

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: Senate Bill 479
AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE TRAINING
Title: PROGRAM.
Vote Date: 4/6/2022
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 3/31/2022
File No.: 620

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Introducers:
The Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

Co-Sponsors:
Representative Mary Mushinsky, 85th District

REASONS FOR BILL:

The purpose of this bill is to establish an Office of Policy and Management (OPM) program to provide tuition expense to support individuals who seek to obtain a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) to establish a career as a commercial truck driver.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Jeffrey Beckham, Secretary, Office of Policy and Management](#) opposed this bill, stating that this type of workforce development is not a program that is typically administered by OPM and states that he thinks this program would be more suited for the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS).

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[John Capobianco, President, Connecticut Teamsters CDL Driver Training Program](#) supported this bill, stating that it will be life changing to provide access to training for individuals who are unemployed, underemployed, disadvantaged and were formally incarcerated or veterans. This will provide a low cost, debt free workforce training options for individuals who pursue a career that require a commercial driver's license. Currently, traditional commercial CDL programs can cost between \$5,000 to \$15,000, which often leads to significant debt and loans. Trucking plays a critical role in Connecticut and in the United States supply chain and economy. There

is a huge demand for trained CDL drivers, and this bill will provide increased training opportunities as well as expand the existing training program.

[Martha Jones, Trucker Driver, Tilcon, Member, Teamsters Local 671](#) supported this bill, stating that it will provide relief and help to individuals in the underserved and disadvantaged community. Ms. Jones shared her background as a woman in the trucking field and asserts that this will provide the opportunity for other women to take advantage of this career path by giving them the opportunity, training and school where it can be affordable.

[Al Pichardo, Trucker Driver, UPS, Member, Teamster Local 677](#) supported this bill, stating that it will bring the training directly to underserved communities and gives the opportunity to individuals to get their CDL in a cost effective, efficient, and innovated way. Mr. Pichardo shared his background as a UPS truck driver for 17 years and stated that the trucking industry is facing a major shortage of drivers with an estimate shortage of over 120,000 drivers in 2022.

[Joseph Sculley, President, Motor Transport Association of Connecticut, Inc. \(MTAC\)](#) supported this bill, but had some concerns. Mr. Sculley stated that currently, the United States is estimated to be short 80,000 truck driver's nationwide and MTAC appreciates the concept of this bill that focuses on recruiting new CDL drivers. Mr. Sculley offered substitute language for this bill. This substitute language can be found [here](#).

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Carl Stebbins, Executive Vice President, New England Tractor Trailer Training School \(NETTTS\)](#) submitted testimony stating that the intent of this bill seems logical, however, they have some concerns in the wording of the bill. Mr. Stebbins states that NETTTS sees no need to establish a CDL training school that is established by the state and paid for by taxpayers.

Reported by: Christina Pen

Date: 4/22/2022