

OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

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sHB-6885

AN ACT EXPANDING THE DEBT-FREE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROGRAM.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Board of Regents for Higher Education	GF - Cost	3.3 million	6.7 million
UConn	GF - Cost	Up to 4.3 million	Up to 8.5 million

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill results in costs to: (1) the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) of approximately \$3.3 million in FY 26 and \$6.7 million in FY 27 and annually thereafter, and; (2) the University of Connecticut (UConn) of up to \$4.3 million in FY 26 and up to \$8.5 million in FY 27 and annually thereafter. The bill creates the finish line scholars program, which extends the debt free community college program through a bachelor's degree at UConn and the Connecticut State Universities (CSUs), for those who participated at the community college level and otherwise qualify. Students who enroll at UConn or a CSU in fall 2025 or later are eligible.

It is estimated that 550 students who enroll at the CSUs in FY 26 could be eligible to participate. Because students can be eligible for multiple years, this number increases to 1,100 in FY 27 and annually thereafter. Assuming current out-of-pocket costs incurred by CSU students, this results in program costs of \$3.3 million in FY 26 and \$6.7 million in FY 27 and annually thereafter.

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At UConn, it is anticipated that up to 400 eligible students could enroll in FY 26.¹ This means that 800 students could be eligible for the program in FY 27 and annually thereafter. The out-of-pocket cost to attend UConn full time² can vary significantly by family income. Assuming average out-of-pocket costs of half the total amount of FY 26 tuition and fees,³ costs could total up to \$4.3 million in FY 26 and \$8.5 million in FY 27 and annually thereafter.

To the extent that the bill increases enrollment in the CSUs or UConn, the cost to fund the program could be significantly higher than indicated in this analysis.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the number of students who participate and the level of grant funding they receive.

¹ UConn *Report on Transfer and Articulation*, January 2023.

² Approx. 97% of undergraduate students enrolled at UConn in the fall of 2023 (including regional campuses), attended full time.

³ FY 26 tuition and fees at UConn total \$21,336. Half this amount is \$10,668.