

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-936

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

Vote Date: 3/7/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/7/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill was a Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee contingency reserve bill to mandate The Board of Regents for Higher Education to conduct a study regarding workforce development in Connecticut, with the aim of providing practical insights and proposing legislative measures that enhance Connecticut's workforce development.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority, Executive Director, Jeanette W. Weldon](#): supports SB 936, they include in their testimony that CHESLA have provided over 56,000 loans and disbursed \$555.6 million since 1985. A study found that their programs have created 597 jobs and increased wage income and output in Connecticut, resulting in a return of more than \$22 for every \$1 lent or given out. CHESLA's scholarships have disbursed \$10.9 million and impacted over 5,700 students since 2015. Students who finish college will earn \$1.2 million more than the average high school graduate, increasing tax revenues. Also stated that CHESLA will continue supporting economic, workforce, and community development while providing initiatives to help students and their families make informed decisions.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Department of Corrections, Registered Nurse, Dora Amoah](#): supports this bill and urges the Committee to include SEIU 1199's "Grow Our Own" direct care nurse strategies in their proposals to stabilize state services for the most vulnerable. It is stated that creating and funding paid preceptor programs for nursing students and novice nurses working at state

agencies is a common strategy in nursing education. It is also stated that establishing a preceptor program at state facilities would provide novice nurses with support they need to provide quality care to patients across Connecticut. In closing, it is also stated that implementing this policy and others would help restore public sector safety net healthcare services and expand them to help more state residents.

[Southwest Connecticut Mental Health System, Registered Nurse, July Bisoño Tapia:](#)

supports this bill with the implementation of certain additions. It is stated that the biggest challenges to providing adequate care are staffing and scheduling issues that lead to overworked staff and a shortage of quality care. It is also stated that to fully address these needs, this bill would have to expand nursing programs, create clinical placements and internship programs, fund and create preceptor programs, reserve slots for current or future state employees in nursing programs, and provide loan forgiveness for RNs after seven years of state service. It is also stated there exists a need for a diverse nursing workforce, to best serve the needs of Spanish-speaking patients and promote equity in healthcare. It is further stated that the bill should incorporate "Grow Our Own" policies by SEIU 1199 to create a team of qualified and diverse nursing professionals.

[Connecticut General Assembly, Senator of Connecticut's 34th District, Senator Paul Cicarella and Senator of Connecticut's 31st District, Senator Henri Martin:](#)

offer support for the inclusion of two measures within the legislation: S.B. 154, which requires a performance audit of certain workforce development programs, and S.B. 155, which concerns the development of an alternative pathways program for high school students. It is stated that Sen. Cicarella and Sen. Martin developed these measures in consult with stakeholders from various state agencies, educational institutions, nonprofits, and employers to address salient challenges faced by jobseekers and employers in Connecticut. It is also stated that inclusion of S.B. 154 in the bill would offer information on the effectiveness of workforce development resources and opportunities for inter-agency collaboration whereas S.B. 155 aims to providing high school graduates with information on alternative career paths.

[Connecticut Nurses Association, Executive Director, Kimberly Sandor, RN, MSN, and FNP:](#)

offers support for this bill because of the longstanding nursing healthcare workforce shortages and the need to address multiple layers of educating and retaining the workforce. It is stated that the Committee should ensure the Board of Regents continues to study the workforce issues while engaging practice partners and healthcare professionals. It is also stated this bill must study and understand institutional and structural racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion to support a diversified workforce. It is further stated that the Committee should hear from underrepresented groups, such as the Northern CT Black Nurses Association or the National Association of Hispanic Nurses, to fully understand the challenges and adversity faced in nursing education.

[Greater New Haven & Quinnipiac Chambers of Commerce, President & CEO, Garrett](#)

[Sheehan:](#) supports this bill because it provides an opportunity for the Board of Regents for Higher Education to conduct a study concerning workforce development issues. It is stated, that if done correctly, this study could offer solutions to fill open jobs and strengthen the state's workforce. It is also stated that collaboration with the business community will be crucial in creating a comprehensive solution.

[Connecticut Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 511, General Counsel & Staff Director, Cara O'Sullivan](#): supports this bill and discusses the need for the State to create pipeline partnerships within the Connecticut Higher Education system to train residents in trades or professions that offer guaranteed employment upon completion. It is stated that the State is currently facing a shortage of workforce in trades and CDL truck drivers, which is affecting state agencies' ability to find qualified applicants. It is also stated that the State should invest in blue-collar jobs, such as those in the trades, manufacturing, and truck driving, which provide excellent job opportunities for young residents and are crucial to Connecticut's infrastructure.

An additional 11 pieces of written testimony were submitted in support of [S.B. 936](#).

[Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities and Connecticut Center for Assisted Living \(CAHCF/CCAL\), President and CEO, Matthew Barrett - Supports](#)

[Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges \(CCIC\), President, Jennifer Widness-supports with additions](#)

[Connecticut Hospital Association, Government Relations - supports](#)

[Department of Children and Families \(DCF\), Supervising Nurse, Chris Juliano RN – supports with additions](#)

[Department of Corrections, Licensed Practical Nurse, Gabriela Bottino LPN - Supports with additions](#)

[Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services \(DMHAS\), Connecticut Valley Hospital, Nurse Clinical Instructor, Marva Taylor RN – supports with additions](#)

[Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services \(DMHAS\), Head Nurse, Dominique Cole RN – supports with additions](#)

[Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services \(DMHAS\), Nurse Clinician, Damien Nuzzo RN – supports with additions](#)

[Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services \(DMHAS\), Licensed Practical Nurse, Andrea Thompson LPN – supports with additions](#)

[Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Connecticut Inc., CEO, Jim Perras - supports](#)

[Quest Diagnostics, Senior Manager, Government Affairs, Ishan S. Shah – supports with additions](#)

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Lukas Houle

Date: 3/13/2023

