and regional boards of education may further minimize instruction time and require additional resources. Additionally, local and regional boards of education may already include variations as part of their current curriculum. CCM cautions against new mandates on towns and cities unless there is ample financial and logistical support to implement new requirements."

[We received additional testimony regarding this bill.](#)

Reported by: Jessica Bucci

Date: 3/16/2022