

Labor and Public Employees Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5494 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Title: CLASSIFICATION.

Vote Date: 3/17/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/10/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor & Public Employees Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The reason for this bill is to have the Labor Commissioner study the classification of youth working via youth employment programs, specifically whether a potential reclassification from minimum fair wage to a stipend-based system could improve the overall availability of these programs to more youth.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Dante Bartolomeo, Commissioner, CT Department of Labor: opposes due to a lack of DOL staff capacity required to conduct a study of this size. Commissioner Bartolomeo states that the DOL would be open to helping research this issue as part of a task force.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Gwendolyn B. Williams, Director of Youth and Recreation Department, City of New Haven: states that replacing wages with stipends could increase available New Haven Youth at Work program positions and maximize the efficacy of a limited budget. She stated that the 14- and 15-year-olds within the program often partake in more learning than practical work, and as such the use of a stipend system as opposed to minimum wage may be helpful in allowing such program's finances to stretch farther, and by extension support more youth.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Anonymous 12 and 13: oppose the bill for reasons largely unrelated to the content of the bill.

Reported by: Olivia Buczak & Cam Clarke

Date: 3/30/2026