

# Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-1413

AN ACT CONCERNING INCLUSIVE PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH  
INTELLECTUAL OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AT THE CONNECTICUT

**Title:** STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM.

**Vote Date:** 3/13/2025

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/7/2025

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee.

### REASONS FOR BILL:

Raised Bill SB-1413 seeks to address problems raised by those with intellectual of developmental disabilities in our states community colleges who have reported that these institutions lack vital programs that would augment and improve these student's support systems and help them thrive during the difficult adjustments and learning they go through in their collegiate careers.

This bill, by providing these inclusive programs, under the direction of the Board of Regents for Higher Education, to these students who need this support will, pursuant to collaboration with state agencies, create a pipeline to greater success, as tailored to each student's individual professed needs by institutions following the statutes described in this bill. As a result, this bill will support students and state by integrating students with developmental and/or cognitive disabilities into their campuses better and, through higher success and graduation rates, it benefits the state more as more graduates are henceforth able to go forth into the workforce.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, Chancellor, Terrance Cheng](#): Supports this bill citing the benefit a state mandate would have given the programs already implemented by many state community colleges regarding educational support for those with disabilities.

He emphasizes as well that, pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), it is the responsibility of all institutions of post-secondary learning to provide reasonable programs and support systems for their students with developmental, and/or physical disabilities when said students disclose the existence of their disability to staff or educators.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

[Christina Allyn](#): Supports this bill from personal experience in receiving aid from their own college in support during their collegiate career. They also posit that with such implemented programs, learning will increase and thus, success and graduations rates will statistically increase as well along with increased self-confidence, life skills, and feelings of self-worth.

[Darlene Borre](#): Supports this bill because it would help realize the strides taken in Connecticut to encourage and support those with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (IDDs) in their transition from K-12 into post-secondary education. This bill would provide such support as offered in K-12 education and hence, improve graduation and success rates for those with IDD in college, as seen in states like California, who have implemented such practices with major success.

In addition, these programs would improve workplace readiness for those with IDD, making it statistically more likely that they will become meaningfully employed in our state after college, and as a result, improve our state economically and educationally.

[Mitchell College, President, Tracy Espy](#): Supports this bill because it would provide the ability for all colleges, public or private, in the state to offer these programs supporting all students, including, but not limited to those with IDD from day one of their college career to their graduation and even post-graduation phase, as proven effective by Mitchell College's post-graduation assistance STAIRs program, which "Offers a residential program in which participants gain preparation for graduate school or career, as well as independent living skills."

[UConn School of Social Work, Graduate Student, Chenoa Greenlee](#): Supports this bill because it would give those students with IDD a realization and ideation that they will succeed in post-secondary education, as many of them believe they will not, given their disabilities and the struggle they would face in college without support. These new and innovative programs would hence support all of those needing it and would benefit our society widely, increasing the educated population in our state, improving our workforce, reducing health risks, as the CDC reports that those whom attend higher education are less likely to be healthier than their under or uneducated fellows as they gain higher wages and therefore, a higher socio-economic status, benefiting all in the process as numbers of graduates rise and levels of poverty and health problems decrease in step with this and other determinates improved by the achievement of a successful navigation of one's collegiate career, to whatever means and ends that may be.

[Mother, Shannon Leary](#): Supports this bill given the inherent benefits these inclusive programs will have on people with IDD, specifically Autism.

[Mrs. Kathryn Strout](#): Supports this bill because it alleviates anxieties professed by those with IDD, especially Autism, when it comes to perusing a post-secondary education career. Many

believe that they will not be able to succeed in such education given their struggles with learning, etc. And this bill would greatly reduce these ideations and reintroduce an overall feeling of readiness, motivation, and importantly, excitement that many of these students have towards attaining a college degree.

[MD. Lisa Weisinger](#): Supports this bill given the improved statistical chances that, given the integrated programs addressing of student's needs, of greater independence and well-being after graduation, which will improve societal norms by fostering an inclusive acceptance of all persons and thus, benefit our state as a result in all aspects.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None expressed.

**Reported by: Tom Atwood**

**Date: 3/28/2025**