



General Assembly

January Session, 2025

Raised Bill No. 7168

LCO No. 5934



Referred to Committee on EDUCATION

Introduced by:
(ED)

AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

- 1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) As used in this section:
- 2 (1) "Eligible student" means any person who (A) has a cumulative
3 grade point average of at least a "B+" in high school, (B) is classified as
4 an in-state student pursuant to section 10a-29 of the general statutes, (C)
5 is making satisfactory academic progress while enrolled in a teacher
6 preparation program at a public institution of higher education, (D) has
7 completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, and (E) has
8 accepted all available financial aid; and
- 9 (2) "Financial aid" means the sum of all scholarships, grants and
10 federal, state and institutional aid received by a qualifying student.
11 "Financial aid" does not include any federal, state or private student
12 loans received by a qualifying student.
- 13 (b) Not later than January 1, 2026, the Department of Education shall
14 establish a tuition assistance program for eligible students who enroll in
15 a teacher preparation program at a public institution of higher

16 education in the state. The department shall pay not less than the
17 balance of tuition, after the acceptance of all available financial aid, for
18 such eligible student who (1) is approved for the tuition assistance
19 program, and (2) enrolls at a public institution of higher education in a
20 teacher preparation program leading to a bachelor's or master's degree
21 for the fall semester of 2026, or any semester thereafter.

22 (c) On or before January 1, 2026, said department shall post in a
23 conspicuous location on its Internet web site (1) a description of such
24 tuition assistance program, and (2) the application form for such
25 program. Not later than April 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the
26 department shall notify students in each public high school in the state
27 about the tuition assistance program.

28 (d) For the fall semester of 2026, and each semester thereafter, the
29 Department of Education shall provide tuition assistance (1) to not more
30 than fifty eligible students each semester on a rolling basis, and (2) for
31 the first four academic years if an eligible student is enrolled in a
32 bachelor's degree program, or the first five academic years if an eligible
33 student is enrolled in an integrated bachelor's and master's degree
34 program, provided the eligible student meets and continues to meet the
35 requirements of this section. The department shall not use tuition
36 assistance to supplant any financial aid, including, but not limited to,
37 state or institutional aid, otherwise available to an eligible student.

38 (e) The Commissioner of Education shall develop tuition assistance
39 repayment criteria for recipients who do not complete the teacher
40 preparation program. Any amounts repaid to the department shall be
41 deposited in the General Fund.

42 (f) Not later than January 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, the
43 Department of Education shall submit, in accordance with the
44 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing
45 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
46 relating to education a report on the tuition assistance program,

47 including, but not limited to, (1) the number of eligible students enrolled
48 in the program, (2) the teacher preparation programs in which such
49 eligible students enrolled, and (3) for each cohort of eligible students the
50 (A) average amount of tuition assistance provided, (B) completion rates,
51 and (C) employment placement upon graduation.

52 Sec. 2. Subsection (c) of section 21a-420f of the general statutes is
53 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
54 *2025*):

55 (c) (1) On and after July 1, 2022, there is established a fund to be
56 known as the "Cannabis Social Equity and Innovation Fund". The fund
57 shall contain any moneys required by law to be deposited in the fund
58 and shall be held by the Treasurer separate and apart from all other
59 moneys, funds and accounts. Amounts in the fund may be expended
60 only pursuant to appropriation by the General Assembly. Any balance
61 remaining in the fund at the end of any fiscal year shall be carried
62 forward in the fund for the fiscal year next succeeding. Moneys in the
63 fund shall be appropriated for the purposes of providing the following:
64 Access to capital for businesses in any industry; technical assistance for
65 the start-up and operation of a business in any industry; funding for
66 workforce education in any industry; funding for community
67 investments; [and] paying costs incurred to implement the activities
68 authorized under RERACA; and providing tuition assistance to
69 students enrolled in teacher preparation programs pursuant to section
70 1 of this act. All such appropriations shall be dedicated to expenditures
71 that further the principles of equity, as defined in section 21a-420.

72 (2) (A) For the purposes of subdivision (1) of this subsection, for the
73 fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, and for each fiscal year thereafter, the
74 Social Equity Council shall transmit, for even-numbered years,
75 estimates of expenditure requirements and for odd-numbered years,
76 recommended adjustments and revisions, if any, of such estimates, to
77 the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, in the manner
78 prescribed for a budgeted agency under subsection (a) of section 4-77.

79 (B) The Office of Policy and Management may not make adjustments
80 to any such estimates or adjustments and revisions of such estimates
81 transmitted by the council. Notwithstanding any provision of the
82 general statutes or any special act, the Governor shall not reduce the
83 allotment requisitions or allotments in force pursuant to section 4-85 or
84 make reductions in allotments in order to achieve budget savings in the
85 General Fund, concerning any appropriations made by the General
86 Assembly for the purposes of subdivision (1) of this subsection.

87 (C) The estimates of expenditure requirements transmitted by the
88 Social Equity Council to the Secretary of the Office of Policy and
89 Management pursuant to subparagraph (A) of this subdivision shall,
90 consistent with the requirements established in subsection (a) of section
91 4-77, include an estimate of the amount of funds required to be
92 distributed among the permissible purposes for appropriations made
93 from the Cannabis Social Equity and Innovation Fund as set forth in
94 subdivision (1) of this subsection.

95 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) There is established a
96 scholarship program administered by the Talent Office of the
97 Department of Education to provide an annual scholarship to a teacher
98 who is certified through an alternative route to certification. The
99 scholarship shall be available to any teacher who (1) completes an
100 alternative route to certification program, (2) is employed as a teacher
101 in the state, and (3) enrolls in a teacher preparation program at an
102 institution of higher education in the state leading to a master's degree
103 for the fall semester of 2026, or any semester thereafter. The scholarship
104 shall be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis and in an amount
105 prescribed by the Talent Office.

106 (b) On or before January 1, 2026, said department shall post in a
107 conspicuous location on its Internet web site (1) a description of such
108 scholarship program, including, but not limited to, the amount of
109 scholarship available through such program, and (2) the application
110 form for such program.

111 (c) Not later than January 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, the
 112 Department of Education shall submit, in accordance with the
 113 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing
 114 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
 115 relating to education a report on the scholarship program, including,
 116 but not limited to, the number of scholarship recipients and the teacher
 117 certification program in which such teacher enrolled.

118 Sec. 4. (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The sum of fifty million dollars is
 119 appropriated to the Department of Education from the Cannabis Social
 120 Equity and Innovation Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, for
 121 the tuition assistance program established pursuant to section 1 of this
 122 act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	21a-420f(c)
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To establish a (1) tuition assistance program for students in teacher preparation programs at a public institution of higher education, and (2) scholarship program for teachers who completed an alternative route to certification program and are pursuing a master's degree, and to appropriate fifty million dollars from the Cannabis Social Equity and Innovation Fund for the tuition assistance program.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]