

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6445

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF

Title: HIGHER EDUCATION.

Vote Date: 2/27/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 1/30/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee.

REASONS FOR BILL:

Institutions of higher education, for example barber shops and every institution which has not enrolled students in the past two years during the Covid-19 pandemic. These institutions face the same threats as faced by more traditional institutions of higher education when it comes to reauthorization as it stands in the statutes, being forced to file paperwork in a very rushed manner and facing barriers regarding student retention, that this legislation desires to remedy.

This bill seeks to remedy a problem faced by institutions of higher education, along with private career schools, given the uptick of virtual learning post-covid, in attaining reauthorization and licensure within the state of Connecticut. Universities and other institutions of Higher Education face problems gaining reauthorization to teach due to having less in-person students given the current condition of learning focusing more on virtual learning.

Hence, institutions of higher education, on a broad spectrum, have expressed their desire a for a more streamlined regulation and pathway to completing and attaining such reauthorization that is updated to meet the current virtual learning ascendent landscape in, and keeping in mind the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on student enrollment and retention in higher education. It is to this end that this bill seeks to create such a streamlined tool, simplifying the statutes pursuant to such matters or reauthorization and licensure.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The Substitute Language seeks to clarify the differences between in-state institution and out-of-state institution as being dependent from which state they derive their licensure and/or accreditation, in effect remedying any questions as to what institution are or are not subject to these recommendations.

Along with general cosmetic changes, the substitute language clarifies the usage of section 10a-22m to regain licensure for a private career school. It also maintains that to have qualified for a "Change of Ownership" must be based on a contract of a higher educational institution which include, but are not limited to, sale, merger, or transfer of a controlling interest, etc. This clarification is meant to remedy questions regarding how an institution is to petition for such licensure and, if ownership has changed, how it shall affect the prospects of engaging in a change of ownership.

The Substitute Language also changes the bill's provision on when a private career school that has not enrolled students for two calendar years must close, to require closing upon expiration of its certificate to operate, instead of 60 days it is extended to 90 days, for the benefit of those institutions mentioned in the Raised Bill HB-6445 who have lapsed their authorization, and/or when Office of Higher Education deems it necessary for an institution to apply for said reauthorization.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Office of Higher Education, Director, Timothy Larson](#): Supports this bill because it bolsters the bill creates an updated statute regarding reauthorization. In the bill, they claim that redefining what university or school is considered in-state would greatly assist the agency in determining which of the petitioning institutions should be authorized. Adding terms regarding "Change of Ownership" petitions also simplifies their work in authorizing those institutions under correct leadership without struggle. And with the extension of the time limit for career school reauthorization from 60 to 90 days would provide relief to both filler and receiving agency in reviewing, cataloguing, and executing the necessary actions needed to reauthorize a career school, who, specifically if they are still educating students, would be vital to their continued and uninterrupted educational operations.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Tom Atwood

Date: 3/17/2025