

# Legislative History for Connecticut Act

**PA 16-120**

HB5070

Senate

2923-2927

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House Transcripts have not been received. They are available on CGA website, but are not the Official copy. Contact House Clerk for assistance (860) 240-0400

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**CONNECTICUT  
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SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):

Yes, thank you, Mr. President. I move that we pass this bill temporarily.

THE CHAIR:

The motion is to pass temporarily. Is there objection? Seeing none, so ordered. Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On page 28, Calendar 574, House Bill Number 570, AN  
ACT CONCERNING HIGHER EDUCATION. It's amended by  
House Amendment Schedule A.

HB 5070

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO (13TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's joint favorable report, and I urge passage of this bill in concurrence with the House of Representatives.

THE CHAIR:

The motion before the Chamber is passage in concurrence with the House. Will you remark further?

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO (13TH):

Yes, Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, this bill is regarding the National Council for State

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Authorization and Reciprocity Agreement. That is referred to fondly as SARA, SARA agreement. It requires the Office of Higher Education to enter into an agreement to allow Connecticut and its higher education institutions to participate in a nationwide state authorization reciprocity agreement on distance learning programs. The state applies to the regional compact, which in this situation, in our case, is the New England Board of Higher Education, also referred to as NEBHE. Institutions then individually apply through the state.

It allows Connecticut schools to offer distance learning programs to out-of-state residents without waiting for the office of higher education to have to enter into a state-to-state agreement and with less cost to Connecticut institutions. It allows out-of-state institutions to participate in the reciprocity agreement and to operate distance programs without licensure from the office of higher education.

So to put that into common terms, it's without SARA, it is like Connecticut driver's license being valid only in the State of Connecticut. With SARA, it can be equated to our being able to pass through every state nationwide without having to go get a driver's license in every single state. The State of Connecticut joining does not mean that all of the Connecticut institutions have to join. It is voluntary for each institution of higher education. It has no impact on our Connecticut institutions as far as how they operate within themselves for transferring of credits, for licensure, or for any of their program approval. In order to enter into the SARA agreement, an institution must be accredited to offer two-year, four-year, or higher level degrees. Each institution must sign an

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agreement to adhere to standards and financial qualifications, more specifically the U.S. Department of Education score for financial responsibility of an institution must be 1.5 or higher. Connecticut consumer protection law is not waived, and I say that because we have explicitly added a section in this bill that spells out that the Attorney General's right and abilities are not changed in any way by membership into SARA.

SARA began in 2015, and it was due in part to a 2010 U.S. Department of Education articulating that each state would be responsible for authorizing education offered to its residents by institutions outside of the state. As of February, we have 36 states that are members of SARA, which we will then be able to participate with if we join this agreement. They are expecting to have 40 by the end of 2016. Over 600 institutions have joined, and it actually will cost our institutions less. To give an idea of that, different states have different funding schedules. Rhode Island, for instance, which we might model after, is anywhere from \$1500 per institution to 8500. Others are from 2000 to 6000, and for instance, Sacred Heart University is currently paying \$58,000 for there to be participating in 30 states. It would be no more than 8500 as opposed to 58,000. Similarly, Charter Oak is paying 40,000 as opposed to anywhere from 2000 to 8000. So with that, I urge passage of this bill.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further?  
Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

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Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. I rise in support of the legislation before us. I used to say, as the Ranking Member on the General Law Committee, that it is the best committee in the General Assembly, and it's one of the only few bipartisan committees, but now that I have the opportunity to serve on the Higher Education Workforce Development Committee with Senator Bartolomeo, I can also say the same to that committee. It's been great to work with Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Willis, and the Ranking Member, Representative Betz, down in the House.

We've done some fantastic things in that committee over the past two years, and some of those things have already flowed through Chamber, but this piece of legislation is one of the most important things that this Chamber should be passing through. I'm not going to get into all details because I think Senator Bartolomeo did a fantastic job in describing what the bill does. With that, Mr. President, I ask the Chamber's adoption of the bill before us. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. Do you care to remark further? Do you care to remark further?

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO (13TH):

Mr. President, I would ask for a roll call vote.

THE CHAIR:

The request has been made for a roll call vote. I ask that the Clerk please announce. If there are no further remarks to be made, I ask that the Clerk

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please announce that a roll call vote is in progress in the Senate.

THE CLERK:

An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

The machine is open.

THE CLERK:

An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all members have voted? Have all members have voted? Please check to see that your votes have been properly recorded. If so, the machine shall be closed, and the Clerk shall announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

House bill 5070,

Total Number Voting	33
Total Number Voting Yea	25
Total Number Voting Nay	8
Absent	3

THE CHAIR:

The bill passes. Mr. Clerk.