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## OLR Bill Analysis

### sSB 1179

#### ***AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT COMMUNITY MAKERSPACE INITIATIVE PROGRAM.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) commissioner to establish and administer, by January 1, 2026, a pilot program to give financial assistance (e.g., grants, loans, or financing) to entities establishing or expanding makerspaces in Connecticut. Under the bill, a “makerspace” is a community space (1) providing entrepreneurs access to tools, technology, or educational materials; (2) where prototyping, creation, production, and assembly of tangible items happens; and (3) supporting the development of educational opportunities for personal growth, workforce training, and early-stage business ventures.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

#### **MAKERSPACES PILOT PROGRAM**

##### ***Development and Funding***

Under the bill, the DECD commissioner must explore funding options for the program, including public-private partnerships, grants, and federal or state funds. The bill caps funding at (1) \$250,000 for any applicant per fiscal year and (2) \$5 million for the pilot program in total.

The bill requires the Manufacturing Innovation Advisory Board to make available \$1 million from the Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF; see BACKGROUND) for DECD to use to give makerspaces financial assistance under the pilot program.

##### ***Applications***

The bill requires the DECD commissioner to establish the pilot program’s eligibility criteria and application process, and applications

for program participation must be submitted in a form the commissioner prescribes. Under the bill, applications must include (1) a description of the makerspace the applicant wants to establish or expand, (2) the requested amount of financial assistance, and (3) any other information the commissioner deems necessary.

### ***Reporting Requirements***

Under the bill, the DECD commissioner must require pilot program participants, within two years after receiving funding, to report to DECD on the progress of establishing or expanding their makerspace and any other information the commissioner deems necessary. Beginning by January 1, 2027, the commissioner must annually report an evaluation of the pilot program's operation and effectiveness to the Commerce Committee.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF)***

MIF provides manufacturers and researchers in aerospace, medical devices, and other targeted industries' supply chains with financing to, among other things, expand facilities, develop products, and match research grants. It is administered by DECD and overseen by an 11-member advisory board. The most recent biennial budget passed in 2023 authorized \$35 million in general obligation bonds for the fund.

## **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Commerce Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea    20    Nay   0    (03/20/2025)