

Appropriations Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-389 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING FUNDS.

Vote Date: 4/1/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/12/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Appropriations Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill is intended to address concerns that the current method of allocating youth employment and training funds may not reflect variations in need across workforce regions. Existing fixed percentage allocations do not account for changes in population or the number of disadvantaged youths in each region, which may result in disparities in funding distribution. By incorporating a formula based on updated data, the bill seeks to align funding more closely with current demographic conditions while providing stability in funding levels for regional workforce development boards.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

The substitute language, LCO 3673, includes a provision clarifying the use of the funds is to serve 14-24-year-old. It also modifies the allocation of the funds to the regional workforce development boards.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Marc Donald, President & CEO, Catalyst CT – Mr. Donald provided testimony in support of this bill, stating that the proposal would expand access to employment and training opportunities for disconnected and at-risk youth across Connecticut. He emphasized that allowing a portion of funds to be distributed directly to nonprofit, community-based

organizations would improve outreach and engagement, particularly for youth who do not typically access services through workforce development boards. He also noted that these organizations provide culturally responsive, relationship-based programming that can improve long-term outcomes in education, employment, and public safety.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Alex Johnson, President & CEO, Capital Workforce Partners – Mr. Johnson submitted testimony in opposition to the bill as written while expressing support for its overall intent. He stated that the bill's use of the federal definition of "economically disadvantaged youth" would exclude 14-and 15-year-olds from eligibility, despite this group representing a significant portion of youth currently served. He explained that this would reduce access to early employment opportunities that are critical for skill development and long-term workforce engagement. He recommended revising the funding formula to include younger youth and to incorporate additional data sources, such as free and reduced-price lunch eligibility and at-risk youth indicators, to better reflect regional need.

Jay Moran, Mayor, Town of Manchester – Mayor Moran testified in opposition to the bill as written while supporting revisions. He raised similar concerns that the proposed funding formula would make 14-and 15-year-olds ineligible for services, limiting access for a larger portion of youth participants. He emphasized the importance of early work experiences in developing skills and connecting youth to future career pathways. He supported modifying the bill to ensure younger youth remain eligible and that funding allocations more accurately reflect community need.

Reported by: Karina Garcia-Ronquillo

Date: 4/8/2026