

Commerce Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1259

AN ACT CONCERNING WORKFORCE SHORTAGES, WORKFORCE

Title: DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING.

Vote Date: 3/13/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/27/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Commerce Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

A stable workforce is key to a flourishing economy. Right now, Connecticut is experiencing a workforce shortage with nearly 75,000 unfilled positions available which poses a great challenge to the growth of our economy. This bill seeks to address this problem by tasking the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development to study workforce shortages, development, and training to find real, actionable solutions going forward.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Daniel O'Keefe, Department of Economic and Community Development, Chief

Innovative Officer: As the department tasked with performing the study, they expressed some concerns about the bill. They stated that the Office of Workforce Strategy is responsible for the development of the state workforce strategic plan and should thus be included in any conversations about workforce development. Additionally, they noted that funding for the study would have to be addressed since it is not in the Governor's budget.

Dr. Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Chief Workforce Officer, Office of Workforce Strategy: They noted that the Office of Workforce Strategy is an independent executive branch state agency assigned to DECD that is responsible for developing and executing the state workforce strategic plan. They went on to describe the work they do, including the creation of workforce initiatives, engagement with employer partners, analyzing education and training outcomes, and more. They are engaged in multiple studies related to workforce training and outcomes, and they welcome any discussions related to workforce development with the committee.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Anonymous, CT Hospital Association: They expressed support for the legislation, citing all the positive things that Connecticut Hospitals and their employees do for the economy and their communities. They believe we need to continue growing the healthcare workforce, and SB 1259 will "contribute to the all-hands-on-deck approach" that is necessary to meet the employment demands in the field of healthcare. They also asked the committee to consider additional ways to support the healthcare workforce and encouraged reviewing the Comptroller's 2025 Healthcare Cabinet Report.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Douglas Sturtevant, Douglas Mechanical Services, Inc., Company President: He is a longtime HVAC professional in the state and opposes this bill because he believes it will add restrictions that will hurt anyone who wants to be a tradesman. He noted the struggles that he and other people in trades have had with getting g new people to train, and he states that this bill will not help.

Reported by: Alexander Mercier

Date: 3/21/2025