

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-204

AN ACT EXPANDING THE DEBT-FREE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROGRAM
Title: AND NAMING THE GRANTS AFTER MARY ANN HANDLEY.

Vote Date: 3/7/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference to Appropriations

PH Date: 2/29/2024

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Sen. Saud Anwar, 3rd Dist.
Rep. Gregory Haddad, 54th Dist.
Rep. Jason Doucette, 13th Dist.
Rep. Gary A. Turco, 27th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would it extend the benefits of the Debt-Free Community College Program to out-of-state high school graduates, thereby promoting educational equity and providing opportunities for students regardless of their state of residence. By allowing out-of-state students to participate in the program, we can foster a more diverse and inclusive learning environment, enriching the educational experience for all involved. Additionally, naming the grants after former State Senator Mary Ann Handley serves as a meaningful tribute to her legacy of advocacy for education and equal opportunity.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language changes "award" to "grant."

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Terrence Cheng, Chancellor, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities](#): Supports this bill stating that it would give the opportunity to students who meet the residency requirements however are not eligible for the PACT program due to that fact that they did not graduate from a Connecticut High School.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Saud Anwar, Senator, Connecticut General Assembly](#): Supports this bill stating that the goal of the Dept-Free Community College Program was solely targeted toward first-time high school graduates. Sen. Anwar then proceeds to say that "its reach has grown." Sen. Anwar would go on to say that "this development is a strong one for our state's workforce." Sen. Anwar also added the significance of naming this award after Mary Ann Handley who was a Connecticut State Senator for 14 years and seven terms.

[Seth Freeman, President of the Congress of Community Colleges \(4Cs\), SEIU 1973](#): Supports this bill stating that it would give "every individual has the opportunity to pursue higher education without being burdened by student debt" as well as it would pay homage to the legacy of Mary Ann Handley.

[Greyson Beebie, Student, Ledyard High School](#): Supports this bill stating it would be good for the state "in regard to college costs and overall college welfare."

[Wilfred Nikoi, Student, Naugatuck Valley Community College](#): Supports this bill because of all that the University has provided for him.

[Bob Reutenauer, Organizer, Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges \(4Cs\) SEIU 1973](#): Supports this bill because of his belief that "this expansion is crucial as it opens the doors to higher education for a broader range of individuals." He also stated his support for this bill because it would pay tribute to Mary Ann Handley.

[Donald E. Williams Jr, Former State Senator, Connecticut General Assembly](#): Supports this bill stating that it would pay tribute to his former colleague Mary Ann Handley. Mr. Williams would go on to state that Sen. Handley would be proud of the recent work that has been done by the Higher Education Committee "to expand the opportunities of higher education to present and future generations of students."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed

Reported by: Chris Peritore

Date: 4/1/2024