

**PA13-124**

SB0273

Children	54-55, 99-100, 116-117, 120-121, (121-122), 262- 263, 340, 342-343	14
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House	5142-5283	142
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Senate	818-836, 3815-3824, 3856-3857	31
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**187**

**JOINT  
STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
HEARINGS**

**CHILDREN  
PART 1  
1 – 307**

**2013  
INDEX**

46  
tk/gbr CHILDREN COMMITTEE

February 14, 2013  
11:00 A.M.

been extraordinary. I actually was dealing with a young person who was suicidal, and called 211 and it was amazing.

RICHARD PORTH: Thank you.

REP. URBAN: The help that we got, and the personal sort of leading me through the things that I needed to do in order to get this child to a place where she could be helped, and she wouldn't be another tragedy.

RICHARD PORTH: Thank you.

REP. URBAN: So I really think you guys do a wonderful job, and I think that your suggestion is well taken.

RICHARD PORTH: I appreciate that feedback, thank you.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO: Questions from other members? Thank you very much, sir. We appreciate your testimony.

RICHARD PORTH: Thanks very much.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO: Okay. We will now have Jamie Bell, and I will be excusing myself and leaving you in the hands of Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN: Welcome, Jamie.

JAMIE BELL: Thank you. Good afternoon, Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, and distinguished members of the select committee on children. I'm Jamie Bell, the acting child advocate for the State of Connecticut. I'll be speaking primarily today about the Office of the Child Advocate Support for Senate Bill 652, but I also want to state for the record

that the Office of the Child Advocate also supports 273, 821, 650 and 169

The mandate of the Office of the Child Advocate includes delivery -- includes evaluating the delivery of state-funded services to children and advocating for policies and practices that promote their well being and protect their special rights.

So over 50 percent of the work that we do, including response to individual calls for assistance and information, and individual and system advocacy seeks to improve access to developmental health services for children and monitor the emotional, behavioral and overall health systems supports for children and their families across the life span.

Most of the children, adolescents and young adults with whom we work, are either placed in hospitals or residential treatment facilities committed to psychiatric hospitals or incarcerated within the juvenile justice or adults correction system.

The overwhelming majority of those children and young adults were involved with the Department of Children and Families at some point in their lives, and many of them were involved when they were infants and toddlers.

Senate Bill 652 will ensure that the children at highest risk for developmental delays, children who are neglected or abused, will be referred to an appropriate agency for assessment. National data indicates that children referred to the child welfare system for abuse or neglect have very high developmental and behavioral health needs regardless of the level of the child welfare system involvement.

91  
tk/gbr CHILDREN COMMITTEE

February 14, 2013  
11:00 A.M.

My testimony is based on many, many conversations with experts in the field in the last two months. But I think we need to look at it carefully and not just overreact, and go into places where, you know, all of a sudden children are going to be stigmatized at very early ages.

However, that being said, we have to have options for parents to seek out help, a place where they know where they can go get referrals, and we need the professionals in the field that currently are not there.

REP. URBAN: Maggie, I think you've made some very good points. If some of the studies and the pilots that you mentioned, if you have that -- if that material is in your testimony I'm not sure, but if you could make it available to us.

MAGGIE ADAIR: I can get that information, and I believe that Judith Myers from CHDI is going to be testifying today, so she will have plenty more information.

REP. URBAN: I am sure Judith will. Thank you, Maggie.

MAGGIE ADAIR: Thank you very much.

REP. URBAN: Kenny of Connecticut Voices for Children is next, welcome.

KENNY FEDER: Thank you, Representative Urban, distinguished members of the Children's Committee. I'm here today to testify in support of Bill Number 652, AN ACT CONCERNING REFERRALS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO THE BIRTH TO THREE PROGRAM. But I'd also just like to say for the record that Connecticut Voices for Children supports Bill

273, and opposes Bill Number 653.

Connecticut Voices for Children supports SB 652, which would require automatic referrals to Birth to Three for infants and toddlers who are victims of substantiated abuse and neglect, to ensure that they do not slip through the cracks, but receive developmentally appropriate services that they require.

Young children who are victims of abuse and neglect are far more likely to suffer from developmental delays than their peers, and indeed studies have demonstrated that a quarter of all young children with substantiated abuse and neglect who are placed in foster care have significant delays in their motor development, and close to half have cognitive or speech delays.

Further, research demonstrates that early intervention is essential to supporting children who suffer from disabilities and developmental delays. Despite this evidence, however, disabilities and delays are often under identified in a abused and neglected infants.

For this reason, in 2004 the Federal Child Abuse Protection and Treatment Act, CAPTA, was amended to require that all child protection agencies developed provisions and procedures for the referral of a child under the age of three who is involved in a substantiated case of abuse and neglect to early intervention services, such as Birth to Three.

Connecticut has referral provisions and procedures, as required by federal law, but its system for referring abused and neglected infants to Birth to Three makes it likely that

108  
tk/gbr CHILDREN COMMITTEE

February 14, 2013  
11:00 A.M.

So I'd like to call up Susan McGuinness, and I think she also has somebody with her, which we'll call afterwards, which is Patricia. So we're going to do Susan and then Patricia and then we'll return to the list. He is welcome to come up, Susan. Welcome, Susan, and --

SUSAN MCGUINNESS: Thank you.

REP. URBAN: -- what's your son's name?

SUSAN MCGUINNESS: Seamus.

REP. URBAN: Seamus, you've done a tremendous job. we really appreciate it.

SUSAN MCGUINNESS: Thank you.

REP. URBAN: And clearly you've done a wonderful job with him cause I didn't even realize he was here.

SUSAN MCGUINNESS: Thanks. I thought he was being too obvious, but hi. I'm Susan McGuinness Getzinger. I'm here testify -- I wish I'd brought my glasses -- I'm here to testify why I oppose nearly all bills being raised and proposed in today's Children's Committee of the Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council.

HB5567  
SB651  
HB6346 SB158  
SB169 SB273

I consider these raised and proposed bills to be errors and superficial proposals due to the withholding of the evidence by the State of Connecticut in the Adam Lanza case in Newtown. We're from Newtown, we have not received services from the school board in Newtown. We've had issues for years.

My focus is also the inherent conflicts of interest with the many vendors involved and members of the Behavioral Health Partnership

Oversight Council. And since the majority of Governor Malloy's appointed committee members, employers stand to profit from the proposed legislation presented, I oppose the majority of the bills.

My reasons are printed below, and I'll just get to the bullet points. Proposed Bill 5567, AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH. Again, Adam Lanza's records are sealed. We're never able to learn from sealed records. I think this is irresponsible. The retention schedule, which is in the back in my testimony, of school records, including medical and mental health and school records, they're -- the records and instructions for destruction of school records may be a factor in this case. The Board of Education law firms are agents of the school district, and so by law they're able to hold those records in at their law firms.

The retention schedule for mental health records has no requirements to maintain for any amount of time those mental health records. However, vaccine records are kept for 50 years. Connecticut school law is riddled with conflict of interest. Some law firms and elected officials have conflicts of interest directly associated with the Adam Lanza case.

Senator Chris Murphy's father is a partner at Shipman & Goodman, the law firm that represents the most school districts in Connecticut, 80 out of 169, and Tom Moony wrote the book that school board of eds use, and he is from Shipman & Goodman, as is the Attorney General George Jepsen.

Berchem, Moses & Deblin, another school law firm, represents 14 to 30 districts, depending

dollars. That's a huge incentive for moral and unethical conflicts of interest and recycling and building programs and kids are falling through the cracks.

One more bill if I may. I just wanted to say the FDA and the CDC recalls products continually. I have the list in the testimony. But they don't recall vaccines. Very problematic. Only taxpayers are liable to pay out for vaccine damages and death. So again, the taxpayers are getting stuck with the bill.

HB Number 6346, AN ACT REVISING VARIOUS STATUTES CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES. And I oppose this because Governor Malloy is protecting people who may be -- may abuse individuals by taking away the right to face your accuser in paragraph F.

I won't go into it, I'll just zoom through these. Number 158, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE ON THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL ABUSE. I oppose this because who is it that writes the curriculum? And the board of ed and parents at the local level are supposed to do this in Connecticut, and they're being manipulated by the attorneys with conflicts of interest.

169, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ASSESSMENT AND DELIVERY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND INTERVENTIONS. Again, we haven't seen the records. They might have been destroyed a long time ago. The whole retention schedule is rigged.

Number 273, AN ACT CONCERNING FOSTER CHILDREN AND INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES. I oppose this because the state vendors recycle foster children from the system back into the same state-funded system programs, and perpetuate a

113  
tk/gbr CHILDREN COMMITTEE

February 14, 2013  
11:00 A.M.

broken and allegedly corrupt system. And it's expanding and not breaking a negative cycle, and these are kids and families.

I know I think that it was sort of half a bell. I'm not sure what's going on over there. I think our bell --

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO: I heard the bell as well.

SUSAN MCGUINESS: You might want to put the (inaudible) into the bell, or just use an iPhone and --

REP. URBAN: Gotcha.

SUSAN MCGUINESS: You know. That might be saving --

REP. URBAN: If you could just wind it up, that would be great.

SUSAN MCGUINESS: So, okay. I'll wind it up, but I do -- I'm not against good things for kids. I'm against corruption and not using the money well, and not holding those already in place accountable. And I think you are decent people that would agree with that. So I thank you for doing this, and I wish you luck on your testimony.

But we really need to see the records, and I'm afraid they're already destroyed. He was born a little boy, Adam Lanza. What did we do to him? Did we vaccinate him and then drug him, and then sure, who wouldn't pick up a gun? Sad and lonely, it's very sad.

If you really want to stop this from happening again, and you're gonna give earlier childhood education and mandate they have vaccines, and they're saying mental health for a baby who's zero? Really? Goo-goo gaga is now a problem?

114  
tk/gbr CHILDREN COMMITTEE

February 14, 2013  
11:00 A.M.

I don't think so.

REP. URBAN: Thank you. Now wait just one second.

SUSAN MCGUINESS: Sorry, questions.

REP. URBAN: I want to see whether there are any questions or comments.

SUSAN MCGUINESS: How to do an epi pen? I can show you.

REP. URBAN: No, no, that's okay. But we do have your written testimony?

SUSAN MCGUINESS: Yes.

REP. URBAN: Okay. Thank you. Because you said some very interesting things, and I really, really appreciate you coming here. You are very passionate about this and I know you've been through a lot so we are going to pay very special attention to what you've brought to us today.

SUSAN MCGUINESS: I appreciate that.

REP. URBAN: I appreciate your testimony.

SUSAN MCGUINESS: Thank you very much.

REP. URBAN: And I believe because I think you guys are -- must be sort of together, but Patricia, if you'd like to come up and testify?

PATRICIA SABATO: Good afternoon.

REP. URBAN: Fine. And if you can state your name for the record so we're sure we've got it.

PATRICIA SABATO: I'm Patricia Sabato. I'm a Sandy Hook mother. I'm also an advocate certified

SB 169 SB 822  
HB 5567 SB 650  
SB 653 SB 260

SENATOR MARTIN M. LOONEY  
MAJORITY LEADER

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*New Haven & Hamden*



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February 14, 2013

Good Morning Sen. Bartolomeo, Rep. Urban and members of the Children Committee. I am here to testify in support of SB 273, AN ACT CONCERNING FOSTER CHILDREN AND INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES.

This bill, which is similar to legislation passed in California, would assist foster children who are, until the age of majority, in the custody of the Commissioner of Children and Families and placed in foster care. This legislation would give preference to qualified applicants, who have been dependent children in foster care, in hiring for or placement in internships with state agencies. This provision, similar to the preference given to veterans in certain employment situations, will allow certain foster children to gain applied work experience which will assist them in successfully seeking employment.

This is a small change with no fiscal impact but it would assist young adults who often face a challenging path. In fact, the January issue of *State Legislatures* magazine cites a recent study which found that nationally 63% of former foster children do not earn a high school diploma or GED, 24% have no earned income in the first two years after leaving foster care and by age 19, 30% of the young male former foster children are incarcerated. These are children who need our help. Thank you for considering this important legislation.

Testimony Supporting S.B. 273: AAC Foster Children and Internship Opportunities  
Testimony Supporting S.B. 652: AAC Referrals from the Department of Children and Families to the Birth to Three Program  
Testimony Opposing S.B. 653: AAC the Department of Children and Families and Out of State Placement for Children Under the Purview of Such Agency  
Kenny Feder  
Children's Committee  
February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, and distinguished members of the Children's Committee:

My name is Kenny Feder, and I am testifying today on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based public education and advocacy organization that works statewide to promote the well-being of Connecticut's children, youth, and families.

**Connecticut Voices for Children supports state agencies giving internship preferences to youth currently or formerly in the custody of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) at the age of majority, as proposed by SB 273.**

Alumni/ae of the foster care system are less likely to have completed high school and college than their peers, and less likely to have close connections to a family member.<sup>1</sup> Without the valuable skills and credentials provided by a degree, and without connections to the workforce that family often provide for children who grow up in more traditional homes, many youth who have experienced foster care struggle to find employment after "aging out" of care. In fact, one longitudinal study of youth who had been in foster care found that only 50% were employed at age 24.<sup>2</sup> However, evidence shows that foster youth who have work experience are more likely to find employment in early adulthood after exiting care.<sup>3</sup>

Parents play an essential role in helping their children gain access to jobs and develop employable skills. For a child in foster care, however, the State of Connecticut (through DCF) has become the statutory parent. As a "parent," therefore, it should, *whenever* able, provide these children with the chance to learn the same skills, and have the same work experiences, as their peers. Giving internship preference to youth currently and formerly in foster care will help assure that these young men and women will have the opportunity to become workforce-ready, and not lose that opportunity just because they were placed in foster care.

<sup>1</sup> See, Mark Courtney, et al., *The Midwest Evaluation of Former Foster Youth*. Available at <http://www.chapinhall.org/research/report/midwest-evaluation-adult-functioning-former-foster-youth>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> See, The Urban Institute, *Coming of Age: Employment Outcomes for Youth Who Age Out of Foster Care Through Their Middle Twenties*, 2008. Available for download at <http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CDIQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Faspe.hhs.gov%2Fhsp%2F08%2Ffosteremp%2Freport.pdf&ei=jw8bUYbpN1eo9gSC-4DAAQ&usg=AFQjCNGCtd5eqvecXDdrZxkfN73mBIetxQ&sig2=4Z3c5ZzYGvm8WRreWNAuLqQ&bvm=bv.42261806.d.dmQ>.

**JOINT  
STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
HEARINGS**

**CHILDREN  
PART 2  
308 - 641**

**2013**

**Children's Committee Testimony Hartford, CT****February 14, 2013 at 11 am room 2b**

I, Susan McGuinness Getzinger, am here to testify why I oppose nearly all bills being raised and proposed in today's Children's Committee of the **Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council**.

I consider these raised and proposed bills to be errors and superficial proposals due to the withholding of evidence by the state of Connecticut in the Adam Lanza case in Newtown, CT.

My focus is the inherent conflicts of interest with the many vendors involved as members of the **Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council**.

Since the majority of Governor Malloy's appointed committee member's employers stand to profit from the proposed legislation presented, I oppose the majority of the bills presented. My reasons are printed below each bill, but I will only go over a few due to time restraints.

\*Proposed H.B. No. 5567 AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH.

**I Oppose because - Adam Lanza's records are sealed. We are never able to learn from sealed records. It is highly irresponsible to continue to seal Adam Lanza's records.**

The retention schedule of school records and instructions for destruction of school records may be a factor in this case.

Board of Education (BOE) law firms are agents of the school district and so they are able under present law to keep school records on their premises.

**The retention schedule for mental health school records in Connecticut has no requirement to maintain for any amount of time those mental health records or any staff notes or paperwork involved., though vaccine records are to be maintained for 50 years. (M8-380 & M8390) <http://www.cslib.org/publicrecords/reteduction.pdf>**

**Connecticut school law is riddled with conflicts of interest.**

Some Law firms and elected officials have conflicts of interest in the Adam Lanza case, for instance:

**Senator Chris Murphy's father is a partner at Shipman & Goodwin, the law firm that represents the most CT school districts in educational hearings where the districts, using tax dollars, fight against children and families. They represent 180 of the 169 Connecticut towns, including Newtown, CT.**

**Attorney General George Jepsen came from the law firm of Shipman & Goodwin.**

**A Shipman and Goodwin attorney, Tom Mooney, "wrote the book" that BOEs use for school law. This is a conflict of interest that steers tax dollars to the BOE attorneys instead of towards services for children in need.**

**Berchem, Moses and Devlin school law attorneys represent anywhere between 14 and 30 of the 169 districts in Connecticut. They have represented Newtown, CT and so, they may retain school records as agents of the school district, including Adam Lanza's.**

**This information may be why Adam Lanza's records are being sealed. To hide the inadequacy of the records retention policies and procedures in Connecticut schools and any law firm**

send signals to all parts of the body. (See notes re: fats and myelin at bottom of testimony).

Some infectious diseases affecting the brain are caused by viruses and bacteria. Viral or bacterial causes have been reported in multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease, and are established causes of encephalopathy, and encephalomyelitis.

Symptoms of nerve dysfunction include, but are not limited to: ADHD, Autism, Learning disabilities and countless other impairments.

Then, instead of accommodating the children in their care, school Administrators and their BOE attorneys, with the help of CT DOE employees, fight families with local tax dollars that might better be used FOR the children's needs, instead of the attorneys' billable hours. Controlling 68% of local tax funds proves to be an immoral incentive to strip children of their rights in Connecticut public schools.

Further conflicts of interest are in the very members of this Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council"

Council members from pharmaceutical companies, including Boehringer Ingerheim (BI), have conflicts of interest, as do many vendors of this Council. BI state on their website that they are looking for new product opportunities and they have partnered with a vaccine manufacturer, a clear conflict of interest.

Children and families are vulnerable to the undisclosed conflicts of interest that this and the other bills create.

The FDA and CDC recall products, when death and injury occurred due to unsafe products, except in the case of vaccines.

Only taxpayers are liable to pay out for vaccine damages and deaths.

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H.B. No. 6346 (RAISED) AN ACT REVISING VARIOUS STATUTES CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

I Oppose because - Governor Malloy is protecting people who may abuse individuals by taking away the right to face your accuser in paragraph f: "(f) The name of any individual who reports suspected abuse or neglect of a child or youth or cooperates with an investigation of child abuse or neglect shall be kept confidential"

\*Proposed S.B. No. 158 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE ON THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN. -

I oppose because - WHO IS IT THAT WRITES THE CURRICULUM? THE BOE AND PARENTS - THIS IS A LOCAL DECISION, NOT A STATE DECISION.

\*Proposed S.B. No. 169 AN ACT CONCERNING THE ASSESSMENT AND DELIVERY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILDREN.

I Oppose because - those with conflicts of interest make The Assessment and they stand to financially gain when people are diagnosed with mental illness.

\*Proposed S.B. No. 273 AN ACT CONCERNING FOSTER CHILDREN AND INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES.

I Oppose because - State Vendors recycle foster children from the system back into same state funded system's programs and perpetuate a broken and allegedly corrupt system.

expanding, not breaking a negative cycle. Private internships are available across the nation. Tax credits might be considered for businesses (without government contracts) sponsoring foster children.

\*Proposed S.B. No. 650 AN ACT CREATING A PARENTS' SUPPORT HOT LINE FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN EXHIBITING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ISSUES.

I Oppose because - unless it is tied to MEDWATCH - the adverse drug reactions will go unchecked.

\*Proposed S.B. No. 652 AN ACT CONCERNING REFERRALS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO THE BIRTH TO THREE PROGRAM.

I Oppose because - Direct referrals are being ignored. The Child Find Law is being ignored in districts in Connecticut

\*S.B. No. 821 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANDATED REPORTERS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT.

I Oppose because - any act regarding mandating reports are easily manipulated to keep parents in line in districts that are hostile to families and have school attorneys to do the bidding of the administrators that might be seeking vengeance upon families.

\*S.B. No. 822 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING INTERVIEWS OF CHILDREN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DURING INVESTIGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT.

I Oppose because - this is a clear and obvious attempt to usurp from the parents their the God given parental authority. Interviews with children without their parents give the opportunity for strangers to intimidate children who will say anything to please their interviewers to stop the line of questioning.

This creates a scary and hostile environment for children and their families.

\*S.B. No. 832 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING FAMILY ASSESSMENT CASES.

I Oppose because - who are the hired people doing the assessing? Trust has been broken in the Connecticut state agencies where families and children are concerned.

\*S.B. No. 833 (RAISED) AN ACT ADDRESSING THE MEDICAL AND EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN.

I Oppose because - This is nothing more than a witch hunt for parents. Parents, private doctors and local Boards of education (sans their attorneys' puppeteering) are supposed to be doing this, but those in positions to profit from the allegedly corrupt educational and medical system have already abused it. People on the inside designed, created and now manage this allegedly corrupt system of drugging and not educating our children in Connecticut public schools.

All Council members need to give in writing (on all pages of all documents) to the public and families involved full financial disclosure and any professional conflicts of interest in the past, presently or near future, including attorneys' projected billable hours, before every comment or input they give and any and all decisions they make. The public needs to fully understand the relationships of the committee members and of their personal and commercial financial gains that are in store for them if the CGA passes this legislation.

Since pharmaceutical companies bear no liability for vaccine damage and, as of January of this year, the CGA hastily put forth a bill to protect psychiatrists writing prescriptions in the same manner, how can the taxpayers, let alone families and individuals, trust such a system

**H – 1164**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2013**

**VOL.56  
PART 15  
4856 – 5209**

open and on the Capitol grounds that they may want to move them over to the LOB Garage, and we'll suspend any business in the meantime so don't rush but, apparently, these are coming in the next 15 or 20 minutes so just to be prudent.

So the Chamber will stand at ease for 15 minutes.

(Chamber at ease.)

(Deputy Speaker Ritter in the Chair.)

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Will the House please return to order?

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 373.

THE CLERK:

Madam Speaker, on page 15 of the House Calendar,  
Calendar Number 373.

SB 273

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban, you have the floor, ma'am.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

The question before the Chamber is on acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

Representative Urban, you have the floor.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I believe that many of us have been at some of these symposiums that the Department of Children and Families has run on our foster children and has listened to some of the experiences and the challenges that our children in foster care have experienced.

Madam Speaker, what this bill does is it gives preference in hiring for -- excuse me -- for internships -- to state internships to children who have been or are currently under our Department of Children and Families care. And, Madam Speaker, I would point out that in the January issue of State Legislature Magazine, a recent study found that nationally 63 percent of former foster children do not earn a high school diploma or GED and 24 percent have no earned income in the first two years after leaving foster care.

It would be our hope that if we give these children preference in internships in this state that

it would encourage them to complete their GED, to, perhaps, go on to technical school or college and become productive members and happy productive members of our society, madam Speaker, and I urge my fellow legislators to support it.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Thank you, Representative.

Will you remark further on this bill?

Representative Betts, you have the floor, sir.

REP. BETTS (78th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and good evening.

A couple of questions, if I could, to the proponent please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Please proceed.

REP. BETTS (78th):

In looking at this bill, it defines "preference" as giving it to somebody a priority over similarly qualified applicants. And through you, Madam Speaker, what happens if you have a foster child that does not have a high school degree and there's another person that does have a high school degree and they're both applying for an internship? Is that perceived to be similarly qualified, or is there another way of

defining -- is it equally qualified or similar?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, to the good ranking member of the Children's Committee, it would depend upon exactly what the internship was for. We have many different available internships in this state, and I would expect that if the internship would be commensurate with the experience and education of the child because we would not want to set them up to fail.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Betts.

REP. BETTS (78th):

Thank you for that answer.

And are these internships paying positions?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, it is my

understanding they are like the internships we do with our present students where they get a stipend.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Betts.

REP. BETTS (78th):

Thank you very much.

Are we, through you, Madam Speaker, for purpose of legislative intent, is the committee going to be getting a report from DCF on how this program is working so that we'll have an understanding of its impact, good or bad?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I would be happy to include this in the Children's Report Card, and I do think that the commissioner has been amazingly forthcoming in having symposiums on these particular issues so it would be my expectation we would get that information but I am happy to include it in the Children's Report Card.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Betts.

REP. BETTS (78th):

I thank you very much.

I am keenly aware of the problem here with the foster children, but I am concerned that we make sure that it's on similarly qualified applicants and not people who have, perhaps, slightly better qualifications than the foster children, but I had supported this bill in the committee. I will be supporting it here now, especially, as I know that we're going to be getting your report to find out how this program is working and I thank the chair --

8147 end of part 3 cjd

8147 begin part 4 cjd

REP. BETTS (78th):

-- for answers, and I ask other people to support this as well.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Sawyer, you have the floor.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, a question, through

you, to the proponent of the bill?

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Please proceed.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

In looking at this bill, would you say that relatively equal candidates that a foster child would then have an edge over, say, a returning veteran of Iraq or Afghanistan?

through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I would think that would be an extraordinarily unusual situation that you would have a returning vet and a foster child vying for the same internship, and I would certainly hope that we would be able to accommodate both of them.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Maybe I should ask the question another way.

Through you, Madam Speaker, if it were -- say there is

someone who is handicapped and they are vying for this particular internship. They are the same approximate education level and have the same background or interest that might be relevant to the internship, would the foster child then have opportunities above the handicapped person?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, the spirit of this bill is recognizing the extraordinarily difficult emotional situations that our foster children have been through, whether it's living in three, four, or five different homes and trying to cope with getting their lives together. I would think that a handicapped person's challenges are not exactly the same as the foster child's so it would be my understanding that this bill would, indeed, look at preference for the child who has had the incredible emotional stress of being in and out of foster care.

Through you, Madam Chair -- Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you and I thank the gentlelady for her answers.

In this case, ladies and gentlemen, I would say that if we looked at ADA, perhaps, this flies right in the face the federal ADA law.

I would also say, ladies and gentlemen, that if I think that it flies in the face of those returning veterans who have post traumatic stress syndrome, if you want to talk about someone who has been in a very difficult life-altering situation. And those are only two examples that I can think of off of the top of my head and that is not to make light of those children who have struggled from oftentimes early, early childhood, sometimes from infancy and have not had a stable placement and have struggled to get to where they are today, but that doesn't mean, Madam Speaker, that we ignore those people who also have struggled and have had struggles that we can't even begin to imagine because we can't compare them to our lives.

So, though, I like the idea, I think that it is a problem when you look at ADA, when I think it's a problem when you're looking at returning veterans, many of whom are looking to get lives back together to

begin a civilian life and need an internship opportunity to be able to fill out a resume, and they, too, have struggled and had amazing adversities.

I will be opposing this bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Thank you, Representative.

Will you remark further? Will you remark further on this bill?

Representative Klarides of the 114th District, you have the floor.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Here we go. Thanks, Madam Speaker.

Through you, I have a few questions to the proponent of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Please proceed.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I see, in line 2, when we talk about preference, it says "preference means priority over similarly qualified applicants." Through you, Madam Speaker, does that mean that they would automatically get it?

So if there was a child that fit into this category that was a foster child and another child that was not, how are we actually defining "preference" in this bill?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I think that it was just very well defined by what you just said. Yes, it's clear that it would be given preference to a foster child.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

But it's my understanding that preference is not necessarily automatic. But from the comments made from the -- excuse me -- the chairwoman, I think she just explained that it would be automatic that there would be a choice, through you is that correct?

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I'm sorry if I gave you that impression. I think the word "preference" leaves some room if there is a problem or there is an issue where the fit is not a good fit, that it would allow that there would be some ability to say that, perhaps, this wasn't going to actually work for that particular foster child.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, so it is not automatic. That's what we're saying?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd)

Through you, Madam Speaker, yes, that is what we're saying.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And, through you, just for my own clarification and maybe because I'm not as understanding of this issue as I should be but, in lines 3 through 7, when we talk about an internship at an agency to any individual up to 24 years of age who is or was at the age of majority in the custody of the commissioner of Children and Families. If somebody's a foster child, that does not terminate at age 18? Is that true or not true?

Thank you.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd)

Through you, Madam Speaker. It can be up until age 24.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I apologize if the chairwoman could repeat that. I was -- there was some noise on this side. I couldn't hear.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban, would you wait one moment please.

I would ask members to please do their best to keep their conversations either to a minimum or to take them outside to the hall. The members cannot hear responses.

Representative Urban, did you hear the question from Representative Klarides.

REP. URBAN (43rd)

Yes, Madam Speaker, I heard the question.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Please respond.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Yes, I will be glad to respond. It can be up to age 24.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

So you can be a foster child up to age 24?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban, would you care to repeat that answer?

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, yes, you can be in foster care as a foster child in the care of the Department of Children and Families up until the age of 24.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And once again, because I'm not as familiar with this. Does the status of being in foster care change at all once you turn 18, or is it, you know, technically speaking, under our state agencies, is somebody in foster care at age 18 or 17 the same as it would be at 24?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

I'm not exactly sure what the good representative is looking for. We do keep children in foster care who -- between the ages of 17, 18, and 24 oftentimes because they're in an educational program, they're in a technical program, they are in a program that is

helping them cope with their lives so it's on a basis  
-- case-by-case basis.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I thank the chairwoman for that answer. It  
clarifies it for me.

I guess one last question, what circumstances  
occurred to get us to the point where we thought this  
was necessary?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker -- and I certainly  
appreciate that question. We've had symposiums where  
the commissioner of the Department of Children and  
Families, Commissioner Katz, has had experts come in  
and talk to us about this. But even more poignantly,  
we have had foster children come in and talk to us  
about their challenges. The fact that they have not  
been able to see their siblings -- and that's one of

the other issues that we tackled last session -- the fact that they feel that they have no support system. They don't have a family, and families are usually essential in a person's first job, a person's decision to go to school.

So there were multiple symposiums where we heard from the children themselves backed up by experts in the field and then using the statistics that I quoted in the beginning about the abysmal number that actually get GEDs or actually able to have jobs to support themselves once they get out of foster care.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And through you, I certainly sympathize with the plight in that regard. I guess I'm just not following and maybe I'm missing it how that translates to not being able to get an internship. If the chairwoman could clarify?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I think it's that people get internships as a way to find out whether that is a particular job that they think they can do, and it encourages them to go on in that field whether it's an internship as a intern in the House of Representatives or it's an internship as in a clerical job or it's an internship in the library, wherever that happens to be, it's almost like a training ground for a future job. So in speaking with these young men and women and talking with the experts on foster care and foster children, it was deemed appropriate that this would be a terrific step to giving them a avenue to a productive job and life.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

I certainly appreciate the answer as to the benefits of internships, and I understand and I think that the chairwoman wasn't clear on the question and I'll try and rephrase that to make it a little clearer.

I understand and we all understand, whether it's

this group of people or in school or whatever area where we're talking about. Internship is a great opportunity to discover what you might be interested in, what you might be good at, et cetera. But I guess my question, unless I missed the answer is, how did we find out that people in foster care, in particular, were having difficulty getting internships and, therefore, necessitating this bill?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd)

Through you, Madam Speaker, I apologize if I misinterpreted the question. We found out through the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And just for a little more specifics what information was that that the Commissioner came through -- I guess, I'm just -- I certainly appreciate trying to help children that are in need of help or

people that are in need of help. I guess I'm just interested in how the Commissioner came to find this information and get it to us.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I can only believe that she made inquiries and then she came to the Children's Committee and talked to us about the inquiries that she had made, but I can also attest to the fact that when I spoke with these kids myself that some of them are afraid to apply for an internship. They're not sure how to do it. They need support to do it so they just let it go like a child that doesn't have a parent there to help them and to encourage them and, of course, the Commissioner of DCF does become the substitute parent, basically, for our children that are in foster care, as well as DCF care. So as their parent in absentia, the Commissioner felt that with the information that she had received about these foster care kids that it would be helpful to give them preference when they're applying to an internship.

Through you, Madam Chair -- Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Chairwoman for her answers.

You know, and I guess I'm a little bit torn because I can appreciate the need for children who may not have the parental or the guardian direction and help that some other kids may have. I guess I'm just a little bit torn over the fact that we have lots of kids out there or young people, at the very least, who may not necessarily be in foster care but may not necessarily have that guidance to help them or that self-esteem or the strength to know how to do it and we're not identifying them in a certain way. So although I appreciate us trying to help this group of kids, to give them preference over other kids who may be just as in need but not be called something, in particular, I have difficulty with.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Thank you, Representative Klarides.

Representative Zupkus, you have the floor, ma'am.

REP. ZUPKUS (89th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

A question, through you for the proponent of this bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Please proceed.

REP. ZUPKUS (89th):

Thank you.

In looking at this bill for hiring individuals and placing them for the internship programs, I know when I have interviewed people or have been to interviews myself there are certain questions that you can't necessarily ask, for example, age being one of them. And I'm curious to know how do you know that these children were in foster care or coming from foster care?

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, because this specifically applies to state agencies. They would be privy to that information. It's specifically for State agencies. It's not for internships any other place but State agencies.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Zupkus.

REP. ZUPKUS (89th):

So, just to be clear, if a foster care child is coming from a state agency -- or from the foster care program and myself are interviewing for the job -- again, I'm just not sure. Do they tell this state agency, "This is a foster care child"?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, it's my understanding it would be part on their application. On their application they would indicate that they were a foster child.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Zupkus.

REP. ZUPKUS (89th):

Great, thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Candelora, you have the floor, sir.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I guess I just have one question to the proponent of the bill, if I can. It might have been asked. But these internships, do they include paid and unpaid internships?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I think I characterized it as stipends as what we do with our kids that are here on their internships.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the answer.

I guess, Madam Speaker, I struggle with this bill because, again, it's very well intentioned but what we're doing here today is, yet again, we're sort of picking winners and losers for assistance.

If individuals happen to be under foster care,

then they're going to be given preference to the same hard working children in our state that might be working toward a future career in the State of Connecticut.

And I recall, and I think it was passed into law a number of years ago, that we give foster children free or subsidized in-state tuition in order to further their higher education careers. We already -- the adolescent ages provide for a free public education to all of our children, and I think we recognize the fact that these foster kids might need a little bit of an edge in society to help them out in their careers, and I think that's why we passed that measure to allow for these individuals to get a little bit of a jump start by giving them an opportunity to go to college and the State of Connecticut picks up that tab. And now we're taking it one more step further by now giving them preference to internships. And I have a hard time taking it that next level because I do think that any individual, any child, that goes to our education system, whether they come from the suburbs or they come from the inner cities, whether they come from wealth or they come from poverty, they all should get that same chance after

they get a college diploma in Connecticut to get one of these internships.

And to say just because individuals, a foster child, that they're going to get preference over some particular area in government that other individuals interested in and I have a hard time with. Because I also look at, there are some opportunities in government, in these state agencies, that are really offered nowhere else. So it's not as if there's an equal playing field somewhere in the private market. There is not. In particular, I think of DEEP and all of the different areas of the environment that it covers from marine biology, and so forth, and I don't think there's a lot of opportunities, necessarily, for somebody to go out and look for a job in the private sector so these positions are fairly scarce. And it's not as if these are necessarily generic positions that are a dime a dozen.

And for me to say that I think that foster children in Connecticut should be given preference over an individual that might have come out of poverty and worked hard and paid for their college tuition and got through the system, then they are not going to be on equal footing as a foster child that might have

been raised in a suburban home who had their college tuition paid for by the State of Connecticut. I just think it's getting a little arbitrary, and I just don't think we should be going down this path. And it's unfortunate that it is coming down as a Senate bill and this may become law in the State of Connecticut because I just think we're moving too quickly.

Thank you

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Rebimbas, you have the floor, ma'am.

REP. REBIMBAS (70th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I also struggle with this bill that's before us.

Through you, Madam Speaker, to the proponent of the bill, if I may.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Please proceed.

REP. REBIMBAS (70th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As I'm reading the bill before us and it talks about preference, and "preference" is defined as a priority over similarly qualified applicants. What

is, I guess, the intent or the problem that we're trying to address with this bill?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I believe what we're trying to achieve here is these foster children have been victims of abuse and neglect and that's why they've been taken out of their homes, or they have been abandoned and have been taken into foster care. So the statistics show us that they rarely graduate from high school, they're rarely able to support themselves or have a job two years after leaving foster care. And the other statistics or studies -- and there have been longitudinal studies that have given us this information -- show that if we can encourage them like a parent would encourage them to do an internship, to get involved, and to find something that strikes a chord in them and that they want to pursue that we have the opportunity to give them a pathway to a productive life.

And I do go back and emphasize, through you, Madam Speaker, we have to remember that these children

are victims of abuse and neglect. That's why they've been removed from their homes. It's not that they've just been happy kids that we take and say, "Don't you want to live in another home?" It's an abuse and neglect or abandonment.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And through you, Madam Speaker, to the proponent of the bill. Aren't there children that are not victims of abuse and neglect that may be in foster care?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, yes, children that might have been abandoned. You can't just routinely say you want your child to be in foster care with somebody else.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank the gentlelady for her responses.

And, in fact, I would disagree. There are, unfortunately, for a variety of different reasons why parents do choose to put their children in temporary foster care. We do know that, again, economics of society, the ills of society, whether it's drug abuse or alcohol abuse, many parents do make the decision of putting their children with grandparents or other family members or even unrelated parents that would be foster parents. So it does happen.

So, again, if the intent is as previously stated that this is for those children in foster care that are victims of sexual abuse or neglect or physical abuse, there's no distinction in the bill before us regarding those children who are in foster care for other reasons. If I could just clarify and confirm that is the situation.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I'm sorry, Representative, could you just repeat the last part of that?

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'll be more than happy to. Hopefully I'll try to get it right and remember what I had said.

Certainly, if the intent of the bill is to provide a preference for foster children who are victims of sexual abuse, neglect, or physical abuse, and we do know that there are other children who are in foster care for other reasons, is there anything in this bill that makes the distinction?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, it's my understanding that there is not a distinction within this bill.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And I think that's unfortunate because then the bill doesn't achieve the intent because I would also submit that there's many children who are victims of sexual assault, physical violence, who never are placed in foster care. These are children who are probably repeatedly victimized in their own homes and continue to be, or these are then children that might end up homeless.

Through you, Madam Speaker, would this bill extend to children who are homeless?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, it doesn't but that's a great idea, and I would love to take that up next session with you.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Does this bill also include children from low-income households?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, this is confined to children in foster care. The feeling is that a low-income family does not necessarily mean it's not a successful loving supportive family.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And I'd also add that because children are in foster care doesn't mean that they are not in a home that's loving and that they can develop and then continue onto an internship or school.

I think it was previously submitted that for encouragement of adoption, children in foster care are either subsidized or provided with free college tuition, and again, that's encouragement towards adoption. What we have before us is a bill that truly

is picking winners and losers in this regard when it comes to children.

I cannot support this bill because I cannot look at two children standing before me, one that was sexually victimized and placed in foster care and another equally victimized sexually child that was not placed in foster care, may have had a loving home of a family friend, neighbor, family member. And I am going to tell one victim over the other, "Both of you are qualified for this internship, both of you applied for this internship."

The intent of the bill is to help those victims but the victim who was placed in foster care, that may actually have a leg up because they had a safe home environment that they were placed in -- "But you will have the preference over this other person, other child, that was equally victimized but may not have had the benefit of foster care."

Again, if we're going to reach the true intent of legislation, we need to make sure that it's evenhanded; otherwise, all we're doing is discriminating. And if I'm going to have statistics of who's going to be more likely than not to have an internship, which we all know more likely than not

will get a person a job or have a leg up and then getting on further in their education.

Let's talk about those children who are victims of other types of abuses: sex trafficking that were never place in foster homes; children from low-income homes that may not have the resources or the tools to have the ability to even apply on an application for an internship. Let's talk about children that come from homes that maybe English was a second language.

How are we choosing young children over others who may have similar struggles but for different reasons? It's very upsetting because I can't imagine that one person up here would not want to support the furtherance of any child's education, prosperous future possibilities for internships, schools, careers, jobs.

Let's give those children, all these children, all of them, the opportunities. Let's set up a center where children can go to whether or not you come from an intact family, a broken family, foster care -- the opportunity to go somewhere and be educated at how to apply to an internship. Let's get them the information and the resources that every single child treated equally should have the same opportunities.

And if there is something in their history that's prevented them from having the extra economic resources of a computer or a laptop, whatever the case is, then let's give them that resource through that center. But let's not pick children over other children. It's just inhumane. We're discriminating. I just don't understand it. I couldn't do it.

I cannot look at two children who both have, if the intent is to children who come from abused homes and say, "But, yeah, you had the benefit of foster care. You have the preference."

Shame on the other child for not having that added opportunity?

Madam Speaker, I cannot in good faith support the bill that's before us.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Perillo, you have the floor, sir.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Madam Speaker, good evening. Thank you very much.

I am struggling with this bill in many of the same ways that other of my colleagues have mentioned before.

Individuals, children who have been in foster

care, who are in foster care now, are not the only kinds of children who are challenged by one situation or another. As Representative Rebimbas, I think very, very eloquently said, there are so many children here in the State of Connecticut who have been disadvantaged in some way shape or form. Many, in fact, most of them, have never been in the foster care system. They've never had access to that safety net that we here, in Connecticut, have created. They've been left out of that system. They've not been let in. They've never been identified as having a challenge.

Yet, here in this case, we are choosing other children over them. As has been said before, we are choosing winners and choosing losers, and I do not believe that is something that we should be doing as a legislature. I do not believe that is something that we should be doing as a state.

Children in Connecticut, all children in Connecticut, do deserve access to the internships and jobs that we here offer. But we can't choose who has a leg up. We can't choose who has an advantage. We can't choose whose disadvantage is more important than another's. It's not our job, and it's not our right.

We have to give all children an advantage. We have to level the playing field, not choose who advances down that field more quickly than others.

We have to be responsible. We have to be stewards. We have to ensure that Connecticut's children have as many advantages as we can possibly offer to them, not disadvantage certain children to better advantage others. That is what this bill does before us today. It has us choosing winners. It has us giving some children an advantage and to the detriment of others.

I can't support that and, quite frankly, I don't think a lot of residents would want to support that. This is a very, very well-intended bill. This is a bill intended to help those who have been challenged, who have been disadvantaged. But, unfortunately, in offering that advantage to one group of individuals, it terribly disadvantaged another entirely important group of young people. And I don't think that's what we want. And it's certainly not what I want.

So, with that, Madam Speaker, I cannot possibly support this bill today.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Carter, you have the floor sir.

REP. CARTER (2nd):

Thank you and good evening, Madam Speaker.

You know, there are a lot of bills that come through this chamber and through these walls, we'll say that sound really great and this, obviously, was one of them. It's hard not to want to do something to help anybody who's been disadvantaged.

And as I've listened to the debate, you know, one of the questions that sticks in my head is who's disadvantage is more important than somebody else's?

You know, it's -- like we've talked about before, there's a lot of kids who have problems, a lot of kids who have tough upbringings and now what are we doing? We're saying, Well, we're going to help this group over those other kids. And I don't like the term "picking winners and losers."

What I feel about this bill that's particularly bothersome, and it's not a struggle for me. It's actually a clear this is the wrong direction to go. What bothers me about this bill is, are we really doing anybody any favors? Think about it for a second. How much do we have to give and how far do we go for anybody in our society who's had some sort of

disadvantage? We've given them school; we've given them, hopefully, a safe foster home to grow in; we've given them every advantage that we can at some point, but at some point we have to say, Go earn it, go out there on their own, go make something of yourself.

Now, as it's been brought up before in this chamber, there are a lot of kids who are competing for these kinds of opportunities, and I say that that's what we should be fostering. Just because somebody's had a disadvantaged upbringing doesn't mean that they're going to turn out badly. And I know we want to do everything we can to help them along and give them a leg up, but at some point, if we really, really want to do something right, we need to give them the opportunity that they can go out and they can compete. We don't need to, in this case, give them the internship over somebody else who is qualified and who has worked hard for it.

Why not go out -- for that matter, why not just hire them all as state employees? Why bother giving them the internship? Why don't we just hire them all on board for something and make them the priority for the state?

Now, I think it's a bad idea folks, I mean, for a

lot of reasons, but number one is there's no quality control there. What are we going to do? We're going to just give these folks any job we have available just because they were disadvantaged? And I have a real problem with that. If we really want to help people in our society, and in America for that matter, we need to do things that help them go out in society, compete for a job, make something of themselves, give them dignity but by just handing them these kinds of opportunities that they should be working for, I don't think we're doing them any favors. I really don't.

For that reason, I will not support this bill, and I wish I could, but we're going in the wrong direction, folks, and I see a lot in this session. I hope we can spend some time, slow down, and look at these bills before we push them along.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Miller of the 122nd, you have the floor, sir.

REP. MILLER (122nd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I have a few questions for the proponent.

Through you, Madam Speaker, I'm trying to get a

handle on foster children age 21, 22, 23, 24. How do they get into foster care at that age?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, for the most part, these are children that have been in foster care from a very young age. And I would also let the good representative know that it's the exception when a child stays with one family. The rule is that most times they have four to five to six different situations. And when we had the symposiums, that was the information that was given to us.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

REP. MILLER (122nd):

And through you, Madam Speaker, is foster care system expanding? Is it increasing every year or not?

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, we are doing our level best to increase adoption, but I think everyone in the chamber knows that once a child gets older,

it's much more difficult for that child to be adopted, particularly, when they've been going from one home to another and they have the emotional and developmental problems that the majority of our children in foster care suffer from.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Miller.

REP. MILLER (122nd):

And through you, Madam Speaker, what's the cost to the state to run this program?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, it's -- and I apologize. I don't know the exact stipends that would be exactly the type of stipend that we would be giving with our legislative interns. And in some cases, there would not be a stipend. It depends on what the internship consists of, but it would be that same stipend.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

And if I might add, there is a specific amount of

money that is set aside for this.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Miller.

REP. MILLER (122nd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Another question, with regard to state agencies, are there any state agencies that are excluded in giving these foster children a priority for being hired?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I do not believe that there are any state agencies that are eliminated from this.

And I would add, Madam Speaker, that we are passing this in concurrence with the Senate, and it was unanimous in the Senate. And I believe I forgot to say "in concurrence with the Senate."

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Miller.

REP. MILLER (122nd):

Thank you and through you, Madam Speaker, if a young individual has behavioral problems, would he be eligible to apply for a police job?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, that would be at the discretion of the person that was offering the internship -- or the agency -- excuse me -- that was offering the internship.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Miller.

REP. MILLER (122nd):

So state agencies, through you, Madam Speaker, would that include the State Police?

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I'm not aware of any internships that we give through the State Police.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Miller.

REP. MILLER (122nd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, are there any other agencies that deal with emotional problems on the outside? Could they apply for a job with that agency?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, the internships are pretty limited in this state so if there was a state agency where we were a bit afraid of the impact on the particular foster child, I think that would be taken into account.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Miller.

REP. MILLER (122nd):

Thank you. And through you, Madam Speaker, just a brief look on the Internet, statistically, college graduates who are foster children is 2 percent graduation rate; and also, 25 percent of foster children eventually become incarcerated. And also from some stats I found, 80 percent of the kids in foster care have emotional problems, behavioral

problems, development problems, so I'm just wondering how we can get these kids to be on a priority list for a job when they have some major problems that may exclude them from doing a good job if they do get hired.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I believe the good representative is referring to what is called "toxic stress" that these children are exposed to and that results in developmental delays and all sorts of issues. And the idea here is to get them in a safe environment, in a state internship, where they can experience some success, perhaps, be motivated to pursue and further their education in that area.

Of course, if someone had extreme issues, then they would not be eligible for an internship that would be at the discretion of the commissioner of the Department of Children and Families.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Miller.

cah/cjd/lgg/cd/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

231  
May 21, 2013

REP. MILLER (122nd):

Thank you. And through you, Madam Speaker, if 80 percent of these children have problems, and I guess, additionally, there's these foster kids who have alcohol and drug problems, as well, we're taking a chance by giving them priority for a job at a state agency, in my opinion. What are your thoughts on that?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban, did you hear a question?

REP. URBAN (43rd):

I believe that he asked for my thoughts?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Miller, do you need to rephrase your question please.

REP. MILLER (122nd):

The question was, what do you do with children who have alcohol- and drug-related problems? How do we deal with those people? Do they get on a priority list?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, that would be at the discretion of the Department of Children and Families commissioner and her staff.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Miller.

REP. MILLER (122nd):

And through you, Madam Speaker, so we're talking about a very small population of kids; is that true?

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, yes, that is true.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Miller.

REP. MILLER (122nd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I think I'm done. Thank you for your answers.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Our distinguished minority leader, Representative Cafero, you have the floor, sir.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, a few questions, through you, to the proponent of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Please proceed.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Through you, Madam Speaker, it's become apparent to me during the debate that the purpose of this bill is to give children who have had a rough time in life, who have been taken from their homes, their natural parents for a whole host of reasons, and put in a foster home, which is temporary by definition, maybe sometimes long term, but I believe at least at the outset not intended to be permanent, to give them an opportunity that many other folks have as interns in a state agency; is that correct?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Madam Speaker, yes, that is correct.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you.

Through you, Madam Speaker, the bill requires that these state agencies and the hiring authority within the state agencies gives reference to these foster children for these internship positions and further defines "preference" as meaning a priority over similarly qualified applicants; is that correct?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, yes, that is correct.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you.

Through you, Madam Speaker, if this bill were to pass and it could be shown that a state agency and its hiring authority within did not give preference to an applicant who was a foster child similarly qualified to other applicants, what happens?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, we would anticipate that the agency would follow the legislation that was passed by this august body, but I do not believe that there would be a penalty or anything along those lines. It would be in the assumption that we have asked them to do this and that they then would follow what we had asked them to do.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I would suggest to the chamber that every law we pass, we hope that people abide by. And this is a statute, if passed and signed by the governor is a law.

But the question I still have is if the hiring agency of the state authority does not give preference in contradiction to this bill, would that give the applicant a cause of action against that state agency for breaking the law?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, and I'm sure the good minority leader has heard this before. I'm not a lawyer, and I would not be able to make that determination from the language of the bill at this point.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I appreciate the gentlewoman's answers.

I happen to be a lawyer, and I will not profess to be an employment lawyer. But I do know this, lawyers make their money and practice their craft by representing people who have been wronged in the eyes of the law.

And what we are passing here is a bill that very directly says any state agency in the hiring of someone for the position of internship shall give preference to someone in the custody of the custody of the commissioner of Children and Families that was placed in a foster home. Clear as a bell. Short

bill, real clear, get it.

So the question becomes what happens if somebody -- and we know this happens -- disregards this statute and gives preference to someone else? I would argue that that would give that individual a cause of action against the state agency, a lawsuit, a claim as the case might be.

Now I don't know what the potential liability of that is, but I do know that it would put -- as all laws do that put a burden on the State, it would potentially put the State at risk if, in fact, they broke the law. That's why we make laws.

So I guess my follow-up question would be, from the eyes of the hiring authority, how would somebody hiring for the position of internship know that the applicant before them is a foster child?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, because these children would be coming out of the Department of Children and Families and they would be, sort of, ushering them through the process. They would be

asking that child to inform the future state agency that was going to consider them for the internship that they were indeed in the foster care program.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you.

Through you, Madam Speaker, let me get this straight. We're going to have foster children who might express an interest in serving as an intern for a state agency, walk into the state agency, upon application for that internship and say, By the way, I'm a foster child.

Is that the way it works?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I don't anticipate it working exactly that way, but I would anticipate that somewhere on the application the child would indicate that they were in foster care where it would ask their parents and they would not be able to give their

parents. They would be giving foster care parents.

Through you, Madam Chair -- Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, will there be a new application form developed that would have a box that one would check off saying that they are in the custody of the commissioner of Children and Families or a foster child?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I don't anticipate that happening.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

You see, here's the catch-22, ladies and gentlemen. The little I know about foster children -- and I know many. The whole reason that we find these children this foster home is to give them a sense of

normalcy, to give them a place of belonging, to make them feel not distinguished or different in a bad way from those that they go to school with or interact with.

I know, in schools, people don't walk in and indicate to their teacher or their classmates or in any other application that I know of to declare themselves a foster child because all they want is a sense of normalcy and belonging.

And yet, we've created, by the passage of this bill, this catch-22 situation wherein we put a burden on a state agency and their hiring authority to give preference to applicants who are foster children. And if they don't, they might subject themselves or their agency, state agency, to a cause of action by that applicant. And yet, we are relying, from what I'm hearing, on the applicant, possibly, volunteering the fact that they are a foster child or in the custody of the commissioner of Children and Families.

So basically we're saying, Hey kid, if you want this internship, you've got to let them know that you're a foster child.

And we're saying to the hiring authority, you better make sure you know whether or not all of the

applicants before you are or are not a foster child.

So picture that interview, folks.

"Hello, Johnny, I understand you're interested in working for the Department of Agriculture. We have a wonderful intern opportunity for you. We have a bunch of qualified applicants. But before I go any further let me ask you this, are you a foster child?"

In fact, any corporation or agency would be advised by attorneys of that agency, You better ask the question. And not only you better ask it. You better document that they answered it that way. So we're now going to introduce this formal process for fear of the state agency and its hiring authority to break the law to either develop an application wherein the applicant signs that they are a foster child. They make that declaration.

Folks, yet another classic example of a well-intended bill, a bill that wants to do a good thing for some kids that deserve to have a good thing done to them. But because we haven't thought it through, the very good thing we want to do could turn into a bad thing.

We've often talked in terms of whether it is illegal residence status, whether it is state aid

recipients, not forcing them to stigmatize themselves.

How many times have you heard that argument? By revealing to anyone in the school system or otherwise that they are, in fact, a state-aid recipient or unemployed or otherwise because we fear a stigmatization of that individual. We don't want to place people in an awkward position. We don't want to single them out. And yet, this bill requires just that on both, the part of the hiring authority and on the part of the applicant. They have to declare they're a foster child or the hiring authority has to ask whether or not they're a foster child and that fact has to be documented.

So as they enter that internship class for that particular summer or session or fall or period of time, they might have declared themselves and singled themselves out and stigmatized themselves if they feel that way as the kid who's the foster child. Is that what we want to do? Is that the purpose of this bill?

Now with all due respect, I know that Representative Urban indicated that this bill has unanimously passed the Senate. And with all due respect to my Senate colleagues, Good for them. We're the House of Representatives. We have more than two

weeks before session ends. If we believe that this bill could be made better that the good intention that it purports to do could be made better and clearer so that we don't have to allow a child to stigmatize themselves by declaring they're a foster child so we don't have to put a burden on the state agency in order to protect themselves from breaking the law, to ask whether or not the kid is a foster child, then let's change the bill. And we could send it back up to the Senate, and they would probably understand our common-sense concerns and pass it.

Just like we demonstrated nearly three hours ago when we took three bills with problems, we took a little time to make them better, and now they're on their way to the Senate. That's what deliberative bodies do.

This bill, as well intended as it might be, is written poorly. And the very people it hopes to help, it could potentially hurt. In fact, I would argue not even potentially. It requires -- it requires every applicant to declare whether or not they're a foster child and it puts a burden on the hiring authority to ask every single time and document it. Is that what we want to do? I think not. Let's fix this bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Willis of the 64th District, you have the floor, ma'am.

REP. WILLIS (64th):

Thank you very much, ma'am. I appreciate it.

I just would like to make some comments as the chair of the Higher Education Committee --

8147 end part 4 cjd

Start of Part 5 Lgg - Job 8147

REP. URBAN (43rd):

(cont.) -- that has looked at this bill in previous sessions. And I just want to paint the landscape of what we're talking about here. First of all, all of these children, young people, would have had to declare themselves as being a guardian of the state. Remember, they are within the Department of Children and Families. They are the State's responsibility. They are our responsibility. It is our responsibility to ensure that they're -- they're guided.

In order to be in this program, they would have already had to declare themselves because they're receiving financial assistance for college tuition

from DCF.

Let's talk about the numbers here. There are only 400-and-some-odd students that are fit into this category of -- every year of qualifying for financial assistance for college. Most of these students do not enter into our public schools or our private independent colleges. Where they end up is they are recruited by proprietary schools, for-profit schools, that's where they go. They go into certificate programs. They don't even go to our community colleges because no one's there to guide them. They need guidance and direction. They need our help. They're our responsibility.

So when I look at these numbers and how many of - - how many internships we would be talking about per year, we're probably talking about a number of students that we could put on one hand. This is a very small number of students. Every year it saddens me when I see the numbers that go off to for-profit schools, very expensive. The State pays for. They don't go into the community colleges. They watch the television, they get sucked into the marketing, come earn a career in whatever it is.

This gives them a little extra guidance, a very

small proportion of these kids. They really need our help. They're different. They've been disadvantaged. They've been adjudicated. They've been neglected. They've been abused or uncared for and have been committed to the Department of Children and Families for a good portion of their lives.

We are their parents, and we should do whatever we can to help them get over the finish line and that's having successful, happy lives as citizens of the State of Connecticut. And I think we will help some students, young people, be able to accomplish that.

I thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you for indulging me in those comments.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative O'Neill, you have the floor, sir.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

If I may, a few questions to the proponent of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Please proceed.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Is there anywhere else in our statutes or

employment laws and rules and regulations that govern state agencies where the state agency is required to inquire of the person about their parentage or how they were raised or who raised them, what their home life was like prior to the age of 18?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, was that prior to the age of 18?

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Yes. The question isn't being asked prior to the age of 18. The question is being asked about their life prior to age 18, which, as I understand it, is when foster care would normally end.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, this particular bill is directed at 18 to 24.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Yes. What I'm saying is someone who's -- let me give an example, is there anywhere else in our state statutes where, let's say, a 21-year-old showed up at a state agency looking for a job, we would ask them, in effect, were you a foster child, who raised you, how were you raised, what was your childhood like, what was your home life like, where we would ask those kind of questions where we would be forced to ask those kinds of questions?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker.

Other children are not asked this question because they're not in this program. They're not wards of the state. They are not being given financial aid. These children are guardians of the State through the Department of Children and Families so these children are a different category than a

normal kid that walks in at 21 and wants to get an internship.

Through you, Madam Chair -- Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Well -- but as I understand it, foster care would normally end at age 18; am I correct in that?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, no, you are not correct. It goes to age 24 if the child is in the -- a program through the Department of Children and Families and receiving aid from the State.

Through you, Madam Chair -- Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Okay. So that the -- the children we're talking about -- because I think at that point, at least it had been lost on me, that we're talking about children who continue in foster care at the time that the

internship is supposed to be granted. And that was not a point that I had and I had been listening to the debate for most of it that I had not recognized that that was what we were really talking about. I understood that the age that this was applicable to was age 24, but I didn't realize that they were still going to continue in foster care and were still dealing with the state of Connecticut throughout that time.

The second question I would ask is with respect to the internships -- because it says in the bill that this applies to any state agency, and we do have a definition in our statutes of what is a state agency, and that definition includes the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Branches. And I just want to clear that this bill was intended, for example, to apply to the Legislative Internship Program; is that correct?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, there are legislative internships, there are unpaid internships in DEEP,

there are internships in DPH and, through you, Madam Speaker, those are the ones that I can name off the top of my head.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

I'm sorry, Madam Speaker. I was distracted for a moment.

But with respect to the legislative, that this clearly -- is it -- is it intended to apply to the Legislative Internship Program?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Is the question is it solely for the Legislative Internship Program? If that's the question, the answer is it is for state agencies that offer internships, whether it be legislative internship here, whether it be DEEP, whether it would be DMV, whether it be DPH. It would be whatever agency offers an internship.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

**H – 1165**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2013**

**VOL.56  
PART 16  
5210 – 5544**

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And just so that I'm -- I'm clear in terms of the category of folks that we're talking about, I guess because, with most things, I assume that a person's recognition or being characterized as being a child ends at age 18 or, perhaps, 21, the people we're talking about are -- are going to be in a -- I guess, that they are already in a condition of sort of continued extended childhood it sounds like.

I guess maybe it would be helpful for me to understand a little bit better, what is the -- what are the criteria that have -- whereby someone would be at age 21 or 22 or 23 or 24 continuing to be a ward of the state? I think that that's what they would normally be called.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker.

They have been accepted into this program. We actually did have a young woman who was interning in

the Appropriations department who was a UConn student who was a ward of the Department of Children and Families and was enormously appreciative of the fact that she was allowed to continue until age 24 in the program. So it is being accepted into this -- into a continuing education situation, and as the good representative -- the good chair of the Higher Education Committee pointed out, when we don't do this kind of thing with our foster children, they're attracted to the programs that they see on the television that are privately -- that have to be funded not publicly and cost a great deal of money so really the -- the idea here is to get these children who are capable of this into our colleges or our community colleges.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I heard that commentary from the chair of the Higher Education Committee. I also heard her indicate that the total number of children -- or people -- because I think that at age 24 they should be

considered adults -- that the total number of people could be counted on one hand and -- and when I hold up one hand, I get a total of five persons that might be eligible for this program -- is -- that's the impression that I get that this isn't really all about -- and I assume that that's on an annualized basis, perhaps I should ask that question even though -- and I guess it would be directed to the Chair of the Higher Education Committee.

So, through you, Madam Speaker, when the reference was made to that the number of people that we're talking about could be counted on one hand, is that on an annual basis?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Okay. I assume that that answer was conveyed from the Chair of the Higher Education Committee?

Through you, Madam Speaker -- Mr. Speaker.

(Deputy Speaker Ryan in the Chair.)

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

You tried to fool me there, the two of you.

Quick two-step.

Mr. Speaker, was the -- the answer -- that one -- that answer came, I take it, from the Chair of the Higher Education Committee?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it was in consultation with us discussing whether we thought it was five or possibly ten, that it was kind of an arbitrary number but it was not many. So we could -- we can identify in specific years, five, but it's now always five, because it depends upon which kids are qualified a particular year, so we had a consultation.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Okay. So we're talking about -- about five people per year, maybe, five, six, seven, something like that. And I did hear the comments made by the Chair of the Higher Education Committee about how people in foster care are attracted by the advertising which is put out by for-profit career schools and the like. It's -- and I think it's a good thing that we try to make sure that the children of Connecticut and of the foster care system are not unduly attracted to these options. However, good they may be for some people, they may not be the best option and they may not be the -- an option that people should be choosing who have -- had a lot of trouble in their lives previously. However, it would seem to me that there are a lot more children in the foster care system than just five or six that come out of the system or hitting age 21 or hitting age 19 who've been in the foster care system. And it -- it would seem to me that this program, if one of its missions is to redirect children coming out of the foster care system who are hitting young adulthood away from expensive

and not necessarily the best option in terms of education for these for-profit career schools, that -- that would be better if the DCF actually provided as part of its program if it's going to hold people in the program for another six years past age 18, that if it provided guidance and the tools to evaluate how one would spend one's money or spend one's ability to get into debt to make sure that folks -- that all of the children coming out of foster care, not just five or six per year -- but that all of the children are given the necessary tools and training to be able to tell when they see something on television whether it's a product they should be buying or not, at least make them more aware of what the better values are that a place, like a community college, is a better value or that a place like a state university or the University of Connecticut is a better value for them, especially given that they've -- they don't have a family with substantial resources to fall back upon if things don't go well. And that, again, however well intentioned this program is, that if -- if that's the mission of it is to help people avoid making bad choices with respect to their educational dollars and to the debt that they're going to accrue by going to

some of these schools that advertise on television that -- that it would be far better if -- if we had a bill that said that DCF is going to educate the children in its custody about the values, relative values, of one type of educational opportunity versus another, and what it means in terms of accumulating debt to go out and borrow a lot of money in student loans and that sort of things for a number of years and then end up, perhaps, with not a marketable skill or -- or not a degree of any kind.

I guess I would just say that, you know, we're talking about these folks that are 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 years old in a way that seems like there's a protracted period of -- of adolescence or childhood that just continues. And I'm sure there are people that are that way who are not foster children where they keep on in not really being out on their own and having somebody, in effect, being wards of -- of the state or wards of someone else, but that -- I guess it raise serious questions about the program in its basic essence if, by age 21, these folks are not able to be on their own that they are still continuing in this program and that they're going to need this kind of preference program.

I have one other question regarding the preference so that I understand it better. It says, I believe, that they would have a preference over people who are -- let's see, give preference in hiring or placement in an internship at such agency to any individual -- I'm sorry -- "preference means priority over similarly qualified applicants." And when I look in the dictionary, it says "similar" means pretty much the same as, of like kind. And I'm just wondering what -- how -- how much of a difference is going to be allowed? How much of a variance needs to be -- is there to be tolerated when someone is similar? I mean, how do we define "similar" for this purpose? Is it just a kind of common dictionary type of concept. I mean, that's a somewhat subjective judgment that the agency who is making a decision about appointing an intern is going to have to make. So are we talking about what are the characteristics that makes someone -- two people similar and what distinguishes them?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I would actually like

to go back to a point that you made -- the good representative made. I would like you to know that DCF does do college counseling and they do inform these -- their -- their -- the children that are their wards of the opportunities and the differences in expenses but, like all kids, we can't actually make them do what we would like them to do, but they -- they diligently pursue the counseling end of that.

As far as similar, I -- I'm going to just have to go through you, Mr. Speaker, with the -- the dictionary definition of "similar," and I realize that similar is -- might be a tad subjective, but I do think that the word itself has a common meaning to people.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I'm assuming that the -- the population that we're dealing with, the early twenties, we're talking about people who are in college or just out of college. When we're talking about similarly qualified applicants are we talking about grades? Are we

talking about degrees pursued? What are we talking about in terms of similarity? I mean, what -- what's the generic characteristic we're talking about?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I think the nature of the internship would define that. An internship at DEEP is going to be different than an internship at DMV, which is going to be different than an internship in DPH. And a particular person applying for that internship would more than likely apply to an internship that in the -- as guided by the Department of Children and Families, their guardian, to an area that would interest and motivate them to go down a path.

As I said, the intern that I worked with in Appropriations was enormously interested in the Appropriations process and was majoring in finance, and it was an -- a wonderful internship for her and she was enormously appreciative of the chance.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well -- and without wanting to put too much pressure on that one individual experience that we seemed to have had with a particular foster student or a foster child who became an intern. Was that person someone -- did that person get a preference through our system here? Do we have a preference system built into the internship program here at the Legislature?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no. At that point in time, we did not have a preference situation. And this girl had done an amazing job after being in and out of five to six foster homes. But in having the symposiums that the Commissioner offered to us, it was very clear that the young woman that we were dealing with was certainly not the rule.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And just so I -- I understand, was this person --  
what was the age of this individual?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, she was 21.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Okay. So she was approximately the same age as  
most of the other interns that we -- we get here.

What would've been the circumstances under which  
someone would be 24 years of age and they would have  
been appearing as an intern -- it is -- what causes  
someone to continue to be subject to or eligible for  
the fostership program through the DCF?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, our foster children

much like our own children sometimes don't make it through college in the prescribed period of time, sometimes don't start college at the prescribed period or start a certificate program or start a two-year degree program so someone could be just finishing up a two-year degree program at 24.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Okay. Well, I guess that answers my questions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Santiago of the 130th, sir, you have the floor.

Representative Betts of the 78th, sir.

REP. BETTS (78th):

Thank you. Good evening, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not -- this is for the second time by the way -- I'm not going to be asking a lot of questions, but I think I'm probably as surprised as Representative Urban is about the length of this debate and the

number of questions that have been asked.

When I first stood up here I spoke in support of this bill. We had a public hearing on it. It being unanimously passed out of Children's and other committees, came down from the Senate unanimous, and I sat there and thought this was going to be a pretty straightforward bill. I think like all of us who had been listening, it said we want to do something for the foster children community and this seemed to be, frankly, you know, a pretty straightforward proposal with good intentions.

However, one of the first things I've learned tonight, this is my first experience at it, I've stayed here for the entire debate and I must say this has been one of the most enlightening experiences I've ever had. The Senate did not have the opportunity to hear the questions that were raised tonight, and they were very, very good questions, whether it was from the perspective of the agencies who are going to be responsible for interviewing and hiring individuals for internship and the subsequent challenges they would have to do to be able to follow that process, to the potential liabilities if they did not follow that process, to what Representative Rebimbas had said,

which really got my attention. For whatever reason, I had not considered other groups that were not foster children. People who have been involved with sexual trafficking, people who may have been children of alcoholic and abusive parents but were not foster children. I had not asked the question, were we picking winners and losers in our quest to try and help out the foster children community.

Now our eyes have been opened. These have been very, very important questions that not only are going to help us in terms of trying to achieve what the goal of this bill is but, more importantly, what we should not be doing.

If we move forward with this bill after all the questions and comments were raised tonight about this issue, I'll be deeply disappointed. These have been tremendously insightful and very significant issues that have been raised. And I know we are a deliberative body. We don't want to put anybody in an awkward position, and we certainly want to try and be thoughtful about what we're doing.

And as I said before when Representative Urban brought this out and I commented, I thought in supporting this, I thought this would be

straightforward. Obviously, it is not. And I really think we might be laying a case for people to challenge this based on the many questions that came up. But forgetting the legalities of it, how about just simply the moral and philosophical questions? I have a very strong bias for people in the foster children community because my father had gone through it so I know firsthand how difficult that life is, and I know the ups and downs to it. I know some other people who have had some good experiences with it. But for us to sit here and now make a state law on this policy, in my judgment upon hearing this debate, is a huge mistake.

I've been given, fortunately, the opportunity hear both sides of this issue now, and I have never before gone against myself in terms of supporting something I did as a ranking member. But for me to move forward now and say that I can support this bill based on what I've heard in this debate tonight would not only be irresponsible, it's something I simply can't do.

We are not making a decision tonight on foster children. We're talking about public policy that's going to have some obviously bad unintended

consequences, and we cannot claim ignorance in not knowing what those consequences are. This has been raised to our minds, it is now our challenge, our responsibility to do the right thing.

I would hope, and I would ask Representative Urban in the spirit of trying to work out a better situation, we know this is not a good bill, we know it, based on what we've heard. I would hope that this bill could be PT'd but if we need to pass and vote on this bill, I hope people fully understand what the ramifications are in doing so.

So, again, I hope we are not put into the position of having to vote on this. I would ask that we would really consider trying to improve this bill because if you really want to help foster children, this is not the way to be able to accomplish that goal.

So I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank Representative Urban. And again, I hope we will not have to be able to bring this bill to a vote and that we'll have time to be able to try and make it better to meet the goals that the committee wanted to do for the foster children.

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Thank you Representative Betts.

Representative Bowles of the 42nd, you have the floor, sir.

REP. BOWLES (42nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate it. I appreciate this opportunity to speak.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, there is one clarification I would ask of the proponent of this bill. When we're talking about all state agencies, does that also include the Department of Children and Families?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, if there are internships available, certainly.

REP. BOWLES (42nd):

Thank you very much --

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Bowles.

REP. BOWLES (42nd):

Thank you very much, that does clarify.

I do this rise in strong support of this bill. I do believe, in fact, it is very straightforward. And I speak as a foster parent of an 18-year-old young man. We have had several other young foster children in our care. I also speak as a former social worker with the State Department of Children and Families, at that time it was called the Department of Children and Youth Services, DCYS. And I can recall my first caseload as a treatment worker back in the early 1980s was a group of foster care adolescent males. And at that time -- and I'm talking about the state of Connecticut, I'm talking about young males going through -- essentially growing up in our care, that is the State of Connecticut's care, and our response in terms of youth to young adult transition, our response to these young men and women at the time were to literally give them 50 cents for bus fare and say good luck at the age of 18.

We have, in fact, come a long way, and I would suggest that this bill simply continues that process forward. And I would suggest that by virtue of the clarification I just received from the proponent of this bill that I would like to flip this around, that in fact that there are kids in -- young men and women,

young children, in our foster care system that could actually contribute, particularly to the Department of Children and Youth -- to the Department of Children and Families that their ability to somehow survive our system, a system that we created, the system that we took responsibility for, that we took them into custody, that we put them into foster care, that we have, as Representative Willis suggested before, we have a special obligation as representatives of the state of Connecticut to these children. And I would just suggest that by providing an internship to the Department of Children and Families or to any other human service agency or any other state agency, we are simply fulfilling a special obligation that we have to them. And in particular to the Department of Children and Families, I have to consider them to be an incredibly valuable asset.

I had spent an inordinate amount of time as a program manager, supervising the adolescent caseworker, trying to create youth advisory boards, trying to get these children to come to the table and provide us with some advice about what they need to do, what we need to do as an agency, that we have come a long ways in terms of a philosophy in this state

with a family-driven, youth-guided system, this is a federal philosophy through the System of Care initiative, that it is imperative and that it is critical that the voices of our children be heard. And I think they can be extremely helpful to us in terms of providing us with the -- with a knowledge, a special internal knowledge about what has gone wrong, what can be done better, and I do suggest again, once more, that we do have a special obligation. And I see this as just yet another small step in that direction. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Srinivasan of the 31st District.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good evening, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Good evening.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I've been listening to this debate for quite some time now, and I just want to get a few things clear. It talks about each state agency giving a preference

in hiring for or placement in internship. And most of the evening I've heard about the internship part.

So through you, Mr. Speaker, the hiring part, I just want to find out what that component is as a special situation for children in foster care. Is it just internship program or hiring for something else and an internship program?

Thank you, Mr. -- through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it is hiring for an internship program.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

So the hiring, through you, Mr. Speaker, the hiring is only for the internship program, not just hiring for a position in any of the state agencies?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the good representative is absolutely correct.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that clarification.

Would this internship program that we are hiring, could I find out how many such programs are there in the state?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, we have about 70 interns here in the House. We have 30 to 40 in DEEP that are unpaid. We have five to 10 per year in DPH. We have a few in DMV -- and I'm sorry, through you, Mr. Speaker, I don't have a full list in front of me, but I would also say in answer to the good Representative Bowles' observation about DCF, we are looking at a possible program there where foster children would mentor foster children in an internship program.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

If I understand this clearly, yes, an exact number we may not have, but are we looking at, in the ballpark, of about 100 to 110 such internship programs?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Such DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I would hesitate to commit to a number and then be found to have that number be incorrect, but I would say it's in that vicinity. They're not a huge number, maybe 200.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

And through you, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Chairwoman for her answer.

And through you, Mr. Speaker, if I heard this clear, some of them are paid and some of them are

cah/cjd/lgg/cd/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

276  
May 21, 2013

unpaid internships?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, most of the internships are not paid, but as I -- I answered before, we do give a stipend as we do to our legislative interns so insofar as that is considered paid, we do give a stipend.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, and how long are these internship programs?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it depends. As you know, the legislative intern runs for a session. Each internship that's being offered by specific agencies would be offered for the period of time that they had

specified that internship but certainly not more than a year.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, if an intern were to reapply for the next year, as they could in an internship here, would this person have a special privilege in getting that internship through -- they're still all foster children, but they're reapplying for the second time for the second year?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, if they were still under 24, they would get the same preference.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

I'm -- I apologize. I did not hear that answer. If I can hear that one more time?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

I Would ask individuals to take their conversations outside. The good representative is having trouble hearing the Chairman's response to his answers.

Representative Urban, would you repeat the answer, please.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Certainly, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, if the applicant is still under the age of 24, then they would be given the same preference.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, as the applicant is under the age of 24, I understand that, but if he or she is applying for the second time and there is somebody else, another foster child who is applying also but for the first time, would there be any difference between somebody who is applying for the first time and somebody who already had that position a year ago?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I would assume that we would be looking at comparable qualifications and, perhaps, there would be a difference between those two foster children that they wouldn't be exactly the same, but I certainly think that have -- if that situation arose, we would try mightily to be sure that both foster children were accommodated by the state because they are after all wards of the state.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I definitely agree that they're wards of the state, and we have a special responsibility towards them, no question about that at all. And I do understand the intent of this bill, which is to make sure that these children who have had a very difficult time are given a little heads up in getting this internship and also the right guidance.

My final question, through you, Mr. Speaker, is

in the debate -- listening to the debate in the evening, I thought I heard that there are not too many applicants and that we can count these applicants on the -- on the hand. And I was a little bit not sure about that, and through you, Mr. Speaker, what has been the number of applicants, on an average, on a yearly basis?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, we did have a discussion, the good Chair of Higher Education and myself, and we did agree that it was between five and ten a year, but we were unwilling to actually commit to a number.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And that's what I thought I heard, somewhere between five and ten, and I was a little bit surprised at that low number. Somehow I thought it would be

much more than that, but I do want to thank the good  
Chairwoman for her answers.

And thank you Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Davis of the 57th District, sir,  
you have the floor.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you to the proponent of the bill, a few  
questions if I may.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just to be completely clear, and from what the  
representatives from Southbury was asking before, this  
bill would directly affect a Legislative Internship  
Program that's -- that's under statute here in the  
state of Connecticut?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

cah/cjd/lgg/cd/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

282  
May 21, 2013

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Actually, in the symposium, we had some foster care kids that came up and said how much they would love to be able to be an intern in this program at the State Legislature so, yes, I would be pleased to say that I hope that we have some that come in to be legislative interns.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is the kind gentlelady aware of any situations where, in fact, we have had foster children serve as interns here in the Legislature?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

As legislative interns, I have to say I am not familiar with any that have served.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not aware of any either because we, quite frankly, don't ask people if they're foster children or not when we accept them into the program currently.

So as the bill is written in a scenario where we get a number of applicants to our program, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the proponent of the bill, would we then have to accept all foster care students that are equally qualified and then accept other students who are not foster care students?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Given the low number of foster care kids that are actually accepted into and a part of the program through DCF, I would not expect that you would run into that problem. When we're talking possibly five, six, maybe eight students and with all the other

internships that are available, I'm -- would be very surprised if every single one of them wanted to be a legislative intern and didn't want to go to DEEP or DPH or DMV or something like that.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

But there's nothing specifically in the legislative language before us that would prohibit every single one of them from applying for the Legislative Internship Program and then having a scenario where we would have to accept them above all other applicants?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, assuming that they were qualified, comparatively qualified, as we looked at our legislative interns, yes, I guess, every single one of them could apply.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

cah/cjd/lgg/cd/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

285  
May 21, 2013

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, a scenario where there would only be a limited number of applicants, and say one of those applicants were to be denied and then make the argument that they were equally qualified under our qualifications because we simply ask that they be a student of a Connecticut university, that they have a certain GPA, and so on and so forth, what would be their recourse to -- potentially would they be able to sue the State of Connecticut because they were not accepted under this statute?

Thank you -- through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, as they are guardians of the state and they are our responsibility under the Department of Children and Families, I would assume that the commissioner or her designee would get in touch with the Legislative Internship Program and inquire as to why the foster child was denied the

position.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So the State would still continue to have legal guardianship of this student after the age of 18?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, if they're in this program, it's up to the age of 24.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And oftentimes we have applicants that are older than the age of 24, would this bill applied to those applicants?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

cah/cjd/lgg/cd/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

287  
May 21, 2013

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. -- through you, Mr. Speaker, the program only runs from 18 to 24. If someone is older than 24, they are no longer a part of this program, nor are they guardians of the state.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We commonly assign these interns through our Legislative Internship Program based on how they personally feel as far as public policy goes, do they identify themselves as a Democrat, identify themselves as a Republican, identify themselves as unaffiliated and, through you, Mr. Speaker, would we not be able to use that determination or to accept them to try to fit them into the slots that are available based on the legislators that put out the call to have an intern? If they are, in fact, a foster child, would we have to accept them into the program and then try to make them fit into our model or would that be an area where we would be able to say they don't fit into our program?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

If I understand the good representative, is he saying that party affiliation is a criteria for being a legislative intern?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative, could you repeat your question?

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Sure, Mr. Speaker, certainly will.

Oftentimes we try to find the best fit for the student into our program. Throughout the years, only a certain number of students -- a certain number of legislators apply to have an intern. What we try to do our best is to assign that student into a -- into a legislator slot that they see themselves aligning with philosophically with political views because we never want to put a student into a situation where they would feel uncomfortable serving as our intern here in the legislature. If the foster child -- if there was a growing number of foster children to apply for this program and we did not have an equal number of slots

cah/cjd/lgg/cd/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

289  
May 21, 2013

on, say, they identified themselves as a Republican and we only had 15 slots available and there were 16 foster children that applied for the program, would we then be able to deny that 16th child because they wouldn't fit into the program, or would we not be able to simply because they were a foster child and then we would have to place them with a Democratic legislator?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

It's my understanding we've had 70 legislative interns. We have never had 16 foster children try to get this kind of position. The most that the good representative and the Chair of Higher Ed and I can come up with is 10. I can't -- I can't anticipate that kind of a situation. I would expect that you would do what you always do in the legislative as chairs of that committee and do your best to make sure that the -- the potential legislative intern is comfortable. And if you did perceive a problem that you would get back to the legislative intern's parent in absentia, which would be the DCF commissioner.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I thank her for that answer. I think it's a great thing to know as we try to develop new policies for the internship program that, you know, this isn't something that would directly affect our ability to select students.

But I do have similar concerns as they were discussed earlier here tonight in that, you know, I think we're giving preferential treatment to the -- to a sector of our society that, perhaps, already has these opportunities available to them. And should we be asking for that information when they're applying for an internship in our state agency, or should we treat these individuals as everybody else and have them apply and be accepted based on their merit rather than their status in our society as a foster student or foster care child or not, so I will not be supporting the bill this evening, and I encourage my colleagues to also oppose it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Buck-Taylor of the 67th District,  
ma'am, you have the floor.

REP. BUCK-TAYLOR (67th):

Good evening, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to put some questions, through you,  
to the proponent of the bill, if I may.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Please proceed.

REP. BUCK-TAYLOR (67th):

Is it the procedure that we're expecting that  
when someone who has been or is in the custody of DCF  
that DCF would be shepherding them through this  
process?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

The children that are -- or young people that are  
eligible for this are already in the DCF program,  
which allows them financial aid and to continue on  
with their education so they would definitely be

cah/cjd/lgg/cd/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

292  
May 21, 2013

helped through the process by DCF.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Thank you.

Representative Buck-Taylor.

REP. BUCK-TAYLOR (67th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, line 5 talks of who is or was at the age of majority in the custody of the commissioner of Children and Families. Does this mean, through you, Mr. Speaker, that there may be people who are 20, 21 years old who were in the custody of DCF at the age 18 but are no longer in the custody of DCF?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Buck-Taylor.

REP. BUCK-TAYLOR (67th):

And may I inquire through you, how the state agency would then learn whether or not this 21-year-old who is no longer in the custody of DCF was in the

cah/cjd/lgg/cd/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

293  
May 21, 2013

custody of DCF at the age of majority?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry. Now that -  
- the individual would have been out of and then come  
back into the custody of DCF.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

(Deputy Speaker Ritter in the Chair.)

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Buck-Taylor.

REP. BUCK-TAYLOR (67th):

Thank you.

Madam Speaker, through you, so the line that  
says, "who is or was it the age of majority in the  
custody of the commissioner of Children and Families,"  
should be interpreted according to legislative intent  
that this person who, subsequent to reaching the age  
of 18, was out of the custody of DCF and then went  
back into the custody of DCF?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, that can happen and, yes, that is to take care of that type of a situation.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Buck-Taylor.

REP. BUCK-TAYLOR (67th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, so is the right interpretation of this is that is somebody who was in the custody of DCF at the age of 18 and is no longer in the custody of DCF at the age of 21 that they would not be eligible for this program even though they had suffered all the injustices that all of the people that are still in the program had suffered?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, they would be coming back under the aegis of the Department of Children and Families and be re-taken back under the auspices of the program.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

There are times when -- when a child or a young person gets into another situation and then comes back into the custody of DCF.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Buck-Taylor.

REP. BUCK-TAYLOR (67th):

Madam Speaker, through you, if we have a 21-year-old who decides not to go back into the custody of DCF but was in the custody of DCF through age 18, are they not entitled to the protections of this bill?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, the bill is limited in -- from age 18 to 24 to young people who are in the program, so they must be back in the program and a part of the financial aid, et cetera, that is offered under the program in order to take the preference for an internship.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Buck-Taylor.

REP. BUCK-TAYLOR (67th):

Madam Speaker, through you, I guess I'm confused. There was a lot of discussion tonight about, you know, us having a special obligation to these children because they've been in foster care, because they've been abused, because they've been neglected, but am I correct in understanding, through you, Madam Speaker, that if they are no longer being in the custody of DCF, post the age of 18 that they cannot benefit by this program?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, if they are not a part of the program past the age of 18, no, they are not part of the preference in the internship program.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Buck-Taylor.

REP. BUCK-TAYLOR (67th):

Madam Speaker, may I ask, through you, for Representative Urban, to show me where in this statute

it states that the young adult has to continue to be  
in the custody of DCF?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, it refers to this --  
this particular legislation, actually, does refer to  
that program and that is the legislative intent and  
certainly the understanding of the department that it  
is the one -- the young people who have been accepted  
into that program and who are receiving that financial  
aid.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Buck-Taylor.

REP. BUCK-TAYLOR (67th):

Madam Speaker, through you, so the verbiage in  
this bill that says "who is or was at the age of  
majority in the custody of DCF," should actually have  
language in here to state that -- or is again accepted  
into the custody of DCF, in order to give it the  
language that I'm hearing from Representative Urban?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, not -- it was not deemed a necessity because it's understood that that's what this particular preference for internships applies to.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Buck-Taylor.

REP. BUCK-TAYLOR (67th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, so would it be correct to say that someone who goes into the custody of DCF at age 17 and a half that they would be entitled to this program?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, the program is limited to age 18 to 24.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Buck-Taylor.

cah/cjd/lgg/cd/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

299  
May 21, 2013

REP. BUCK-TAYLOR (67th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, we heard tonight Representative Willis talk about painting a landscape -- and I appreciate her doing that. However, I think an important part of the landscape that was missing was what Representative Rebimbas talked about. I've represented kids who have been assisted by DCF. I've represented kids who haven't had the luck, the good fortune to have the help from DCF. What I couldn't possibly do tonight is vote for this bill, come across one of the students, one of the children that I've represented who have been raped, incested, physically abused, neglected, and say because you weren't lucky enough to be in the custody of DCF, you're not going to be given the same opportunities that those children were given, just because you weren't lucky enough.

We heard people talk about tonight that we have special obligation to the children of DCF. I counter that. We have a special obligation to all abused children, and I submit, Madam Chair -- Madam Speaker, that what we are doing tonight is telling a certain segment of abused children that they aren't good enough, they aren't as good as children who were lucky enough to be given an opportunity by DCF. And I think

anybody who votes for this bill should consider that they are going to have to explain this at some point to those children. So there is no way that I can vote for this bill, Madam Speaker, in the form that it's in, because it discriminates. It discriminates against children who are less fortunate. It discriminates against inner-city children who may be don't come to the attention of DCF. It discriminates against children who are in environments that no one ever pays any attention to. So I would ask everyone here to take a hard look at this bill and see if it really does what you say you -- it's supposed to do, which is give an opportunity to children who have been abused and neglected. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Carter, for the second time, perhaps, Representative.

REP. CARTER (2nd):

Thank you, Madam Chair -- Madam Speaker. Yes, it is for the second time. Thank you.

One of the things that's come up, I wanted to make sure that I address, and I will be brief, is that as I spoke out, as many of my colleagues spoke out

against this bill, one of the inference is that I want to make sure that nobody is making is that somehow that foster children are in any way less capable. You know, we're talking about foster children having some sort of disadvantaged upbringing, bad luck, all these things. You know what, I think the DCF program is among the best in the country at helping our foster children. I don't look at them as somebody who -- yes, maybe they had a hard go of it, but I want to make sure when we're talking about children who have been abused or who have issues, we're not always talking about every foster child. And I think that's important to throw out there that this is in no way an indictment on what DCF does.

DCF is an amazing organization. I think they do amazing things for our kids. The reason we're looking at this bill this way is we believe that everybody should have an equal chance at these internships.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

(Speaker Sharkey in the Chair.)

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Do you care to remark further on the bill?

Representative Alberts of the 50th District.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have been listening to the debate on this issue and it's been very passionate for some time and, you know, my experience with the subject of foster children has to do with having been in a family that had foster children, and I also have a nephew who has taken into his care, a foster child, and I'm well aware of some of the challenges that foster parents face and some of the issues, of course, that foster children themselves face. One of the discussion items I believe they took place earlier tonight, Mr. Speaker, related to preference given to foster children in the bill that is now before us. And I had a question for the proponent of the bill, if I may.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I understand it it's been made clear that there would be preference in the awarding of internships to individuals who had been in the care of

the foster program of the State of Connecticut or were still in the care of the foster program. And do I understand correctly that that is the only preference option that's available in the state?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure I understand the question, but I'll answer it and if it's not what you're looking for then ask me again.

From what I understand of the question that is the only preference that we are looking at that they be an actual foster child in the program that DCF runs which allows them financial aid and education between the ages of 18 and 24.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So if there's two groups of individuals and one group is the category the proponent just outlined and one is a group of all other individuals, the

preference goes to the former, all other things being equal; is that not correct?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Now how do we reconcile veterans in this whole process? Because I know there was a discussion earlier where one individual brought up the concept of veterans potentially applying for one of these positions. And it would seem to me that many returning veterans would be about the same age and -- and I went -- as the discussion unfolded, I went to the Department of Transportation web site for -- for our state and there is ample information about veterans' preference points that we provide. How do we reconcile veterans being a preferred group for hiring status in the state with a group that was just outlined by the proponent?

Through you Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, we're not talking about hiring with the foster children. We're talking about internships, and we're talking about a very small number. They're a small number that -- that actually are in that DCF program which provides for financial aid and the education. It's a very small number. So if there was a conflict in an internship issue with a returning vet, I would hope that we would be able to accommodate that given the very small number of DCF foster kids that we're dealing with.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So that -- your thought then, through you, Mr. Speaker, is that because there's not a hiring, per se, of this individual that that negates the State's declaration of support for veterans.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I can't imagine negating any declaration. We're talking -- we're not talking about hiring for a job. We were talking about unpaid internships and internships that we, like with our legislative interns, give a stipend, and if I haven't answered your question, please just give it to me again.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So if this internship that was awarded to somebody that qualified as having been a foster child at some point or still in the care and that led to a potential job opening where the individual was applying for a permanent position with the state on a paid basis, and we had a veteran coming back and applying for a position which would be a paid position, would the proponents -- would the proponent believe that those things being equal the preference

cah/cjd/lgg/cd/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

307  
May 21, 2013

would go to the veteran?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, if I can answer, like, in the negative, the preference would not be for the foster child because we're going from an internship to a paid position.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I do thank the proponent's response. I'm just trying to gauge the difference here and there are subtle differences, and I do appreciate the position that -- that she's advocating for.

And I do thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Do you care to remark? Do you care to remark further on the bill that's before us?

If not, staff and guests to the well of the

House. Members take your seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll. The House of Representatives is voting by roll. Will members please come to the chamber immediately.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Will the House please come back to order?

It appears as though one of the members of the Chamber had signaled an indication that she wished to be recognized on the bill before I had called for the vote and opened the machine. I'm willing to accept that representation on the -- on the minority side of the aisle.

So at this time, Mr. Clerk, I'd ask that we take this vote off the board and re-open debate.

THE CLERK:

The machine will be cleaned.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

I don't know if need to have it cleaned, Mr. Clerk, just --

THE CLERK:

It's a term of art, Mr. Speaker, and I'm an artiste.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you. Thank you, sir.

And with that, would you care to remark further on the bill that's before us?

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, through you, a few questions to the proponent of the bill, please.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Please proceed, madam.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

In my other field where I deal with subsidized housing and we maintain a waiting list and it's -- it's supervised by the federal government and they're very strict and watch this list very carefully about what type of preference we give to the tenant applicants. One of the top criteria that we always start with when we're trying to give preference to applicants is to look at the family income.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, would any family income count at all in the preferences for the foster children in the internship program?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

cah/cjd/lgg/cd/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

310  
May 21, 2013

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, because they are guardians of the state and in the program, family income is not applicable in this case.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you.

I understand that I'm sure what the proponent is saying is that the -- the child's income, whether they're 18, 19, 20 or 21 wouldn't be applicable. But I know in the -- in the subsidized housing field, we also look at the -- the family income of the people whether they're married, the husband and the wife that are serving as foster parents or the single parent. And the first step that we always take is to look at that source of income and compare it to other eligible tenants who are on the waiting list.

So, through you, Mr. Speaker, just to clarify, I understand that the -- the foster child's income wouldn't be applicable, but would we look at all at

the parents' income?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, because we're looking at a foster parent, and sometimes a child will have four to five different foster parents, then the income is -- is not something that would be looked at.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Urban.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And also, if the foster child did have a disability, would any disability give a foster child preference over another foster child who may be applying for that same internship program?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I think the one thing that we want to be very cognizant of that we would not

set a foster child up to fail. So, if there was a particular internship where the comparable qualifications were exactly the same and one of the -- one of the applicants that was a foster child was disabled, I think it would be a function of whatever that disability was, and I would hope that we wouldn't run into a situation where we had -- because, to the good representative, we are really only looking at between five and ten kids a year, so I would hope that we wouldn't have a duplicate issue like that.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Yes. And I do understand what the proponent is saying, but I think more specifically what my question was is when we're setting up a preferential program for internships where we are saying, If you come from a foster home, you will get points, so to speak -- in a good way, I mean. Frequently on the waiting list that I manage, we have to acknowledge if a person represents that they have disabilities and there's certain cases where that person would get, quote/unquote, preferential treatment.

If we had applicants in your scenario, who come -  
- come in with the same number of points but one has a  
disability and, therefore, some disadvantage, I'm just  
wondering if there's going to be any protocol that the  
disability also has to be weighed into the decision  
when we choose the internship applicant.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, as of now, the  
disability would not be a part of the preference.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm also wondering about the preference -- if  
there would ever be any situation where if you're  
coming from a foster home -- and I do believe in  
Connecticut you can have a single-parent foster home  
just as easily as you could have a dual-parent foster  
home -- would that be at all considered by the hiring  
body --

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, because, yet, again, the -- unfortunately, many of our foster children are in multiple homes, they're not with the same family from age four on or from age 12 on from whenever they enter the system. So there is no -- there's no preference because we can't separate that out because of the problem with the multitude of families that some children have -- are being placed with.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Bacchiochi.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I just, you know, I want to say that I think it must be a very difficult situation for anyone who is in the situation that you're advocating for these children to be moved from one home to another. I can't begin to imagine the heartache and the pain and the suffering that children that are in that situation would go through.

As a parent, I know how hard we try to give a stable environment to our children and how we work so hard to love them and give them every opportunity they have. And when you think of children don't have that opportunity, I can understand why the proponents of this bill would want to do anything and even just the littlest thing to try to help those children. But what bothers me and I'm sure it's sort of, you know, several people have said before me, I deal with people every single day who are struggling for so many different reasons. They'll come in my office door and the most common is a single mom with a child who has no source of income and no place to live. And it's so heartbreaking because these people have just not had the advantages in life that they should have, and yet I have to put them on a waiting list for housing and they tell me their story and they're crying and their child is there and I can see how much they need. They need so much what they came in my door for. They need a place to live. And yet, by law, I cannot help the single mom with the child. I can't give her preferential treatment because the law doesn't allow me to do that, and then the next person who might come through the door will be somebody who has maybe just

served his sentence in jail, he's done the time, he's paid back his debt to society, he comes through my door looking for subsidized housing. He just needs a break, he just needs somebody to give him a break and he wants me to be the person who will give him a break, but I can't. I can't give him that preferential treatment. And it's not that he doesn't deserve it. It's not that he hasn't had a very hard life, gone through drug addiction, and so many different problems that very -- very well could have stemmed from a very difficult childhood. But when he comes through my door, by law, I can't give him that preferential treatment.

And probably the one scenario I remember that moved me so deeply was I had a woman come in with a child who had been a victim of domestic violence. And I was so moved by her story that I -- I gave her preferential treatment. It was many years ago, and I knew I wasn't supposed to do that but my heart was so broken that I gave her preferential treatment and I gave her the apartment, and in that case it didn't work out because she ended up going back to the place that she came from and didn't pay her rent and left the apartment in terrible condition.

I never regretted giving her preferential treatment because sometimes your heart just aches so much for somebody that you just do anything that you have to do to help that person get ahead, and I imagine in many situations that's what all of us are doing that we want to so desperately help the people that we care about, that we try to come up with really good ideas that will -- will help them get ahead.

But the problem is there's so many people that need a helping hand and when you give that preferential treatment to one person, somehow somebody else pays the price for it and, you know, going back to -- to the waitlist that I manage, when I give preferential treatment to one person, it means somebody else has to wait longer. And I sort of think that's what's going to happen here when we choose a person in -- a foster child and allow them to have the internship to have the internship just because they've had that difficult situation, somebody else doesn't get that slot and that somebody else could be the person who has been brought up in such a disadvantaged home, has been abused, and has been in a home with domestic violence, or all of the many homeless situations that I see on a regular basis, and I just

don't know how we can choose that group over all of these other disadvantaged children. But yet, I still see the heart, I still see the meaning and why this could be such a good thing, but I don't know if I can get comfortable choosing one group over another group.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for recognizing that my light was on and for giving me the opportunity to talk with the proponent of the bill. Thank you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, madam.

Do you care to remark further on the bill that's before us?

Representative Shaban of the 135th.

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

No, questions. I think the representative has been on her feet for quite long enough, but, really more of a statement if I could. You know, obviously bills like this and a lot of -- most -- I think probably all the bills that come through here start with a good motive in mind. Obviously, I think everyone in here is trying to do the right thing, that we -- that's what we're trying to do.

You know, this is -- it seems to me, you know, I

have been listening to the debate now for what, two, three, four hours, whatever it's been, trying to instill confidence in some folks to some young kids who maybe need some help, give them a head start, you know, trying to help folks out of what might otherwise be a hole that they started in through no fault of their own or, you know. So that, you know, all of that makes sense, but what we're doing here -- what we're doing here is enshrining preferences with the sanction of law.

Now, through the course of this debate, some of the stuff you've heard is, I think, that DCF or, frankly, any state agency can do this anyway, can do this anyway. Whatever state agency says, you know what, we're going to try -- we're going to give it a little bit of a harder look at the kids coming out of the DCF. We can do that anyway. We could do it by administrative fiat, we could do it by state agency policy, we could do it just on a basic voluntary basis. So all of the good things -- all of the good things this bill tries to do, we could do it anyway. But what we're doing here is enshrining it by sanction of state law. We're enshrining it with the power of having a -- because every right comes with a remedy,

and if once you grant the right, you create remedies, whether express or implied, that creates unintended consequences and that's not what we're trying to do here.

What we're trying to do here is help young kids get a head start. And a way to do that is not necessarily put everything in a statute. We -- and frankly, I think a lot of that's the distinction with a lot of the debates we have in this chamber is are we going to do this because we think it's right, or are we going to make this a law because we think it's right.

Well, I think some of the folks in one half of the room think, well, let's just do it, and some of the folks on the other half of the room think, well, I think we need a law to do that. I think this is one of the things that we don't need a law to do. Some things we do, absolutely. This is one of the things that can be done voluntarily.

If we're creating rights, we're going to create remedies and that's the wrong direction to go in. It's -- you know, it's funny because you read -- you read a seven -- six-, seven-, eight-line bill that otherwise looks innocuous, but when you really start

to think about it and drill down on it and you start talking about it -- I mean right out of the gate, right out of the gate, in line 3, "Each state agency shall give preference in hiring." Well, "preference in hiring" is like paragraph 2 in every -- in every employment law case in the planet earth. You cannot give preferences in hiring.

Now I understand it's an internship. I understand that. We can do this without creating statute to do it. So that's probably the direction we ought to go in. Frankly, this could -- so much stuff that we do up here, especially when we're either filing time or looking to do something else, could be done administratively. I think that's the direction this bill should go. I'm hoping that's the direction this bill will go. You know, I applaud its motives, but I can't -- personally, I cannot continue to -- to bless putting every possible good thing to do in a statute and giving it the force of law.

So -- so, Mr. Speaker, thank you. Representative Bacchiochi said it, too, thank you for hitting the reset button because there were a couple of us who had something to say. I appreciate the opportunity, and I thank the Chamber for its time.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

The Chamber will stand at ease.

(Chamber at ease.)

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The Chamber will please come back to order.

Do you care to remark further on the bill that's  
before us?

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Clerk has amendment LCO Number  
7535, may he call and I be allowed to summarize?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Clerk, please call LCO 7535, which we designate  
House Amendment "A."

THE CLERK:

House Amendment "A," LCO 7535, introduced by  
Representative Cafero, Senator Looney, and  
Representative Urban.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The Minority Leader seeks leave of the Chamber to

summarize.

Is there objection? Is there objection?

You may proceed with summarization, sir.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, ladies and gentleman of the chamber, the amendment before us makes it clear that nothing in the provisions of the underlying bill will require any hiree to request foster child status of any applicant, or any applicant to disclose his or her status as a foster child should they choose not to do so.

Also, it says that nothing in the bill should be construed to give a hiree or an applicant the right to pursue a cause of action in a court of competent jurisdiction. And I move adoption.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The question before the Chamber is adoption of the amendment.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I thank the good minority leader for the amendment, and I think it has clarified some issues that came up in debate, and it

is certainly a friendly amendment.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, madam.

Do you care to remark further on the amendment?

Do you care to remark further on House Amendment  
"A"?

Are we sure?

If there's no one to speak on House Amendment  
"A," I will try your minds. All those in favor of  
House Amendment "A," please signify by saying aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Those opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. The amendment is adopted.

Do you care to remark further on the bill as  
amended?

Are you sure?

If not, staff and guests to the well of the  
House. Members take your seats. The machine will be  
open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll.

The House of Representatives is voting by roll. Will members please return to the chamber immediately.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? Would the members please check the board to make sure your vote is properly cast.

If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked, and the Clerk will take a tally.

Clerk, please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

SB 273, as amended by House "A," not in concurrence with the Senate

Total Number Voting	135
Necessary for Passage	68
Those voting Yea	113
Those voting Nay	22
Those absent and not voting	15

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The bill, as amended, passes.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 242.

THE CLERK:

On page 6, Calendar 242, favorable report of the joint standing committee on Planning and Development, Substitute House Bill 6363, AN ACT STREAMLINING STATE

**S - 654**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2013**

**VOL. 56  
PART 3  
614 - 910**

cd/gbr  
SENATE

73  
April 18, 2013

Yes, Madam President.

I believe that the next go item is on Calendar page 10, Calendar 100, Senate Bill 273, followed by -- on Calendar page 11, Calendars 110 and 111.

THE CHAIR:

Okay.

Mr. Clerk, can you -- we're going to stand at ease for a moment, please.

(Chamber at ease.)

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will come back to order.

Mr. Clerk, now go back to calling -- I think it's page 10, Calendar Number 100, Bill -- Senate Bill 273, please.

THE CLERK:

On page 10, Calendar 100, Senate Bill Number 273, AN ACT CONCERNING FOSTER CHILDREN AND INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES, favorable report of the Committee on -- the standing Committee on Children.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bartolomeo -- forget it, Dante.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you.

I think this is quite an initiation. I stand for my first bill and we lose our machine.

Thank you, Madam President.

I move acceptance of the joint committee's -- joint favorable report and I urge passage of this bill.

THE CHAIR:

The question is on adoption. Will you remark?

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

This bill will allow for children who are now or previously under the custody of DCF up until the age of 24 to be given priority for state agency internships. The Committee on Children heard testimony that foster children, as opposed to their peers, are much less likely to graduate high school and college; and actually 24 percent of them report no earned income for the first two years that they are out of foster care.

It passed through our committee unanimously and there is no fiscal note attached. I asked your permission, Madam President, if I might yield to Senator Looney as the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney, will you accept the yield, sir?

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, I will. Thank you, Madam President.

I want to thank Senator Bartolomeo and her committee for bringing this -- this forward. As we know, many young people who have been through our -- our foster care system have suffered many challenges and deprivations in the course of their -- of their lives, leading up to young adulthood and often are -- and not as well prepared as those who have come from -- from supportive and strong family settings for all of those years to be prepared to undertake life. What this would do -- in a couple of other states, notably California, have adopted legislation of this kind, is to -- is to indicate when internships are available in state agencies so people -- young people preparing for careers, that someone in the foster care system, coming out of the foster care system be given a

preference for that so that we might find ways to enhance their opportunities.

As Senator Bartolomeo said so many young people coming out of the foster system when they reach young adulthood have relatively low rates of educational attainment and low levels of -- of employment. This will help them in a positive way to -- to gain experience and to build resumes for their later life.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark further? Will you remark --

Senator Linares.

SENATOR LINARES:

Thank you, Madam President.

I stand in support of this bill. Today, actually marks the 20th anniversary of my uncle, who was a foster child, joining our family, so I stand in support of this bill today. While thinking about him, many foster children go through some of the most difficult circumstances that many of us never have had to go through, and I think that this -- this bill is an excellent way to give foster children a chance for an experience that can change their life so I support this bill. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR MCKINNEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

cd/gbr  
SENATE

76  
April 18, 2013

I stand in support of the bill but, just for clarification, if I could ask a question, through you, to either Senator Bartolomeo or Senator Looney, whoever -- whoever chooses to be so adventurous to answer.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR MCKINNEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

I think this is a great idea, don't get me wrong. I'm just curious, how would a state agency, in filling spots for internships, know whether an applicant was formally within the system or a foster child? Is there a question on any of the applications?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you.

And, Madam President, if I might, I would ask Senator Looney if he's aware of how California might have handled that?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Through you.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, through you, Madam President, I believe California did modify their application forms and also had a public information program to for people --

cd/gbr  
SENATE

77  
April 18, 2013

through the foster care system being advised of their rights under this -- under this provision.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR MCKINNEY:

And thank you, through you, Madam President, to Senator Looney, is Senator Looney aware of any prohibition against or problems with asking applicants whether or not they were foster children or within DCF care?

Through you, Madam President.

Does it violate any rights of those individuals or anyone by asking that question?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Madam President, through you, to Senator McKinney, I believe not because I believe that the California system is -- is in operation and they have not experienced problems with -- of that kind.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR MCKINNEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

My last question, hopefully. Seeing as we are modeling this after California, I assume we do not yet have the question -- the applications prepared. The effective date of this act is July 1, 2013, do we anticipate the state agencies having the applications prepared; who in state government is in charge of

cd/gbr  
SENATE

78  
April 18, 2013

preparing that application; are we going to have one uniform application, or is each agency going to be on their own to come up with their own application?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Through you, Madam President.

We will be consulting with the State Department of Administrative Services on that -- on that question.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR MCKINNEY:

Thank you.

I will vote for this. I have no objection to the concept. I hope we're a little more prepared in passing bills than we appear to be on this one today, though. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Will --

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, a question, through you, please, to the proponent of this particular bill.

THE CHAIR:

cd/gbr  
SENATE

79  
April 18, 2013

Please proceed.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Yes, through you, Madam President.

The qualifications for this particular internship would be the same or are they modified and changed for the individuals that this bill identifies?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bartolomeo -- I got it.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Madam President, through you, may I ask a repeat of the question?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Yes, Madam President.

The qualifications required for an internship, would they be the same for all parties or would they be modified to fit for this particular group of candidates that were previously or are currently foster children and also the age usually of those candidates?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

cd/gbr  
SENATE

80  
April 18, 2013

Through you, there would be no adjustment to the actual internship qualifications. The priority would simply be given if a child is currently or has in the past been under the custody of DCF and that, therefore, would be the one criteria that would allow them to have priority when -- when being considered for the internship.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you very much, Madam President, for the answer and also so there is no age limitation -- there is no age that you could, essentially, no longer be considered a previous foster child so it could be someone that is 20, 30, 40 years old?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

No, ma'am. As the -- as the bill states, it would be up to the age of 24.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

That's very helpful --

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

-- thank you, Madam President, much appreciated.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark?

cd/gbr  
SENATE

81  
April 18, 2013

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

If I may, a couple of questions to the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

Did the -- when it says "internships," it says when hiring individuals, I think there's a bit of a difference between hiring an individual and placing them on an internship so is it job positions, as well as internships, paid positions?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

Through you, it actually says, "in hiring or for placement in," so it can be paid or non-paid, it could be hired or not hired, for hiring or placement in an internship.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

cd/gbr  
SENATE

82  
April 18, 2013

So a paid internship, with what type of agency would that be?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bartolomeo -- sorry about that.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

Through you, any state agency.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

And -- thank you, Madam President.

And, through you, these paid internships, are they for just a short or brief period of time? It's not a permanent position. Correct?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

It is no different than any other internship that would be contingent upon the criteria set up when the internship was created.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

cd/gbr  
SENATE

83  
April 18, 2013

Well -- thank you, Madam President.

But I guess what I'm asking is do these internships have a defined period of time?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

Through you, these internships are -- are at this point in time not identified. It would be for any internship within any state agency.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

Well, then, let's go back to the definition of an "internship." Does an internship have a defined period of time, through you, Madam President, to your knowledge?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

To my knowledge, it does not have a defined period of time. It's defined when the internship is created.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

cd/gbr  
SENATE

84  
April 18, 2013

Thank you, Madam President.

So could an internship be a long-term position?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Through you, Madam President.

I suppose that is possible.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

So -- thank you, Madam President.

So then in reality is this bill for the purpose of an internship or for employment opportunities?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Through you, Madam President.

It's for the purposes of an internship as is stated on the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

I guess I -- the reason -- thank you, Madam President.

cd/gbr  
SENATE

85  
April 18, 2013

I question that because you're saying that it is not a defined period of time; it is -- could be for paid employment; it is for possibly permanent employment; and that's where I'm trying to understand the difference between permanent positions and internships.

We have many interns here in the legislature that work for the session and then go back to school or do whatever. That's what I'm trying to disseminate in the information. I still don't have a clear answer.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

And through you, I think -- I think it's actually rather clear in the way that I have stated. It would be the -- the internship would have to be created and in that creation of an internship, there would be certain criteria that would determine how long the internship would last. As you stated, positions here that might be somewhat similar, there would be a formal hiring process --

THE CHAIR:

Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen -- excuse me, Senator. Can we keep our voices down in the Circle please and take our conversations outside the Circle. Thank you.

Please proceed.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you -- thank you, Madam President.

So when a internship is created and, therefore, posted prior to the applicant even applying there would be criteria, I'm sure, that would designate the length of

cd/gbr  
SENATE

86  
April 18, 2013

time and other conditions for the internship, whether or not it was paid would certainly be part of that, and if we're going to compare it to those that we have here in the legislature, prior to anyone being hired on full-time, I believe that -- that is a -- another step within personnel that would not necessarily be considered any longer an internship.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

And one last question, if I may, through you, to the proponent of the bill. It says "over similarly qualified applicants," can -- can you give a definition of similarly qualified applicants?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Sure.

Through you, "similarly qualified" would, I assume, be similar experience, similar schooling, similar qualifications in relation to the internship.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

So, then, if another applicant did not have similar requirements or qualified -- or qualifications, let's say, were greater, maybe better grades, better what have you, would that person in the foster care program

cd/gbr  
SENATE

87  
April 18, 2013

still get preference over an individual who may have better qualifications?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

Through you, I stand by the language of the bill, which says "for similar candidates."

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

I -- maybe I'm not phrasing my question properly. Let me rephrase. I guess what I'm asking is, you know, when we say "similarly qualified applicants," what if there's an applicant that is -- has greater qualifications? Will that person now get -- lose that internship because this individual will get preference?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

(Inaudible).

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

Through you, the answer would be, no, because as you stated they would have greater qualifications, which wouldn't be considered similar. So the superior candidate with the superior qualifications would certainly have, you know, they'd have their own

cd/gbr  
SENATE

88  
April 18, 2013

standing and it wouldn't be considered similar, and therefore, there wouldn't be any priority given.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

And one last question, through you, Madam President, the similar qualified applicants, those criteria are defined in the bill?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Rephrase if you would.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

In the -- thank you, Madam President, through you, in -- where it says "similarly qualified applicants," though criteria that make up those qualifications, are they determined in the bill or is that something that is subjective?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

With all due respect, I'm not understanding how -- how that could be a challenge to comprehend. The criteria of the internship are one thing, a candidate's resume or qualifications being similar to another and,

cd/gbr  
SENATE

89  
April 18, 2013

therefore, being appropriate to the qualifications stated on the internship, I don't understand how that's not self explanatory, sir, with all due respect.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

That's okay, Senator. I have challenge comprehending many things.

But through you, Madam President, I guess what I'm trying to say is earlier in our conversation, you said that it could be grades, it could be -- I forget, maybe you mentioned a few others -- are those defined in the bill is what I'm asking or is it something that is subjective when we talk about similarly qualified applicants? That's -- it's a simple question. And I don't think it's a difficult question. I think it's plain language. Is it in the -- is it in the bill, and that's all I'm asking?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

And through you, so with all the questions that you do have, sir, I would assume that you might have seen the language of the bill. It does not define similar qualifications here in the bill. My explanation of the things that they might look at go to my experience of having reviewed resumes and of hiring people and expecting to look at what qualifications were appropriate to the internship that might be being offered.

THE CHAIR:

cd/gbr  
SENATE

90  
April 18, 2013

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Through you, Madam President.

So the answer is no?

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

I stand by my answer. Thank you, sir.

SENATOR KANE:

Okay. Thank you, Madam President.

I appreciate Senator Bartolomeo's answers. I tend to agree with Senator McKinney that I don't know if this bill is properly prepared before us because there's a lot of gray area in this legislation and there's questions that seem to still unanswered.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

Seeing none, Mr. Clerk, the -- will you call for a roll call vote. The machine is open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.  
Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher. Thank you.

Have all -- all members have voted, all members have voted, the machine will be closed.

Mr. Clerk, will you please call a tally.

cd/gbr  
SENATE

91  
April 18, 2013

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill Number 273.

Total Number Voting	36
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The bill passes.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On page 11, Calendar 110, Senate Bill Number 521, AN ACT CONCERNING A REPORT OF THE SURVEY OF ACCESSIBILITY IN AND TO STATE BUILDINGS, favorable report of the Committee on Public Safety.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Ayala.

SENATOR AYALA:

Thank you, Madam President.

I move acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and urge passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is on passage. Will you remark, sir?

SENATOR AYALA:

Yes, Madam President.

This bill requires that the Department of Administrative Services submit a report regarding the State's compliance with the Americans with

**S - 664**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2013**

**VOL. 56  
PART 13  
3813 - 4129**

the study will have been completed. We will have some agreed-upon language. We can move the bill forward.

And I urge the Chamber's adoption.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark further on the bill? Will you remark further on the bill?

Senator Doyle.

SENATOR DOYLE:

Mr. President, therefore, I move this bill to the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing and hearing no objections, so ordered.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On page 46, Calendar 100, Senate Bill Number 273, AN ACT CONCERNING FOSTER CHILDREN AND INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES. It is a Report of the Select Committee on CHILDREN.

(The President in the Chair.)

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, ma'am.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Madam President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Joint Favorable Report and I urge passage of the bill, in concurrence with the House of Representatives.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is on acceptance and passage.

Will you remark?

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Yes. Thank you, Madam President.

This bill has come before us previous to this and the House, in their passage, amended the bill and the amendment will clarify that individuals that are hiring interns are not required to request whether or not the child had foster -- foster care status. And it also requires that the child doesn't have to disclose that or the applicant, I should say. And in addition to that, it prevents anyone from pursuing a cause of action in court, which would be associated with the provisions of this bill.

So that being said, Madam President, I do urge passage of this bill.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark? Will you remark?

Senator Linares.

SENATOR LINARES:

Good to see you again, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Great to be here. Thank you.

SENATOR LINARES:

As I said before, I think that this bill has great intentions and I did support in the Children's Committee and I -- I do support the concept of this bill.

I just -- I just have two questions for the proponent of the bill, I would like to ask.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR LINARES:

One of the concerns that was actually brought up to me by a constituent and had -- there was a discussion about this in the House Chamber -- was in the event where someone, whether it be a foster child or a -- a child that has been, let's say sexually abused or abused in some capacity, and was up for an internship, let's say against someone who was a foster child and had identified that on the application, would the foster child get preference to the person who was sexually abused?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

And Madam President, through you.

If I could just clarify, is -- is the good Senator asking in this scenario, are both children foster children or only one? I -- I need clarification if I might.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Linares.

SENATOR LINARES:

Yes. Thank you, Senator.

No just -- just one is foster child in this circumstance. Not -- not the other.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Through you, Madam President.

To clarify further, is the foster child the abused child or not? The --

THE CHAIR:

Senator Linares.

SENATOR LINARES:

No, the foster child is not the abused child in this instance. The purpose -- the reason why I brought this up was because I'm just concerned that there might be people out there that have undergone certain circumstances that were, you know, very troublesome, and could also use preference and so I just wanted to see if, you know, in this case, would the foster child have preference over, say, you know, in the terrible event where there has been someone that was sexually abused in the past.

Thank you.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, through you.

The answer to that would be that, you know, the only thing that this bill addresses is whether or not the child is or had been under the custody of DCF in the Foster Care System. And in that case that child would be given preference to all others or that applicant, I should say, would be given to all others that had not been within the system, if they had similar credentials when applying for that internship.

You know, I can't imagine a scenario, however, where a child who is not under DCF, having been abused would even expose that information during applying for an internship, so I can't see how that would be in practical terms, I don't know how that information would ever come out. I don't think that that would be part of any kind of applicant -- application information.

Through you, Madam Senator.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Linares.

SENATOR LINARES:

Thank you, Madam President.

And I would like to thank the good Senator for answering my question.

It was a concern that was brought up to me by a constituent and was a discussion in the House by some of my colleagues, but I'm -- I'm happy that -- that you have an answer to my question.

I did -- I did have just a -- just another question for the good Senator.

In the event where a foster child who is under DCF's custody or another -- was to apply for an internship and then another child who was in foster care to some capacity or had adoptive parents was applying for the same internship, in that -- in that event who would

have preference or would both have preference to that internship?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator -- Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

Through you.

If I'm understanding the correct -- the question correctly, you're asking if there were two children applying for the same internship that were both currently or previously under the custody of DCF, and if that -- by the shake of the head I expect I misunderstood.

Madam President, through you.

Could you --

SENATOR LINARES:

No, just one -- one -- one was under DCF custody and the other wasn't, but was, you know, adopted or was a foster child, just not under Connecticut Department of Children's and Family's Custody. Would one have preference over the other?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Sorry, Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Through you, Madam President.

I - I'm not so sure how that, again, would be -- be a practical scenario, but what I can say is that the only thing we're speaking about here is giving

preference to a current or previous applicant who -- or current or previous child under the custody of DCF, under the age of 24 and to any other applicant. So the only scenario here is they're given custody -- or, excuse me, they're given preference as long as their credentials in every other realm are similar. I hope that answers your question.

SENATOR LINARES:

Okay. Yes. Thank -- thank you --

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Linares.

SENATOR LINARES:

Thank you, Madam President.

I appreciate Senator Bartolomeo's answers.

And you know, I think those are two concerns that are -- are important -- were important to highlight for legislative intent.

I do support this bill. I think it's important to give opportunities to those who are -- are or have been foster children. I do believe that that is why we live in the greatest country on Earth, because of the opportunities we prevent -- we present to all people.

Well, that's -- thank you, Madam President.

The good Senator answered all my questions and I -- I thank you for your time.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you very much.

Will you remark further?

Senator Chapin.

SENATOR CHAPIN:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, a couple of questions to the proponent.

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR CHAPIN:

Thank you, Madam President.

In the amended language that came up from the House, it says in Lines 8 and 9, notwithstanding any provisions of this act, nothing shall require any hiree to request foster child status. Is there anything that would prohibit that would prohibit the hiree from requesting that information?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

And through you.

If I might stand at ease for one moment, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will stand at ease.

(Chamber at ease.)

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will come back to order.

Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, through you.

The -- the basis for the amendment is just to say that we don't -- our legislative intent is not to have that a question that an applicant were forced to answer.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Chapin.

SENATOR CHAPIN:

Thank you, Madam President.

And I thank the good Chairwoman for her answer.

It does, Madam President, it does seem like there may be a conflict because I know sometimes in these applications the applicant's asked to sign an affidavit saying they -- that they filled it out in its entirety and accurately. It would seem that if the hiree did ask for that information, I'm not sure whether this -- the language before us would relieve the applicant of the duty of abiding by that affidavit that they're signing, but it's a subtle concern that I have, but certainly something that we could take a closer look at in the future.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark further? Will you remark further?

If not, Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

If there's no objection, I would ask that this be put on the Consent Calendar, please.

THE CHAIR:

There is -- oh. Seeing no objection, so ordered.

Mr. Clerk.

Sorry. Senator Doyle.

SENATOR DOYLE:

Thank you, Madam President.

Purpose of announcement.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR DOYLE:

Thank you, Madam President.

Just for the record, I want to note tomorrow, Friday, May 31st at 10:00 a.m. or 15 minutes before the start of the first Session, the Judiciary Committee meeting -- Judiciary Committee will have a Committee meeting outside the Hall of the House.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. It will be noted.

Mr. Clerk.

Would move to place that item also on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, now would ask the Clerk to call the items on the first Consent Calendar, so that we might proceed to a vote on that Consent Calendar.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 5, Calendar 278, Senate Bill 709; Calendar 333, House Bill 5759; Calendar 334, House Bill 6396; Calendar 340, House Bill 6211.

On Page 8, Calendar 357, House Bill 6349 and Calendar 398, Senate Bill 1065.

On Page 11, Calendar 457, House Bill 5564 and Calendar 462, House Bill 5908.

On Page 15, Calendar 516, House Bill 5500; Calendar 521, House Bill 6407.

On Page 19, Calendar 558, House Bill 6340.

Page 21, Calendar 574, House Bill 6534; Calendar 575, House Bill 6562; and Calendar 577, House Bill 6652.

Page 23, Calendar 587, House Bill 6465; Calendar 589, House Bill 6447.

On Page 24, Calendar 599, House Bill 6458.

Page 25, Calendar 602, House Bill 5614.

And on Page 29, Calendar 622, House Bill 5278;  
Calendar 625, House Bill 6624.

Page 39, Calendar 223, Senate Bill 954 and Calendar  
227, Senate Bill 819.

And on Page 46, Calendar 100, Senate Bill 273 and  
Calendar 137, Senate Bill 837.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, please call for a roll call vote and the  
machine will be open on the first Consent Calendar.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.  
Members to the Chamber. Immediate roll call has been  
ordered in the Senate on today's first Consent  
Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

All members have voted, all members have voted.

The machine will be closed.

Mr. Clerk will you please call the tally.

THE CLERK:

On today's first Consent Calendar:

Total Number Voting	34
Necessary for Adoption	18
Those voting Yea	34
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	2

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar passes.

The Senate will stand at ease.

(Chamber at ease.)