

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

HB801 PA292 1945

Public Personnel 165-170

Senate
House 650, 710

Transcripts from the Joint Standing Committee Public Hearing(s) and/or Senate
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PUBLIC PERSONNEL

THURSDAY

APRIL 19, 1945

Senator Corkey, presiding

Members present: Senators Corkey and Kiernan.

Representatives: Curtiss, Little, Eggleston, Tanner, Warner, Wochomurka, Beers, Foote, Warnock, O'Shea.

\ S.B. No. 386 (Senator Parsons) AN ACT CONCERNING RETIREMENT OF COUNTY EMPLOYEES.

SENATOR PARSONS: The intent of this bill is to include county employees under the State Retirement System. This is a permissive bill, which would allow them to participate in the System, the expense to be borne by the employees and the County so that no added expense would be placed upon the State. There is a general bill under consideration which would include them, but if it should not pass, I hope that the Committee will give favorable consideration to this bill.

REP. EGGLESTON: If that other bill passes will it cover them?

SENATOR PARSONS: I have not had an opportunity to check it fully, but I do think these county employees deserve your consideration.

Registering in favor of this bill were Senator Wm. E. Sheehy, M. C. Griffin, County Sealer, Charles E. Goodrich, County Commissioner, Rep. Moran, Ernest R. Ferguson, Haddam Sheriff, Rep. Pitney.

\ H.B. 801 (Rep. Dallas) AN ACT EXTENDING THE BENEFITS OF THE RETIREMENT SYSTEM TO EMPLOYEES OF STATE AID INSTITUTIONS.

REP. KOSKOFF: This bill has appeared before the legislature in one form or another three times, and I see has been slightly changed this season, but the principle and purpose is the same and it is a good bill. The bill has previously been defeated by propaganda and by the smallness of certain people who have a good thing themselves, but are unwilling for others to participate. Two years ago the situation was thoroughly investigated by the Judiciary Committee, and I had the pleasure of being on the sub-committee which made the investigation. We had

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many sessions, at which a state actuary was present, who went thoroughly into the question as to whether it would cost other state employees more if these institutions were permitted to come in, and it was found that it would not. These people deserve to come under the State Retirement Act. To a large extent the State carries the expense of these institutions and has a real interest, or should have, to see that these people are allowed to come under the State Retirement System. They receive low pay, but are doing the state a lot of good.

CHR. CORKEY: What institutions would be included:

REP. KOSKOFF: American School for the Deaf, Newington Home for Crippled Children and Connecticut Institute for the Blind. Last session the Judiciary Committee, both houses, unanimously voted to support this bill, or one similar to it, but on the last day the bill was tabled so that we couldn't take action on it. I say to you that it is high time we took care of these people, and I earnestly urge this Committee to give favorable consideration to this bill.

MRS. WARNOCK: Would it include employees of private hospitals?

REP. KOSKOFF: Only if they receive 50% of operating expenses from the state. Every year up until now people have come to the Judiciary Committee saying that this bill opens the doors to everyone. I warn the Committee to look out for this: you are opening the door to these three institutions only.

REP. SHERWOOD: I would certainly be remiss if I didn't speak in favor of this bill, which includes the Newington Home and the Institute for the Blind. I feel the bill is very worthy and should be passed.

REP. DALLAS: I urge your most careful consideration of this bill. I am personally familiar with the work of the American School for the Deaf, and know that it is worthy of your consideration.

REP. DAVEY: I am in favor of this bill.

MR. GEORGE ERSKINE, Cheshire Reformatory: I am in favor of this bill because I appreciate the need for it, but I do think that the State should fulfill

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its obligation by at least contributing to the fund the full amount to cover back payments for these employees.

MR. SPENCER GROSS: I am a Director of the American School for the Deaf, which receives 90% of its support from the State and 90% of its pupils; the balance coming from Massachusetts and New Hampshire. We have about 60 employees, exclusive of temporary and part time help. On the average they are paid less than employees of other state institutions, and when they come to retirement age we try to scrape a little money together to do something for them, but it is very negative. This bill has been drawn to include not only our own institution, but the employees of the Conn. Institute for the Blind and the Newington Home for Crippled Children. I would like to ask Dr. Perkins to supplement what I have said.

MR. HENRY A. PERKINS: There is little I can add to what Mr. Gross has said, except that I would like to say that our budget is about \$162,000, of which about \$140,000 is contributed by the State. We contribute from endowment about \$16,000 and the rest comes from various sources, including Mass. About 90% of our pupils are from Connecticut. We have been able to do very little for our teachers, and they certainly deserve more than the \$300 or so which we can give them.

MR. DANIEL CAMPION: I am familiar with the Conn. Institute for the Blind, where 100% of the pupils are from Connecticut. I have seen the work there from day to day and know that the teachers both old and young give a great deal of specialized service, which is not called for in regular schools; and yet we are unable to pay them adequate wages. Some time ago one of our teachers left and went to Pittsburg, I met her some time later and she found the situation in Pennsylvania much more liberal than here and is included under State Retirement System there.

MR. LESLIE R. MARTIN, Chairman of Executive Committee Conn. Institute for the Blind: I am here to speak in favor of this bill. We, as you perhaps know, run a school which educates the blind children of the State. If we didn't do it, then the State would have to operate a school of its own. We have about 30 or 31 employees, and since these people are not under Social Security or any form of pension plan they feel they should be allowed to come under the State Retirement System. This bill came up two

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years ago and received a very favorable hearing, but somehow it didn't get through. This time we hope for better luck. We feel it is a joint problem of the State and the three institutions, which are carrying on this charitable work for the State of Connecticut.

MR. FLETCHER PARKER: I am here speaking in behalf of the Conn. Institute for the Blind, representing Dr. Potter. We in these institutions are doing the State's work at a decreased cost, because of the gifts and endowments which we receive. These children are taught and cared for at less than the State could do it for, and if we didn't operate these institutions the State would have to operate schools of its own. This bill takes care of the employees of these three institutions only, and I ask that your Committee give it favorable consideration.

CHR. CORKEY: I'm wondering if any thought has been given to the number of employees who might be added.

MR. BOATNER: American School for the Deaf. About 200 employees are involved.

MR. PARKER: We run on strict budgets and I do not believe there would be any large increase. At the moment there are less blind children in Connecticut, so we have less to do.

REP. CURTISS: Do you think there are a lot of teachers nearing retirement age?

MR. PARKER: I think that may ^{be} true. We certainly don't want to give you any wrong information, but we do feel that it is a State obligation.

MR. BOATNER: As I understand it, they would only pay back dues to 1939, and it's true that a teacher who had 30 years record behind her would get credit for that, but it would seem unfair to exclude her from pension entirely. The actuaries do have a list of the employees, their salaries, etc.

CHR. CORKEY: The Committee would appreciate it if such information could be submitted to it.

MR. HENRY S. BEERS. A hasty look at the list indicates that the distribution of old and young employees in these institutions averages about the same as for other State employees.

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MRS. JAMES R. MILLER, a member of the State Board of Education for the Blind. I am heartily in favor of this bill, and we feel that it is fair and well deserved.

MR. BERNARD McCUSKER, representing Conn. State Employees Association: Our Association is not opposed to the employees of these various institutions being cared for in their old age, but we maintain that the Retirement Act was made to protect our members. We are told that the system is running into poor condition, and feel it is a mistake to allow any additional groups to be brought in. We would have to go along on the cost, and we maintain that the state should go along with the increase. Prior to 1939 employees were taken care of out of the general fund. We have a large stake in this, and we don't want to end up without a retirement act, and we hope your Committee will recognize these facts.

REP. LITTLE: If you were a member of a Board of Managers of one of these institutions, how would you go about managing them?

MR. MCCUSKER: They are private corporations; they do not come under State jurisdiction, and their funds are not managed by Commissioner of Finance and Comptroller. Employees are not under the Merit System; in other words, they are not state institutions.

CHR. CORKEY: They are to all intents and purposes operated by state funds, and if they weren't in existence the state would have to operate similar institutions.

MR. McCUSKER: It is certainly going to cost something, and someone will have to pay for it. I think it will be harmful to our Association. I believe Mr. Beers stated there was a certain amount owing by the state to the Employees Retirement System. There is a deficiency in our fund at present. We've been contributing 2½%; now they tell us we must contribute 4%, but the state only contributes 50% of what is actually paid out.

MR. FLETCHER PARKER: We are sympathetic to the point Mr. McCusker has raised, but it is possible that the matter can be worked out and adjusted. If we are out of line, it may be that we might be able to vote funds from our endowment to take care of employees' back payments.

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MR. JOSEPH P. COONEY: Under the General Statutes the State Board of Education for the Blind can by Probate Court compel children to attend the Conn. Institute for the Blind, and the power of selection is not with the institute. The Institute is performing a state function, since if it didn't exist the state would have to run a school of its own. Of course it will cost something to include these employees, but it would be a very small portion of the whole fund. These people are largely career people, who receive low pay, and yet are specialists in their field.

MR. GRIFFIN, Council 398 Middletown Federal, County State and Municipal Employees Union. We are opposed to this bill. We are now being asked to contribute 4%, whereas the State is paying only 7/10 of 1%.

MR. MURPHY, Middletown Council 398. We are very much in favor of the principles of a pension system, but do not feel that this bill is written so that all angles are taken care of. We feel that the whole Retirement Act is in need of actuarial adjustments and a larger contribution on the part of the state; in which case it wouldn't be so costly to the fund to bring in a few extra groups.

Registering in favor of this bill were Rep. Dallas and Rep. Mahoney.

✓ H.B. No. 46 (Rep. Smith) AN ACT CONCERNING
ADJUSTMENT OF FORMER RETIREMENT
PROVISIONS.

MR. E. O. SMITH, Mansfield: This bill doesn't infringe on the Retirement System in any way, but was drawn up in the interest of a group of older former state employees. The matter came to my attention because of a number of friends of mine at the University of Connecticut, and the bill is intended to give this older retired group the benefit of the more liberal terms of the present act. The payments come from the general fund, and in no way affects the retirement fund. The group is rapidly diminishing, and I believe the cost would be only about \$10,000.

Registering in favor of this bill were Senator Alice V. Rowland and Rep. Frank O. Jones.

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CONNECTICUT
GEN. ASSEMBLY

HOUSE

PROCEEDINGS
1945

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PART 2
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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
The House of Representatives

Monday
May
Twenty-first
1 9 4 5

The House was called to order at 1:17 p. m. by the Speaker,- the Honorable E. Lea Marsh, Junior.

Prayer was offered by the Chaplain, the Reverend W. Dixon Hoag of Old Lyme:

Our Father, we are assembled to do the work of another week but before we assume the business on the Calendar we lift our thoughts to Thee that we may take our bearings. We would remember whither we would be bound and correct our wanderings away from our proper course. Too often in the storm of debate and the strife of tongues we lose our way. In this moment we would sight Thy fixed stars of Truth, and Right, and Wisdom, and resolve to follow them, Amen.

Favorable reports were received from the committees named, the bills read the second time and tabled for the Calendar and printing as follows:

APPROPRIATIONS - (committee bills) - House Bills No. 1200 and 1201.
BANKS - House Bills Nos. 639 and 866 (both substitute bills).
EDUCATION - House Bill No. 302 (substitute) and House Bill No. 670.
FINANCE - House Bill No. 30 and substitute House Bills Nos. 33, 511 and 683.
FISH and GAME AND SHELL FISH - House Bills Nos. 96 and 102.
CITIES AND BOROUGHs - House Bills Nos. 59, 977, 1164, 1165, 1168 and 1172.
also substitute House Bills Nos. 347, 496, 666 and 914.
JUDICIARY - House Bill Nos. 736; substitute House Bill No. 991 and committee bills Nos. 1202 and 1203.
PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY - House Bill No. 1057 (substitute).
PUBLIC PERSONNEL - House Bills Nos. 796 and substitute bills Nos. 200; 801 and House Bill No. 808,
PUBLIC WELFARE AND HUMANE INSTITUTIONS - House Bills No. 815 (substitute)

Unfavorable reports were received from the committees named, the bills were read the second time and tabled for the Calendar:

5.24.1945

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(Bills passed without debate continued.)

House Bill No. 30- An Act Concerning the Financing of Towns Pending the Adoption of Budgets. This bill was explained by Mr. Wochomurka of Willington, a member of the committee on Finance.

House Bill No. 96 - An Act Concerning the Killing of Deer. This bill was explained by Mr. Hammond of Waterford, a member of the committee on Fish and Game and Shell Fish. Mr. Curtiss of Norfolk inquired of Mr. Hammond as to the spelling of the word "deer". Mr. Hammond replied that it is spelled in two ways and that "Diana was able to get her deer and her man, both at the same time." Mr. Boyd of Kent inquired as to whether there were any extra charges for the use of the "bow and arrow". Mr. Hammond replied that the law included the use of the bow and arrow, whether "co-quiver or all aquiver". Mr. Hutchings of Harwinton inquired as to whether the law would permit deer to be killed with a club. Mr. Hammond referred the question to "our old friend, Laf Maine", for an answer.

House Bill No. 302 - An Act Concerning Authority to Confer Academic Degrees. This bill was explained by Mr. Sherwood of Newington, a member of the committee. On motion of Mr. Sherwood the bill was amended by House Amendment Schedule "A", as printed in the Journal for the day. (Education committee)

House Bill No. 683 - Finance committee - An Act Concerning the Taxation of Water, Gas, Electric and Power Companies. The bill was explained by Mr. Woodford of Avon, a member of the committee.

House Bill No. 796 - An Act Concerning Positions Exempt from the Classified Service. This bill was explained by Mr. Curtiss of Norfolk, Chairman of the committee on Public Personnel, who also explained -

House Bill No. 801- An Act Extending the Benefits of the State Retirement System to Employees of Certain State Aid Institutions.

House Bill No. 866 (substitute) Banks. An Act Authorizing Savings Banks to Make Personal Loans. This bill was explained by Mr. Stuart of Newtown, a member of the said committee.

House Bill No. 1165- Cities and Boroughs. An Act Permitting a Municipality to Remove Debris and Wreckage from Waterways and to Assess the Cost Against the Responsible Party. This bill was explained by Mr. Pratt, House Chairman of the committee.

The following Senate bills were taken from the table, read the third time, the reports of the committees named accepted and the bills passed without debate in concurrence with the Senate:

Senate Bill No. 132 - An Act Concerning Approval of Water and Sewerage Systems. The bill was explained by Mr. Pruyn of Colebrook, a member of the committee. On motion of Mr. Pruyn of Colebrook the bill was amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" and, as amended, the bill was transmitted to the Statute Revision Commissioner in accordance with the provisions of Joint Rule 1XA. Remarks were as follows:

The Speaker: The gentleman from Westport.