

Appropriations Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6863

AN ACT MAKING DEFICIENCY APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR

Title: ENDING JUNE 30, 2025.

Vote Date: 4/22/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 4/10/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Governor Lamont

REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill authorizes funds for several state agencies to allow them to cover shortfalls in the current fiscal year. Since it is difficult to anticipate extraordinary circumstances that may place additional demands on agencies (court orders, increased caseloads, public health concerns, etc.), deficiency appropriations are necessary in order for agencies to meet their fiscal obligations.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Jeffrey Beckham, Secretary, Office of Policy and Management](#) – Secretary Beckham testified in support of the bill. He stated that the deficiency appropriations, in combination with anticipated Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) transfers and adjustment of holdbacks, will address the majority of FY 2025 shortfalls projected by OPM as reflected in the bill. He added that OPM anticipates having a final set of adjustments that will incorporate updated expenditure estimates, as well as additional FAC action and release of withheld funds, and that OPM is prepared to work with the Office of Fiscal Analysis and the Appropriations Committee to adjust the bill to reflect updated estimates as the fiscal year progresses. Secretary Beckham shared that OPM faced significant challenges in developing a viable plan for addressing shortfalls this fiscal year, which included both an unusually large number of identified shortfalls and overall spending levels that are challenging to accommodate under the constitutional spending cap. He added that many of the agency deficiencies are the result of budget revisions not being adopted during the 2024 legislative session.

The following state agency representatives offered testimony that described their respective agency's need for a deficiency appropriation:

[Dante Bartolomeo, Commissioner, CTDOL](#)
[Elizabeth Bozzuto, Chief Court Administrator, Judicial Department](#)
[Dr. Jason White, Director, CT Agricultural Experiment Station](#)
[Michelle Gilman, Commissioner, DAS](#)
[Ronnell Higgins, Commissioner, DESPP](#)
[John Day, Acting Chief Public Defender, Division of Public Defender Services](#)
[Nancy Navarretta, Commissioner, DMHAS](#)
[Dr. Alice Pritchard, Executive Director, CT Technical Education and Career System](#)
[Jordan Scheff, Commissioner, DDS](#)
[William Tong, Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General](#)
[Ron Welch, Commissioner, DVA](#)
[Andrea Barton Reeves, Commissioner, DSS](#)
[Mark Boughton, Commissioner, DRS](#)
[Seila Mosquera-Bruno, Commissioner, DOH](#)
[Tara Downes, Deputy State Comptroller, OSC](#)
[Major General Francis Evon, Adjutant General, Military Department\](#)
[Deidre Gifford, Commissioner, OHS](#)
[Dr. Maura DeJoseph, Deputy Chief Medical Examiner, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner](#)
[Tanya Hughes, Executive Director, CHRO](#)
[Manisha Juthani, Commissioner, DPH](#)
[Angel Quiros, Commissioner, DOC](#)
[Helen Sullivan, Administrator, Teachers' Retirement Board](#)

The following state agency representatives submitted testimony in opposition to the bill:

[Nick Kapoor, Chairman, CHRO](#) – Mr. Kapoor, writing on behalf of the CHRO Commissioners, expressed concern regarding the proposed budget cuts to CHRO's. He wrote that the recent holdback of \$900,000, coupled with the additional \$500,000 reduction to Other Expenses outlined in HB 6863, significantly hampers the agency's ability to fulfill its mission of protecting civil rights in Connecticut. He shared that CHRO has been unable to fill crucial staff positions leading to a backlog of intake appointments, as the agency has seen a sharp increase in inquiries and complaints.

[Claire Kindall, Interim Executive Director and General Counsel, SEEC](#) – Attorney Kindall submitted testimony in opposition to the provision in Section 2 that would remove \$650,000 from SEEC's budget. She wrote that removing \$650,000 from SEEC's current budget would mean that the agency would be unable to fund approximately five payroll cycles for all existing SEEC employees. Attorney Kindall added that their budget is 97% personnel costs and the remaining three percent covers technology expenses necessary to operate their electronic filing system (eCRIS). She offered that the agency could withstand a \$130,000 reduction, at most, which could be achieved by a delay in filling three positions until July 1.

[Colleen Murphy, Executive Director and General Counsel, FOI Commission](#) – Attorney Murphy submitted testimony in opposition to the bill's provision that would reduce the FOI Commission's budget by \$325,000. She wrote that FOI Commission anticipates that it will not have \$325,000.00 (which represents close to 15% of the Commission's entire budget) at

the end of FY 25 to help address other agency deficiencies. Her testimony went on to explain that the FOI Commission has a single line-item budget that encompasses both Personal Services (PS) and Other Expenses (OE), and that the PS component accounts for approximately 91% of the appropriated amount for 18 full time positions; the OE component accounts for the other 9% of the total appropriated amount. She shared that over the past couple of years, due to retirements and agency transfers, along with the addition of two new positions, the Commission has been working hard to gain a full staff. Attorney Murphy wrote that hiring has been challenging and taken longer than anticipated due to the state's inability to meet salary levels for selected candidates. With regard to OE, she wrote that the small amount allotted is needed to ensure fulfillment of all of the Commission's other budgetary obligations, some of which are not fixed, such as commission meeting and hearing costs, transcripts for court appeals, copying, and postage costs.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Chelsea Ross, Executive Director, Partnership for Strong Communities](#) – Ms. Ross submitted testimony in support of the proposed deficiency appropriation for the Department of Housing, stating that Connecticut is at a turning point in addressing housing affordability. She shared the following statistics:

- More than 150,000 households that rent their home spend over half of their income on rent.
- A full-time worker in our state must earn at least \$25.90 per hour—over \$53,000 per year—to afford a modest one-bedroom apartment.

She wrote that rapid rental increases have impacted the state's ability to operate the Rental Assistance Program (RAP), which currently serves approximately 6,500 households and has a proven track record of reducing homelessness, increasing family stability, and improving long-term outcomes. Ms. Ross shared that "research demonstrates that housing vouchers improve health and educational outcomes while reducing homelessness, poverty, and racial disparities." She urged continued investment in RAP to allow the program to keep pace with rising rents, as funding shortfalls would force a reduction in the number of families served.

[Neena Wright, Veterans in Connecticut](#) – Ms. Wright urged support for funding the deficiency in the Department of Veterans Affairs so that veterans "get all that they deserve."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Neil Farmer](#) – Mr. Farmer wrote that he believes that HB 6863 is not business friendly. Further, he stated his belief that the state has irreparably damaged its business reputation, giving companies no reason to stay in Connecticut no reason to return to the state. He added his perspective that the states that have acquired CT businesses will do what it takes to keep those businesses in their state, as opposed to Connecticut.

Reported by: Susan Keane

Date: 4/29/25