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CCIC 2024 Legislative Summary

This update summarizes legislation adopted during the 2024 regular legislative session of the CT General Assembly, which ended on May 8, 2024, that impacts (or may be of interest to) CCIC member institutions. Please note this summary was completed on May 23, 2024 and the majority of these bills still await the Governor's signature to be signed into law.

Higher Education & Employment Committee Bills

Automatic Admissions

The legislature changed the requirement to qualify for admission to a participating institution of higher education through the [Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program](#) from a minimum class rank percentile to a minimum *unweighted* grade point average for students.

- [Public Act 24-47](#)

Scholarship Displacement Policy Sharing

Effective July 1, 2024, institutions of higher education in the state will be required to disclose its policy on reducing the amount of financial aid it offers to a current or prospective student who receives a scholarship ("scholarship displacement") in:

- 1) the initial financial aid packaged offered to each current or prospective student; and
- 2) a report submitted to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee by January 1, 2025.

- [Public Act 24-87](#)

CT Student Loan Repayment Assistance

Legislation passed that expands the [student loan payment tax credit](#) for qualified employers by allowing the employer to claim the credit for eligible payments it made to a student loan servicer on a qualified employee's behalf on **any** student education loan, rather than just CHESLA loans. The legislation also requires CHESLA to (1) establish a High Priority Occupation Loan Subsidy Program to subsidize interest rates on loans it issues to eligible individuals employed in high priority occupations and (2) consult with the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS) to designate occupations as such.

- [Public Act 24-52](#)

Minority Advancement Program Expansion: PATH

Under legislation passed this session, beginning in FY 25, the Office of Higher Education, as part of its [Minority Advancement Program \(MAP\)](#), will be required to establish the Preparation for Academic Transition to a Higher Education program (PATH), utilizing no

more than \$100,000 from the existing MAP appropriation. The new PATH grants may go to community based non-profit organizations that provide assistance to Connecticut students in grade eleven or twelve with (1) completing applications to postsecondary education programs, (2) completing the FAFSA, or (3) securing education scholarships and grants to finance attendance in a postsecondary education program.

- [Public Act 24-117](#)

Education Committee Bills

CT FAFSA Completion Mandate Delayed to 2027

Beginning with the graduating class of 2025, current law requires students to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), institutional financial aid application (if the student does not have legal immigration status), or signed waiver, to graduate from high school. Legislation passed this session delays the requirement by two years, to the graduating class of 2027.

- [Public Act 24-45 \(Sections 9 & 10\)](#)

Teacher Certification

The State Department of Education convened the [CT Educators Certification Council](#) in August 2023 to discuss the process of teacher certification. CCIC participated in the Council's deliberations.

Legislation was subsequently introduced in the Education Committee and passed unanimously in both chambers to reflect the Committee's general agreement about how best to proceed in this effort. Central to this new approach includes a new, 16-member Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board to support modernizing educator preparation, as well as attracting and retaining effective and diverse educators.

Of note, this legislation:

- Repeals, effective July 1, 2026, existing outdated regulations overseeing the teacher certification process and criteria for education preparation programs. The two years to sunset the regulations will allow time for the new Board to establish new standards.
- Amends the grades covered by various certifications, including adding pre-K to the elementary certification. Accordingly, beginning July 1, 2025, elementary education teacher preparation programs must be aligned with NAEYC standards and competencies for early childhood standards.
- Allows alternate route to certification programs (ARCs) that partner with an accredited university to provide a dual degree-plus certification program for participants who hold an associate degree.
- Continues to require a master's degree but provides the option for the new Certification Board to establish an alternative to a master's degree, down the line.
- Provides CCIC an appointment to the new Board.

A complete summary of the changes is available [here](#).

- [Public Hearing Testimony](#)
- [Public Act 24-41](#)

EdTPA

The Certification legislation that passed includes new language related to the use of EdTPA. Beginning July 1, 2024, the legislation bans SDE from requiring teacher preparation programs to use edTPA for certain purposes and it prohibits teacher preparation programs from using edTPA scores to prevent a student from completing their program. Institutions may still use the exam to assess students.

- [Public Act 24-41 \(Section 15\)](#)

Aspiring Diversity Scholarship Program

A section of the Certification legislation – Section 50 – amends the eligibility criteria for the existing [Aspiring Diversity Scholarship Program](#). This Scholarship program provides up to \$10,000 annually for eligible students enrolled in a teacher preparation program in-state. The legislation makes the scholarship available to students who graduate from public high schools in [Alliance Districts](#), rather than public high schools in *priority school districts*. This change is intended to broaden the pool of eligible recipients. The spending bill that passed ([Public Act 24-81, Sec. 234](#)) reduced the FY 25 appropriation for this scholarship program by \$2 million.

- [Public Act 24-41 \(Section 50\)](#)

Study for Statewide Advanced Courses

Under a new law, the State Department of Education is required to conduct a study, by January 1, 2026, on the feasibility of establishing and administering a state-wide program to support public high school students' participation in advanced courses or programs. Higher education institutions are to be consulted in this work, public and private. "Advanced course or program" is defined in the new law as an honors class, advanced placement class, International Baccalaureate program, Cambridge International program, dual enrollment program, dual credit course or program, early college program or any other advanced or accelerated course or program that is offered, and for which credit is awarded, by a local or regional board of education in grades nine to twelve, inclusive.

- [Public Act 24-78 \(Section 4\)](#)

SDE Literacy Research and Reading Success Resources for Teacher Prep

Legislation passed requiring the State Department of Education's (SDE's) Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success to make available to the faculty of teacher preparation programs (1) resources and research supporting scientifically based reading instruction and (2) Connecticut's K-3 Literacy Strategy that the center develops. The same bill also requires SDE's Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities ensure that intermediate administrator and supervisor preparation programs, in addition to educator preparation

programs and applicants for educator certification, meet compliance standards for dyslexia instruction and training.

- [Public Act 24-78 \(Sections 1 - 3\)](#)

Commerce Committee Bills

Global Entrepreneurship in Residence Program

Last year the Commerce Committee created a working group to explore the concept of creating a global entrepreneurship in residence program, seeking to replicate [a program in Massachusetts](#). CCIC had a seat on that working group. Legislation was subsequently introduced this session to require that UCONN create such a program. CCIC weighed in with the bill's proponents and the University of Bridgeport submitted testimony encouraging the Committee to revise the bill to allow for the participation of other institutions in such a program. The bill was amended and subsequently passed, requiring DECD to develop recommendations for a three-year pilot program on the design and establishment of a three-year Global Entrepreneur in Residence pilot program to attract or retain resident specialists in Connecticut.

- [Testimony](#)
- [Public Act 24-103](#)

CTNext Moved to DECD

Legislation was adopted that moves the standalone quasi-public entity CTNext under the CT Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). CTNext was shut down earlier this spring. DECD will now be responsible for promoting the innovation ecosystem in the state and will be administering some of the programs led by CTNext, including Tech Talent Bridge. Bond funding allocated to CTNext for this work was also transferred to DECD.

- [Public Act 24-149](#)

Public Health Committee Bills

Health Information Exchange

Legislation passed making modifications to existing law around connecting to the statewide Health Information Exchange (HIE) ("Connie") which is administered under the oversight of the Office of Health Strategy.

Of note, the legislation:

- Requires OHS to establish a working group to make recommendations on the office's exchange-related regulations, policies, and procedures;
- Allows health care providers until 18 months after those recommendations are adopted to connect and participate in the HIE;

- Explicitly states that “*any health care provider that would violate any other law by sharing information with or connecting to the exchange shall not be required to share such information with or connect to the exchange*”; and
- States that “*nothing in this section shall be construed to require a health care provider to share patient information with the State-wide Health Information Exchange if (1) sharing such information is prohibited by state or federal privacy and security laws.*”

By way of background, under the statute, Connecticut-licensed healthcare providers includes licensed providers who work at campus-based student health centers. While some higher education institutions outsource student health services to a hospital system, where student health services are provided by employees of the institution, the student health records may be protected under FERPA.

- [Public Act 24-19 \(Sections 21 & 22\)](#)

Physician Recruitment Working Group

Legislation passed extending the reporting deadline to 2026 for a CT Department of Public Health (DPH) convened physician recruitment working group that was created in 2022 and adds to the group’s charge the study of issues related to primary care residency and ways to keep those residents in the state.

- [Public Act 24-19 \(Section 37\)](#)

Athletic Trainers Shortage

A task force was created by legislation that passed this session to examine methods to recruit and retain athletic trainers in the state.

- [Special Act 24-17](#)

Nursing

Legislative changes were made that may impact Nursing programs:

- Legislation passed entering Connecticut into the Nurse Licensure Compact. The compact creates a process for nurses to obtain a multistate license, allowing them to practice in any member state. ([Public Act 24-83 - Section 1](#))
- The Public Health Commissioner must require anyone applying for a multistate nursing license between October 1, 2025 to January 1, 2028 to submit to a state and national fingerprint-based criminal history records check by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. ([Public Act 24-83 - Section 2](#))

The proposal to waive nurse licensure fees, proposed by the Governor in January, did not pass.

Social Work

Legislative changes were made that may impact Social Work programs:

- Under current law, to obtain a Social Work license in CT, individuals that have obtained an MWS degree and the program completed must be accredited. A change was made to allow an MSW degree holder to obtain licensure if the degree is from a program that (1) is in the process of getting accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and (2) was offered from the spring 2024 semester and before the fall 2028 semester. ([Public Act 24-68, Section 40](#))
- Legislation passed entering Connecticut into the Social Work Licensure Compact. The compact creates a process for social workers to obtain a multistate license, allowing them to practice in any member state (including by telehealth). Member states must grant a multistate license in one of three categories (clinical, master's, or bachelor's) to social workers who meet the compact's eligibility requirements. The Compact takes effect when seven states have adopted it. Only two states have done so thus far. ([Public Act 24-30, Section 1](#))
- Effective immediately, the Public Health Commissioner must require anyone applying for social worker licensure to submit to a state and national fingerprint-based criminal history records check by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. ([Public Act 24-30, Section 2](#))

Other Bills

Tri-share PILOT program

Legislation passed this year created a Tri-Share Childcare Matching Program for New London County (1) in which childcare costs are shared equally between participating employers, employees, and the state and (2) that runs for at least two years. Under the bill, OEC must choose a regional or statewide organization to administer the program. \$1.8 million was included in the spending bill for this program.

- [Public Act 24-91](#)

Relevant Provisions in the Spending Bill

The comprehensive spending bill that the legislature passed in lieu of a budget adjustment bill ([Public Act 24-81](#)) includes a number of provisions that may be of interest to higher education institutions:

- **REALLOCATION OF UNSPENT ARPA FUNDS:** Requires that any unobligated ARPA funds will first go to resolve any agency deficiencies if the Comptroller projects a cumulative FY 25 General Fund deficit of greater than 1% as of October 1, 2024. If no such deficit is projected or there are remaining funds after resolving the projected deficit, then any unobligated funds, up to \$40 million, shall be distributed to the public institutions of higher education. Any remaining obligations after distributing funds to the institutions of higher education shall be used in accordance ARPA guidelines. (§ 7)

- **VOCATIONAL VILLAGE PROGRAM:** Requires the Department of Corrections (DOC) Commissioner to prepare and equip the department and its post-secondary education partners to use allocated funding under the vocational village program for programs that produce economic and other benefits, including inmate employment opportunities. (§ 17)
- **NEEDS ASSESSMENT ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES:** Requires OPM's Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division, in consultation with DOC, to do a needs assessment of the facilities, materials, and staffing required to deliver postsecondary education programs in correctional facilities and report the results of that assessment to the Higher Education Committee by January 1, 2025. (§ 18)
- **STUDENT LOAN REIMBURSEMENT PILOT PROGRAM:** Modifies eligibility requirements for the OHE Student Loan Reimbursement Pilot Program approved in 2023, including (1) expanding the program to students who have attended and graduated with an associate degree, (2) requiring the OHE executive director to establish hardship waiver qualifications and forms, and (3) requires specific documentation from participants as part of their annual reporting requirements. (§ 22)
- **ROBERTA B. WILLIS SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING:** Makes several changes to a 2023-enacted allocation of Roberta B. Willis scholarship program funds, including that all ARPA funds allocated for the program be **disbursed**, rather than **used**, by December 31, 2024, and requires OHE to reserve up to \$15 million from the program's FY 25 appropriation for disbursement during FY 26. (§ 50)
- **2024-25 ACADEMIC YEAR CHANGES TO THE ROBERTA B. WILLIS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM:** Prohibits the OHE from requiring that Roberta B. Willis scholarship program need-based grants be reduced based on a student's initial qualifications as determined from his or her FAFSA and pauses the requirement that the program's need and merit-based grants be awarded in a higher amount than its need-based grants. (§ 53)
- **PACT EXPANSION:** Expands PACT eligibility to include transition program students who (1) are state residents, (2) have not graduated from high school, (3) are enrolled in a transition program under their individualized education program, and (4) enroll in one or more courses at a regional community-technical college. Also increases the program's minimum awards from \$250 to \$500 for full-time students, and from \$150 to \$300 for part-time students. (§ 75)
- **REPEAL OF STUDENT LOAN REIMBURSEMENT AND RELATED PROGRAMS:** Repeals several student loan reimbursement, scholarship, and related programs that have not been funded. (§ 87)
- **HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY BOARD:** Establishes the Higher Education Financial Sustainability Advisory Board, designates its members, assigns the board powers and duties, and requires public higher education institutions and the UConn Health Center to submit certain information to the board at the chairpersons' request. (§ 107)

Key Legislation that Did Not Pass

Legacy Admissions

Legislation seeking to prohibit the consideration of a familial relationship and donor status in the admissions process at institutions of higher education in Connecticut died. The bill was amended in the Senate to require that institutions of higher education in Connecticut file with the Higher Education Committee: 1) a statement stating that do not consider legacy or donor status in admissions; OR 2) a report with admissions and enrollment data, disaggregated by race and gender, for each of the prior five academic years. However, the bill as amended by the Senate failed to receive final action in the House before the legislative session adjourned.

- [Testimony](#)
- [Bill](#)

Substance Free Housing

A bill was introduced, but subsequently died, requiring higher education institutions in the state provide on-campus student housing an option for substance-free housing. The bill defined “substance-free housing” as an area of a residential facility where each student agrees to keep their room drug- and alcohol- free. [CCIC opposed](#) the bill. The bill was amended in the House to apply only to the state’s public colleges but the Senate did not act on the amended bill before the end of the session.

- [Bill](#)

Consideration of Disciplinary History in Admissions

The Higher Ed Committee proposed legislation sought by the [Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee \(JJPOC\)](#) to prohibit institutions of higher education from considering the school disciplinary history of an applicant during the admissions process. "School disciplinary history" was defined in the bill as any record of action taken against a student by a secondary school for violation of a policy. The bill did not prohibit schools from considering information related to criminal history or the disciplinary history from a post-secondary institution. [CCIC opposed](#). The bill was not voted on in either chamber and died with the end of the session.

- [Bill](#)

Clarifying Proceedings Policies for Third-Party Victims at Higher Ed Institutions

The Higher Ed Committee’s bill which sought to require that institutions have policies and procedures in place related to victims of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking or intimate partner violence who are not a student or employee of an institution of higher education (“third parties”) died when it failed to be voted on in either chamber.

- [Bill](#)

Artificial Intelligence

The General Law Committee introduced legislation in follow-up to the recommendations of a working group report (linked below) that sought to provide a framework for regulating and promoting broader use of artificial intelligence in Connecticut. The bill also included workforce development opportunities to ensure individuals gain knowledge in this area. Originally, the workforce opportunities in the legislation focused solely on leveraging the public colleges but the bill was amended to all higher education institutions in the state.

The bill died after inaction in the House before the session ended.

- [CT AI Working Group Report](#)
- [Testimony](#)
- [Bill](#)

Taxation of Private Colleges

Legislation was raised in the Planning and Development Committee to remove property tax exemptions for any real property acquired by an independent institution of higher education on and after October 1, 2024. CCIC and some of our member institutions submitted written testimony opposing and Fairfield University testified in opposition at the public hearing. This bill DIED and was not voted out of the Committee before its deadline.

- [Testimony](#)
- [Bill](#)

E-Books

Legislation was introduced to prohibit publishers of electronic books and digital audiobooks from including certain restrictions in contracts or license agreements with libraries in the state. Academic libraries that are funded by the state, in whole or in part, were implicated. It failed to pass the House or the Senate and died at the end of the session.

- [Bill](#)
- [Bill Summary](#)

Collegiate Sports Betting

The Public Safety Committee moved forward a bill (without a public hearing) to expand in-state collegiate sports betting. Currently, state law only allows for betting on in-state institutions that are participating in a tournament. Other states in the northeast (from Maine to New Jersey) have similar policies *limiting* betting on in-state institutions. CCIC expressed significant concern about expanding college betting on in-state institutions and the bill did not move forward.

Of note, in the bond bill, \$400,000 (2%) of the state's revenue from sports wagering was earmarked to create a youth sports grant program to give grants to distressed municipalities to support the operating costs of nonprofit youth sports organizations. ([HB 5524](#), Sec. 110 & 111).

- “Quiet but major change would allow fans to bet on UConn, state schools in Connecticut” (Hearst | March 20, 2024)
- [Bill](#) (Section 5; Lines 511-528; 540-543 (prohibiting prop bets))