

# Labor and Public Employees Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5469

**Title:** AN ACT CONCERNING FLEXIBLE HOLIDAYS FOR STATE EMPLOYEES.

**Vote Date:** 3/21/2024

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/12/2024

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor & Public Employees Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

State employees have varied background, culture, or religions, and for that reason, this bill allows substitutions of holidays outside of tradition. This bill establishes that a substitution of two legal holidays for two flexible holidays with pay in each calendar year, so that employees may choose to work on a designated holiday they may not celebrate, and instead take off a holiday they observe which is not designated as a holiday by the state.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None provided.

### NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

**Michael Bloom, Executive Direction, Jewish Federation Association of CT:** Mr. Bloom submitted testimony in support of the bill. In his comments, he wrote "An effective way of showing Connecticut is welcoming is allowing state employees to designate their religious holidays as days off, in lieu of other current state holidays, which may not have the same meaning to the employee". He adds that it is essential for Connecticut to welcoming all citizens, including those who are not Catholic.

**Ed Hawthorne, President, Connecticut AFL-CIO:** Mr. Hawthorne submitted testimony in support of the bill. He wrote "To provide equity when arbitrarily designating holidays for which employees will receive paid time off, many states and private companies have begun allowing employees to use floating holidays in place of a specific number of legal holidays". He adds "This approach lets employees customize their use of paid legal holidays in order to

observe their own religious or cultural occasions”. However, he wants to advocate for state employees to add up to two legal holidays each calendar year, it will cost the state nothing to be sensitive towards religious differences.

**Zak Leavy, Legislative Director, AFSCME Council 4:** Mr. Leavy submitted testimony in support of the bill. In his comments, he wrote “We support HB 5469 as it will continue moving Connecticut toward a model employer when it comes to diversity not only in recruitment, but also in retention”. He adds that the state of Connecticut must show respect for every employee’s choice and recognize their background, religion, or culture.

**Jillian Gilchrest, State Representative, Connecticut General Assembly:** Representative Gilchrest submitted testimony in support of the bill. In her comments, she wrote “The bill before you today would allow full-time permanent state employees to substitute two legal holidays for two flexible holidays with pay in each calendar year”. She adds this bill limits an appointing authority from restricting which legal holiday and employee may substitute.

**Alkuish Kantaru, Citizen:** Ms. Kantaru submitted testimony in support of the bill. In her testimony, she comments “In India, we had a program similar to the flexible holiday switch out. For instance, I would switch my holiday of Mawlid for two days before English Christmas”. However, she states this bill will be welcoming to society at large.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None provided.

**Reported by: Giselle Galarza**

**Date: 04/08/2024**