



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 665**

February Session, 2026

Substitute House Bill No. 5418

*House of Representatives, April 16, 2026*

The Committee on Appropriations reported through REP. WALKER of the 93rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE KIRKLYN M. KERR PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT.***

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

1 Section 1. Section 10a-19h of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2027*):

3 (a) For the purposes of this section, "veterinary student" means an in-  
4 state resident enrolled in an accredited veterinary graduate school.

5 (b) The president of The University of Connecticut shall establish and  
6 administer the Kirklyn M. Kerr program to support the veterinary  
7 medicine education of not more than five veterinary students per  
8 cohort. Each cohort may be funded for a four-year period pursuant to  
9 the provisions of subsection (c) of this section.

10 (c) Any state resident may apply, in the form and manner prescribed  
11 by The University of Connecticut, for a grant to attend a veterinary  
12 graduate school under the Kirklyn M. Kerr program. The university

13 shall award such grants within available appropriations. Each grant  
14 recipient shall receive a grant for four years in the amount of the  
15 difference between the cost of in-state tuition and out-of-state tuition at  
16 the veterinary graduate school approved by the university under said  
17 program. Such grant shall be issued in the form of a student loan that  
18 shall (1) not be subject to repayment, and (2) be forgiven at a rate of  
19 twenty per cent per annum over the course of five years, provided such  
20 grant recipient, after graduating from veterinary school and completing  
21 any subsequent professional training, is a state resident and practicing  
22 veterinarian, licensed pursuant to chapter 384, working in the state.  
23 Such student loan shall be subject to repayment for any remaining  
24 balance of such student loan if a grant recipient ceases to be a state  
25 resident or a practicing veterinarian in the state at any time during the  
26 first five years after graduating from veterinary school and completing  
27 any subsequent professional training.

28 (d) The University of Connecticut shall enter into a memorandum of  
29 understanding with the Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental  
30 Loan Authority for the issuance of forgivable student loans pursuant to  
31 the provisions of subsection (c) of this section.

32 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) The Office of Higher Education  
33 shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with The University  
34 of Connecticut for the use of funds in the Kirklyn M. Kerr account,  
35 established pursuant to section 3 of this act, to award grants to  
36 veterinary students under the Kirklyn M. Kerr program established  
37 pursuant to section 10a-19h of the general statutes, as amended by this  
38 act.

39 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) There is established an account  
40 to be known as the "Kirklyn M. Kerr account", which shall be a separate,  
41 nonlapsing account. The account shall contain any moneys required by  
42 law to be deposited in the account. Moneys in the account shall be  
43 expended by the Office of Higher Education for the purposes of the  
44 memorandum of understanding with The University of Connecticut  
45 concerning the Kirklyn M. Kerr program, established pursuant to



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*The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.*

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**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:** None

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

The bill has no fiscal impact to the state. It: (1) establishes a forgivable loan program for Connecticut students to attend an out-of-state veterinary school via the Kirklyn M. Kerr program, involving the Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA) and UConn; and (2) establishes a nonlapsing account for the forgivable loans to students participating in the program, involving UConn and the Office of Higher Education. The bill does not specify a funding source.

**The Out Years**

**State Impact:** None

**Municipal Impact:** None

**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 5418*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE KIRKLYN M. KERR PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT.*****SUMMARY**

This bill makes various revisions to the Kirklyn M. Kerr Program, which supports veterinary medicine education, including:

1. requiring grants to be issued as student loans that do not need to be paid back as long as recipients meet certain criteria, such as practicing in the state following graduation for at least five years;
2. requiring UConn to enter memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with the Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA) and Office of Higher Education (OHE) regarding the loans and funds under the program; and
3. establishing the “Kirklyn M. Kerr” account, a separate nonlapsing account.

By law, UConn must administer the Kirklyn M. Kerr program to support a cohort of in-state residents enrolled in an accredited (out-of-state) veterinary graduate school (there are no veterinary schools in Connecticut). Each cohort must consist of five or fewer students and can be funded for a four-year period. In practice, the program has been dormant in recent years.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2027, except the provisions regarding the UConn-OHE MOU and the Kirklyn M. Kerr account are effective July 1, 2026.

**KIRKLYN M. KERR PROGRAM**

The bill allows for state residents to apply for a grant under the

Kirklyn M. Kerr program as determined by UConn, and UConn must award grants within available appropriations.

Under the bill, each recipient must receive a four-year grant equal to the difference between the cost of in-state tuition and out-of-state tuition at a UConn-approved veterinary school. Grants are issued as student loans that do not need to be repaid as long as after graduation and completion of any subsequent professional training, the grant recipient is a state resident and works as a practicing veterinarian in the state for at least five years, during which period 20% of the original loan amount is forgiven in each of these five years.

**MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING AND KIRKLYN M. KERR ACCOUNT**

The bill requires UConn to enter an MOU with CHESLA to issue forgivable student loans under this program.

The bill also establishes the “Kirklyn M. Kerr” account, a separate and nonlapsing account. The account’s funds must be spent by OHE for the purposes outlined in a MOU that OHE is required to enter with UConn on the awarding of grants under the program.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference - APP  
Yea 18 Nay 0 (03/12/2026)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute  
Yea 51 Nay 0 (04/01/2026)