
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5418

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

SUMMARY

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

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

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

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

KIRKLYN M. KERR PROGRAM

The bill allows for state residents to apply for a grant under the Kirklyn M. Kerr program as determined by UConn, and UConn must

award grants within available appropriations.

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

MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING AND KIRKLYN M. KERR ACCOUNT

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

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

COMMITTEE ACTION

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

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

Appropriations Committee

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