

Labor and Public Employees Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-442 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF RETIREMENT HEALTH BENEFITS FOR
Title: PARAEDUCATORS.

Vote Date: 3/17/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/10/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor & Public Employees Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The reason for this bill is to study retirement health benefit options available to paraeducators, as many paraeducators have to cover a substantial amount of healthcare costs themselves.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Sean Scanlon, State Comptroller, Office of the State Comptroller: Mr. Scanlon is in support of the bill. He states that recent challenges have placed paraeducators in a difficult position. He explains that a study in 2021 showed that 66% paraeducators on their district's health insurance spent at least 10% of their wages to cover it. He adds that in 2023 the Comptroller office was tasked with creating a program to cover the costs. However, he states that he would like a clearer picture to see what more he could do.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Shellye Davis, President, Hartford Paraeducators: Ms. Davis is in support of the bill. She states that paraeducators are essential partners in the education, they support students with disabilities and emotional needs. However, she explains they receive some of the lowest wages and the least stable benefits. Ms. Davis believes that the bill acknowledges that paraeducators deserve basic level retirement benefits.

Ed Hawthorne, President, Hartford Paraeducators: Mr. Hawthorne is in support of the bill. He states that paraeducators are essential to student learning because they can provide one-

on-one support to students which leads to better academic performance. He explains that while work has been done to make health insurance more affordable for paraeducators he hopes that this bill will improve the situation even more.

Michael Adams, Legislative Assistant, AFSCME: Mr. Adams is in support of the bill. He states that paraeducators are an important part of the school system, they take on some of the most challenging tasks, however they are among the lowest paid. He adds that when a paraeducator retires they are not often provided with health insurance. He claims that the study in the bill is important because it will gather data on the reality of paraeducators.

Michael Barry, Coordinator, CT Coalition for Retirement Security: Mr. Barry is in support of the bill. He states that he was once a paraeducator so he believes that providing paraeducators with health benefits and pensions will make their futures easier.

Kate Dias, President, CEA: Ms. Dias is in support of the bill. She states that paraeducators play an essential role in the success of educators and students, due to the support they provide to students. She adds that the bill is important to understanding the current conditions of paraeducators.

Gary Hayman, Paraeducator: Mr. Hayman is in support of the bill. He states that he has been a paraeducator for West Hartford for 20 years. He explains that paraeducators take on many roles in the classroom, rather it is covering for the teacher, creating lesson plans, or supervising students. However, he states that they get paid slightly more than minimum wage, and when they retire, they cannot keep their health insurance. He understands that this could be a budget issue for schools, so he suggests limiting qualifications for benefit packets to paraeducators who worked for 10 years or more. He believes that this is important to fixing the lack of paraeducators.

Gloria Lewis, Paraeducator, AFSCME Local 3429, Elizabeth Nargi Paraeducator, AFSCME Local 3429, Linda Randi Paraeducator, AFSCME Local 3429, Hyclis William, Paraeducator, AFSCME Local 3429, John Levis, Paraeducator, AFSCME Local 3429, Lucille Patton, Attendance Worker, New Haven Board of Education: This group of paraeducators is in support of the bill. They explain that they provide needed assistance to teachers and students, however they earn wages below the cost of living. They state that the biggest issue is the lack of reliable, affordable retirement health coverage. They claim this is causing many issues including financial insecurity, workforce instability and inequity. They state the bill will require the Comptroller to examine the retirement health benefits paraeducators currently receive, how benefits vary across districts, and policies that could improve the lives of paraeducators.

Drew Michael McWeeney, Assistant Professor, CT State College: Mr. McWeeney is in support of the bill. He claims that studying retirement health benefits for paraeducators will provide policymakers with information to create policies surrounding the issue. He states that paraeducators are needed in the classroom and without them he could have a difficult time operating his classroom. He notes that while they do not have the same level of education as a teacher their role holds the classroom together. He adds that good policy needs data before it should be implemented.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Anonymous 12 and Anonymous 13: Opposes the bill for reasons largely unrelated to the content of the bill.

Anonymous 14: Opposes the bill because of increasing costs.

Reported by: Olivia Buczak

Date: 3/27/2026