

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

PA 20-8

September Special Session

Emergency Certified HB 7010

House:	1618-1683	66
<u>Senate:</u>	<u>1102-1116, 1190-1191</u>	<u>17</u>
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2020 September Special Session - PA 8 - Emergency Certified [HB 7010](#) - AN ACT CONCERNING THE AUTHORIZATION OF STATE GRANT COMMITMENTS FOR SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS, THE RECOGNITION OF GOODWIN UNIVERSITY AS A LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY FOR PURPOSES OF FEDERAL LAW, CERTAIN EXCLUSIONS TO THE CALCULATION OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT'S MINIMUM BUDGET REQUIREMENT, AND DELAYING CERTAIN REVISIONS TO THE LAW REGARDING THE PROVISION OF CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Transcripts from the Joint Standing Committee Public Hearing(s) and/or Senate and House Representatives Proceedings

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Compiled 2020

Connecticut
General Assembly
House

Proceedings
2020

September Special Session

Vol. 63
Part 3
1229-1728

call Emergency Certified House Bill 7010.

CLERK:

Emergency Certification Bill No. 7010 AN ACT
CONCERNING THE AUTHORIZATION OF STATE GRANT
COMMITMENTS FOR SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS, THE
RECOGNITION OF GOODWIN UNIVERSITY AS A LOCAL
EDUCATION AGENCY FOR PURPOSES OF FEDERAL LAW,
CERTAIN EXCLUSIONS TO THE CALCULATION OF A SCHOOL
DISTRICT'S MINIMUM BUDGET REQUIREMENT, AND DELAYING
CERTAIN REVISIONS TO THE LAW REGARDING THE PROVISION
OF CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES. Introduced by
Representative Aresimowicz, Senator Looney, Senator
Duff, Representative Ritter.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Sanchez of the 25th District,
the great City of New Britton you have the floor,
sir.

REP. SANCHEZ (25TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. I move passage of
the Bill.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Question before the Chamber is on passage of the Bill. Will you remark, sir?

REP. SANCHEZ (25TH):

Yes, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before I start I would like to say it was an honor serving with you here in this Chamber and thank you for giving me the opportunity to Chair this Committee. It's a great Committee, I get so along and well with my Ranking Member, we make a good team and I hope we're both back next year [Laughter].

So, Mr. Speaker this Bill authorizes 12 school construction grants and exempts another six school construction projects from various statutory and regulatory requirements to allow them to qualify for State reimbursement grants or higher reimbursement percentages. For the grants and these exemptions are referred to as notwithstanding. And that covers Sections one through seven.

Section eight it specifies that all State laws and regulations applicable to public school operations including those on state aid and grand

eligibility apply to certain inter-district magnet school operators.

Section nine cover the MBR for fiscal year 20 and 21, the Bill allows public school districts to exclude from their minimum budget requirement calculation for the next fiscal year certainly local supplemental appropriations or federal funds they received to cover costs for associated for the COVID-19.

And then Section ten of the Bill delays until July 1st of 2021 recent changes made under the Public Act 19-1 to the law addressing how school construction contracts are awarded for construction management services.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. Will you remark? Representative McCarty of the 38th District, madam you have the floor.

REP. MC CARTY (38TH):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and it is wonderful to see you and I wish you the very best

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and if I may this personal privilege also to recognize our wonderful, fabulous Minority Leader and thank her for all of her guidance and support over the many years we heard all of the dialogue from our office so I do want to wish you both the very best. Thank you for that privilege.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, madam.

REP. MC CARTY (38TH):

So Mr. Speaker through you.

I do have a few questions for the good Chairman of the Education Committee.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Absolutely. Representative Sanchez please prepare yourself. Representative McCarty, you have the floor.

REP. MC CARTY (38TH):

Thank you. Mr. Chair if you could just explain to us the first seven sections and talked about the school priority list but for the edification of some of the Members would you just in a very cursory

fashion let the Assembly know what is a priority school list? How does the school get on the priority school list?

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Sanchez.

REP. SANCHEZ (25TH):

Just lookin for my notes here. So to the good Ranking Member and also before I continue with the answer to the question, I would also like to thank the Minority Leader for her service as well in this Chamber and for selecting the good choice as Ranking Member in the Education Committee [Chuckle].

So priority list, towns or districts must subject projects to DAS prior to June 30th in order to be eligible for the priority list. And that is forwarded to DAS, to the Legislature in December of the same year. That list becomes the priority list that is part of the School Construction Bill in the January of the following school year, following fiscal year. Notwithstanding the difference between both is that notwithstanding new projects that

appear as notwithstanding can be given a status of being on the priority list by the Legislature even if they miss the June 30th deadline. And sometimes this is referred to as jumping the list.

Notwithstanding projects still must verify all expenses just as Priority List projects must verify all expenses in order of DAS to approve any reimbursement for construction work done. So there are the differences. So a Priority School List did come in front of us in the Education Committee and we did vote on that which was 12 school projects and then afterwards the Notwithstandings came in. We do this almost every year.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative McCarty.

REP. MC CARTY (38TH):

Thank you very much for that answer. And if I may just point out that the School Priority projects are vetted very thoroughly by DAS and at the local level and they really do tremendous work looking at the scope, the enrollment. They work with the local

towns and the process is very much vetted. We have the 12 projects on the list this year and we're pleased to have those there. With the notwithstanding language, if I may, there are two projects on there that I would ask the good Chair if we could have a little more clarification and I ask on the Norwalk School Project in particular because this is a notwithstanding language school project and it does have a very significant cost which we realize. It did not go through the School Priority List process so with that, so we have more clarification would the good Chair just give a quick summary of what it will be entailed in the Norwalk School Project?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Sanchez.

REP. SANCHEZ (25TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

So with Norwalk absolutely like other projects in the past they may go on the notwithstanding list

and it's like I stated before, it's called jumping the list. But they have to follow all the same guidelines and DAS and Norwalk, the City of Norwalk have been working on this project now for over a year. They didn't get to their, to the deadline, they didn't reach the deadline in time so this is why they're asking us to put it on the notwithstanding. But the projects in there will have to go through the same process through DAS in order for anything to get done in regards to the Norwalk project. The other thing is that there is a number of different programs involved with Norwalk. They're making this connection with IBM and also Norwalk Community College where students can go to school there and as they are getting their high school diploma they also can work towards their associates degree and get that when they leave the school. So Norwalk High School will be part of this, this new unit with IBM and the college will be also part of it. They're also adding, there will be services for students outside of Norwalk,

surrounding towns particularly Stamford and Bridgeport where they plan on recruiting about 100 students from each one of those towns to be part of this program. The fact that this project seems to be very costly, it actually beforehand it was almost at \$225 million dollars which was really high. It went down to \$189 million dollars so the project is that. The part that the State would be responsible for is about \$150 million dollars, \$151 million dollars because they are asking for an 80 percent reimbursement rate on the school.

The project also has a very old building that is about 50 years old which is the main building and in order for them to do a new part of the building they will start one section first, knock one section down, move the students into that new section and so it's gonna be in phases. So this is a project that is probably gonna take a number of years to complete and that's why there is so much cost involved to. They are not gonna be using any portables to house the students. So basically they knock one section

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out, build it and move the students around. And again they have to go through the same process with the Department of Administrative Services and it's a project, you know, when I checked with DAS they have been involved with this project. The mayor of Norwalk has been involved, the council has been involved, everyone is involved with this project. It's just that they didn't meet that deadline and this is why they are on the notwithstanding list. I hope I answered your question.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative McCarty.

REP. MC CARTY (38TH):

Yes, you did and I thank you for that. If I may just point out however because this project does have quite a significant cost and it was outside the process if I may just suggest going forward that we try to keep our projects going through the priority list process because that does allow for more vetting, it allows the Committee to ask questions and it also allows the Education Committee to pose

questions. So I would just ask since it did raise some concerns, I know you had explained very well that it will meet all the requirements and I believe the application will have to be in by the end of this year in December. So with that, just a suggestion that going forward that we have all of the information in advance and that it makes the Priority School List.

With that, I may just ask one question concerning the notwithstanding. These projects naturally add to the cost of the school building projects but is there a cap on school building projects?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you, madam. Representative Sanchez.

REP. SANCHEZ (25TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

No there is no cap. What they wanted to do this year is to maintain the amount of money, the amount of bonding under \$500 million dollars and

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this total packet comes out to about \$445 million dollars and in recent years, in past years, school projects had been a lot higher. I mean there were times where I remember being here and some construction school projects were close to a billion dollars for the total construction bill. But in the last three to four years that number has been dropping substantially so this year it will be under that \$500 million dollars but there is no cap.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative McCarty.

REP. MC CARTY (38TH):

Yes, Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for that explanation because I think some of the concerns may have been would this new notwithstanding possibly impact adversely any of the other school projects and you've answered that clearly that there will be no adverse impact on the other projects and it is under the ideal which was \$500 million dollars and as you've clearly pointed out over these last years the Department of

Administrative Service has done an excellent job in trying to keep the costs of the projects at a reasonable level.

With that, if I may just and then we will move to the other Sections for one moment, but on the other school, the school in Danbury if you would just give an overview of that project.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Sanchez.

REP. SANCHEZ (25TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, Danbury has we all know in the last couple of years has seen quite a few more students because they have been moving people from nearby New York moving into Danbury and they have seen, I think, close to 400 more new students in their school district. So there is an overcrowding problem in the City of Danbury. Danbury again has found a commercial space where they can develop it and this language here is a pilot so it's not something that

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can be done over again. It's gonna be a pilot where they're gonna use this commercial space to build this new addition to I think their high school if I'm not mistaken where they can house about four to five hundred students and this is why Danbury is also asking for a higher percentage rate which is also 80 percent and their project is not to exceed \$93 million dollars but it can go way below that because again what they're doing is they are fixing this commercial space that they have in this city and they are hoping to also purchase some land next to it so that they can build a future school on that land. I hope that answers your question on Danbury.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative McCarty.

REP. MC CARTY (38TH):

Yes, yes it does very well and I think that was the Section of the Bill where it designated it as a pilot program so that was for clarification for my colleagues.

And then if we move off the notwithstanding to

the last few Sections of the Bill. If you look at Section 8 of the Bill it talks about Goodwin University and establishing the status of Goodwin would be inter-district magnet schools that are in that area run by Learn the REST Learn. Evidently this particular project did not have an LEA status, am I reading that correctly that the intent of that Section is to offer the LEA status so that the magnet schools would be eligible for federal funding. Is that correct?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Sanchez.

REP. SANCHEZ (25TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. That is correct.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative McCarty.

REP. MC CARTY (38TH):

Thank you very much and then if we move to Section 9. Section 9 deals with the MBRs and just for my colleagues none of that language is new

except for the one section dealing with Covid funding and that the local districts cannot use that funding for the MBR. Is that correct?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Sanchez.

REP. SANCHEZ (25TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

That is correct. It's unique because of the fact that many of these school districts receive dollars, federal dollars for COVID-19 and some received \$300,000 dollars, some received a million dollars and they just want to make sure some of the school district, well all the school districts want to make sure it is not used against them in the MBR, that particular funding that came in from the federal government. But the language, all the rest of the language is the same, nothing is changed but just the addition of that COVID-19.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative McCarty.

REP. MC CARTY (38TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you very much for that clarification. And that brings us to the very last Section of the Bill and I believe that is just extending out the date for the construction managers from a Bill that was previously passed and we're asking for more time to review that.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Is that correct?

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Sanchez.

REP. SANCHEZ (25TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

That is correct, they are just asking for a one-year extension so that during, so next session they can, all stakeholders can come to the table and talk about how they can come up with a deal moving forward when it comes to school construction projects.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative McCarty.

REP. MC CARTY (38TH):

Okay, thank you very much Mr. Speaker and that takes me to the end of my questions. And I would again just like to thank my good Chairman for his cooperation and collegiality and I would recommend and ask my colleagues to please support this important Bill that really protects all of our students throughout the State of Connecticut. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, madam. Representative Pavalock for what purpose do you rise, madam?

REP. PAVALOCK-D'AMATO (77TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request permission to recuse myself for a conflict of interest.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Chamber will stand at ease. The Chamber will come back to order.

Representative Wilson-Pheanious of the 53rd
Madam, you have the floor.

REP. WILSON PHEANIOUS (53RD):

Thank you, sir.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Don't rush, we'll wait.

REP. WILSON PHEANIOUS (53RD):

Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of this Bill hoping that it goes through. I want to say thank you on behalf of the Birch Grove School in Tolland. It's one of the many worthy projects that are in this Bill. The Birch Grove School is one that was seriously affected by pyrrhotite and we ended up having to replace and entire school foundation. That was last year's Bill. This year we, during construction, found soft sand under the construction and that required an additional fix and so we are here again in gratitude for the support we receive from the Education Committee and from this body. I have to thank in particular Representative Sanchez, Representative McCarty and all the Members of your Committees that they actually came out to Birch Grove to see the damage to see the school, to meet the children, to

talk to the parents and our community will be forever grateful for that special attention. I also want to say that the project is on time, coming in on budget and the children are very excited that in the school of August 23, 2021 we expect in the coming school year these children will have a new school. So I want to thank the Education Committee and all of the people that have worked so hard to make this a possibility because those children are deserving. This was a terrible event in our town, in Tolland and we are just tremendously grateful for the attention and citizen given and we, are kids and especially in our parents. They have been in those portable school buildings now for nearly a year and everyone is looking very forward to the school as we watch it go up before our eyes. So again in great gratitude and with great support, support all of the projects in this Bill but especially Paragraph Six. Thank you very much for your attention and perhaps we can move on with the vote. Thank you.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you, madam. Will you remark further on the Bill before us? Representative Candelora of the 86th, you have the floor.

REP. CANDELORA (86TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I have a couple of questions for the proponent.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Sanchez please prepare yourself. Representative Candelora please proceed.

REP. SANCHEZ (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Chairman and the Ranking Member and the Members of the Education Committee for all their good work on this such important school construction bill. But I do want to focus a little bit on Section 5. My understanding is that overall we have an allotment of appropriations in the general fund for school construction and as we go through this process of the Priority List there are certain hurdles that need to be jumped and achieved before schools get onto that list. And I am just wondering why in

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particular, I know we're notwithstanding the application process and we're gonna be delaying or giving more time for the district to submit their applications. Why are we increasing the reimbursement rates? I believe the original reimbursement rates for this city is around 30 percent and why are we going to 80 percent?

Through you.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Sanchez.

REP. SANCHEZ (25TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, with between talks with DAS, and the City of Norwalk, and Senator Duff and other members of the delegation that number is what they came up with. And I'm thinkin it's because of the magnitude of the project and because of the fact that they have to, in every case, they have to follow what they, with the plan where is the IBM School, the college, all that has to be in place before they can get percentage. So they are still not out of the

woods, I mean all this still has to go through and be approved from DAS but this is a number they came up with of 80 percent.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And in Line 87 there is reference to a 50 percent reimbursement rate for a natatorium. Could the good Representative, could you tell me what a natatorium is?

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Sanchez.

REP. SANCHEZ (25TH):

It's a swimming pool that they are going to be adding onto the school and it's my understanding that they get a 50 percent rate of 50 percent rate of whatever is allotted to them. In this Bill they're gonna get 100 percent of that 50 percent.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have any further questions but I do want to bring some information to the Chamber. As I understand it, you know, we've, I know our annual allotments for school construction has fluctuated but over the last decade we have certainly seen some struggles on our State budget and Lord knows we know the struggles have been difficult. And in the past budget cycle we allotted \$437 million dollars in 2020 and \$419 million dollars in 2021 to fund our school construction projects. As I am reading this Bill it is putting our total allotment up over \$444 million dollars. Now there is some significance to this because where we were, and what we can afford and when we passed the Bond Bill that legislation was passed on March 11th before the pandemic hit us and before our revenue numbers dropped. And unfortunately when Consensus Revenue was done which was, you know, sort of our trigger that was done in April before we really knew, we still don't know what our real revenue numbers are and because of

that concern this side of the aisle had requested that the governor use his executive power and adopt new revenue numbers in July and do a Consensus Revenue Process in July when all of the new tax payments came in because they were all delayed into July so we had a better handle on where the State of Connecticut would be. That never happened.

We also have a statutory requirement that the Finance Committee needs to meet before July first if there are changes in circumstances that may cause us to want to look at our revenue numbers. And regardless every July we need to go in and take that vote. That never happens. So now we're here today approving more bonding and what people should notice is that when the treasurer has been issuing these debt service letters, in these letters they are basing this information off April numbers. So right now our bonding capacity in the latest is putting us somewhere at 83 percent. But there is a footnote here that says Consensus Revenue estimated on April 20th, sorry, April 2020 by OPM and OFA revised

estimate revenues downward by \$2.7 billion from the original adopted revenues. Using the adjusted revenue amounts the debt limit calculation would result in a debt limit percentage of 98.24 percent which I believe will cause the State of Connecticut, once we have new revenue numbers, that we're gonna need to look to cancel 9 percent of our bonded indebtedness. Yet today we're potentially moving forward on a project that is over potentially \$185 million dollars of State dollars. And what I find so offensive about this project is, it is leapfrogging over our entire process that we have set up and I know this process has evolved. Typically we never used to need to have local approval before projects got on the grant list. We now require that local approval because what would happen is the State would approve too many projects and they would never come to fruition. I heard discussions of comparisons of the Ram High School got this amount of money, well that money did get approved at some point in time by this Legislature

and guess what, the project never happened because it was never far enough long down the tracks in order to get that funding. And now today we are faced with potentially having to cancel bond projects a month from now, worthy projects that might be shovel ready because we're gonna put this project on the books. It's gonna leapfrog everything else.

And I get particularly upset because I know what my town is going through right now. We have a high school that has a basement that is flooded 364 days a year. We've gone through the agonizing process of trying to get our school approved. Thirty percent of my town is made up of public utility so the tax dollars we receive in are limited and we have about a 50 percent reimbursement rate and so the town struggles to make the decisions. They got their application in on July first and they broke their backs to get it in, to start the process and get on the Priority List. And I sit here today and I explained to them how they needed to do it.

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We were working with DAS and OPM and we had all those conversations and yet this project is gonna leapfrog even over my town that is trying to get into the hopper at a point in time where potentially 98 percent of our indebtedness is gonna be sucked up two months from now. I know, you know, so much we talk about in this Chamber about fairness, you know, part of our discussions that we've tried to do is to make things fairer that we've seen it with the Police Accountability Bill and this Energy Bill. You know, we talk about trying to be fair to everybody and look at people that are impoverished or in different positions but we had private conversations in a room that generates this type of Section 5 and to me this is the definition of privileged that so much in this Chamber we rail against externally and so because of that, the Clerk is in possession of LCO 4472. I ask that it be called and I be allowed to summarize.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Will the Clerk please call LCO No. 4472

designated as House Amendment Schedule "A".

CLERK:

House Amendment Schedule "A" offered by
Representative Candelora and Representative O'Dea.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative seeks leave of the Chamber to
summarize the Amendment. Is there objection? Is
there objection? Hearing none, Representative
Candelora you have the floor.

REP. CANDELORA (86TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker this
Amendment merely strikes Section 5 which would be to
eliminate this project at this time. It would
reduce the State Construction Bill by \$185 million
dollars and I move adoption.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Question before the Chamber is on adoption of
the Amendment. Will you remark? Will you remark?
Representative Sanchez, oops, Representative
Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86TH):

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I just want to ask that when the vote be taken it be taken by role.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Yea absolutely, Representative. Under the circumstances we're operating limit folks in the Chamber it's an automatic roll call vote so we will do that, sir. Thank you. Representative Sanchez.

REP. SANCHEZ (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As much as I know that this is a really costly project, I ask that my colleagues reject the Amendment. I'd like to keep this Bill intact as it is at this moment.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. Now we have an Amendment on the Board. There are other people wishing to speak. So if you're in the Chamber and you would like to speak on the Amendment, just raise your hand so I can see you. Representative O'Dea of the 125th, you have the floor.

REP. O'DEA (125TH):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I stand

briefly in support of this Amendment. I live in the neighboring town of New Canaan and no doubt that this school project is obviously grand and something that I'm sure the proponent of this project, I know Senator Duff is a proponent, and like to see happen. However as my good colleague stated we are in a fiscal crisis. UConn is facing a \$76 million dollar deficit and they are asking us for \$28 million and UConn Health is facing a \$76.9 million dollar deficit and is asking for \$76 million dollars. We passed a lot of spending over the last couple years and while I appreciate the needs, if you read some articles about the projects, the local school boards had suggested an \$11 million dollar renovation of the current high school not a new high school. They also suggested a bigger need was in the elementary schools. It appears as though we're trying to force the local municipality how to spend the money beyond what the local school board wants to do. And certainly I appreciate the desire for further funding New Canaan as I've said here in the Chamber

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many times, we get less than a penny back from the dollars we send up to Hartford. Some would argue that is ineffective legislators. But here we can't afford this project. It is taking up so much of the bonding so I ask my colleagues to please support this Amendment and vote yes. Thank you.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. Will you remark further on the Amendment before us? Representative Perillo of the 137th, you have the floor, sir.

REP. PERILLO (137TH):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise in opposition to his Amendment. We are obviously the composition is focusing on our fiscal situation and we are in an overall and uncertain about where we are going in our fiscal state. However we also need to look at, you know, if we're gonna talk about, you know, the cost of things. You have to also take into account when you look at, you know, the project that is being discussed the cost of inaction in this case, I believe, is I think its problematic because

you're talking about a facility that is 50 years old, it's basically reached the end of its shelf-life. You know, you're looking at, you know, increased maintenance costs, cost of operation and that kind of thing going forward. So while, you know, they're talking about \$11 million dollars that they want to put towards the school, that does not buy us much time. We're gonna have to have this conversation about whether to rebuild the school and redo the school going forward.

Now it's been mentioned that, you know, IBM has something to do with some part of the school. Let me be specific about what that is. In 2014 with the help of the governor and the speaker we brought something called P-Tech and P-Tech was a program that was started in Brooklyn with IBM in partnership with IBM and the idea is create an apprentice program in Computer Science. So you're takin kids from all different walks, you know, all different backgrounds, largely disadvantaged kids and giving them the opportunity to get involved in computer

science and earn an associate's degree in computer science at the same time that they are getting their high school diploma. The projections, the focus on the Norwalk P-Tech is that they, you know, IBM is so keen on what's going on in Norwalk they want to expand it and you're now talking, basically if this goes through and it works out, it's going to be even bigger than the Brooklyn Program which is, but more importantly it's going to be bringing in kids from all over the region that can use this education. This is life-changing education and to go the opposite way to say well this school is gonna get built or somehow this is going to be addressed with 1971 technology with, you know, cement forms, you know, holding up construction. This thing, this school is dated. It does not have the capacity that, you know, really grown into a new school with renovations. Basically you need to have an institution that can grow with the projected student population and the needs of Norwalk as a whole, you know, the demographic trend. And the current school

can't focus on, you know, right now is that it, to me the school doesn't or it won't. So I am in fierce opposition of this Amendment [Laugh] and because I think that we really need to focus on the future of Norwalk. Thank you.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, Representative. Will you remark further on the Amendment before us? Representative Arora of the 151st you have the floor, sir.

REP. ARORA (151ST):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be brief here. I want to make a few points. We all agree the importance of making sure that the facilities for schools are improved and when needed newly built. The concern we have this fiscal year and the fact that this project seems out of line in terms of its cost when compared to other projects within the State and out of the State. I want to point out three facts.

Number one, the median high school in the

United States which is about 175-200,00 square feet costs \$235 dollars per square feet for a total of \$45 million dollars, \$235 dollars per square feet. Now Connecticut I think is 10 percent more or 20 percent more, so maybe \$260 I would say. The normal high as currently proposed is 300,000 square feet, a little over 300,00 square feet project and at \$189 million dollars it's close to \$600 dollars a square feet. So just to compare 235 is the U.S. average, 250-260 should be Connecticut average and \$600 dollars per square feet. High end luxury buildings across in New York City like Four Seasons cost \$500 dollars a square feet. So we need to definitely study this further and as was said, we are leapfrogging the due diligence process which we always use. So I really ask bipartisan support for this Amendment. That we should give more time, in a time of fiscal crisis not to adopt a project that is \$600 dollars a square feet, more than double, more than double the cost in the United States and I would humbly suggest that next year, in the next

session, once the more due diligence has been done this project can come back. We are not saying that it should not be done, we think this doesn't look right, let's just do a study or more look into it so it gets the requisite proposal and so I strongly urge my colleagues across the aisle as well as my colleagues in my caucus to support this Amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. Again there are many people on the Board, we have the Amendment that is proposed is there anybody wishing to speak on the Amendment? Representative Dathan of the 142nd, madam you now have the floor.

REP. DATHAN (142ND):

Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. First I want to say it has been an honor to have my first term with you as Speaker and appreciate all your leadership that you have given to this Chamber over the last several years but just not quite two years for me, so thank you so much.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you, madam.

REP. DATHAN (142ND):

I want to speak out against this Amendment.

You know, we have this wonder P-Tech Program that my colleague Representative Perone was talking about that offers a lot of jobs for kids in this area and an opportunity for them to cutdown on college debt because they are getting their education and they are getting college credits so they are saving themselves a lot of money and a lot of future debt. So that is right and it's also keeping these kids in Connecticut which is helping our local economy. If we do not do this program IBM is going to be looking in other places to expand this program. It has been that successful for them that they would like to do that. So there is a lot of evidence that we need to keep these projects in our State to increase the number of young people, talented young people in our State to grow our economy. It really is an investment in our future and I really feel that we

need to move forward and not backward. I do also want to add this program also is an expansion of the Visual Arts and Performing Program which may have an impact on the cost but it is going to a center of excellence for these in our State. This current high school that we have is over 50 years old. It was designed after a prison, not that esthetics have anything to do with whether we do an update or not but it is something that we should also consider. Please also recognize that the Norwalk Board of Education and the Norwalk City Council have all approved the new Norwalk High School including authorizing local bond money as well. The mayor is 100 percent behind this and I have spoken to him directly and he is in support. So I'm gonna conclude my remarks but I would like my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to oppose this Amendment. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, Madam. Will you remark further on the Amendment before us? Representative

Rebimbas of the 70th District, Madam you have the floor.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll make this brief. I wasn't going to comment on the Amendment but I think I feel a duty and a responsibility to and we know that's dangerous when it's after midnight.

But Mr. Speaker I do rise in strong support of the Amendment that is before us. Now we've heard all of the fiscal arguments. I believe Representative Candelora certainly highlighted that and made a perfect argument as to how this even on the books, may impact future necessary projects and bonding. It also unfortunately leaps, as he described it, ahead of all the other projects that were properly filed in a timely basis. So I heard over and over today and previously that the best way to pass legislation in this building is in a bipartisan manner. There is no better process for a bipartisan manner but the process we have being

properly vetted and selected through the Committee process. This item was not gone through the Committee process. What we are essentially doing now is allowing a very expensive project that has not been vetted, that statements in this room contradict reports and articles, contradicts a variety of different things, I hear elementary schools in Norwalk need to, are on a priority. I don't know who to believe. I didn't have the opportunity to ask because this was placed on this list for us to vote right here, right now with no further discussion. That's not a bipartisan manner. That is not the process we have for school construction and it's not just all fiscal, its respect the process. Respect all the other schools. No doubt we want IBM to stay, we want IBM to invest and I hope they invest in Norwalk and I look forward to bringing students from across the State and I hope those students then stay in the State of Connecticut and continue to invest. But what are we saying about the elementary school in Norwalk that

is a priority or an elementary school in any other place in the State of Connecticut. We just heard about flooding in a school that can't get funding. And we have a project of his case, this magnitude that we are now saying we want to fund for 80 percent of the project without any vetting, without any respect of the process, why. At this hour, why? A special session, why? And it's not gonna be done anytime soon. Why are we then addressing this now? Let's respect the project that the good Representative I heard from on the other side, that the Committee took the time to go to the town, examine the project, meet the kids, meet the students. I encourage everyone to please take a moment, we've been here all day. I understand. I want to go home to. But take a moment. Think about why we're up here and what we're doing. It's not all about the money but it's about the respect of the process. So, Mr. Speaker as much as I hope and I wish that we'd have more opportunities for these exchanges, I'll take this opportunity to say thank

you, for your leadership and mentorship as well.

And so to the rest of the Chamber I ask you to
please support the Amendment.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, Madam. Will you
remark further on the Amendment before us? If not
will the Staff and guests please come to the Well of
the House. Members take your seats, the machine will
be open. [Ringing]

CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll,
Members prepare yourself to vote. The House of
Representatives is voting by roll, Members prepare
to vote.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

IF all the members voted please check the board
to ensure that your vote is properly cast. If all
members have voted, the machine will be locked and
the Clerk will take a tally. Representative
D'Agostino for what purposes do you rise, sir?

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. Please record my vote in the negative.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. Representative Wilson-Pheanious for what purposes do you rise, Madam?

REP. WILSON PHEANIOUS (53RD):

I rise to record by vote in the negative.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

So noted. Representative Simms, for what purpose do you rise, sir? Push your button, sir so we can get you on the system, turn on one second. Give 'em one second. Okay, Representative please proceed.

REP. SIMMS (140TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand to cast my vote in the negative.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Vote is so noted. Have all the Members voted? Representative Arora of the 151st, sir for what purposes do you rise?

REP. ARORA (151ST):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to record my vote in support of the Amendment.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Arora in the affirmative. Thank you, sir. Representative Ritter of the 1st District, for what purposes do you rise, sir?

REP. RITTER (1ST):

Mr. Speaker this is important and may not affect the tally but it is important. So Representative Perone has definitely hit the "No" button on the Amendment on his side, I can see it. I don't know how the technology works so if the button is lit up and it does appear it was done by computer so Representative Stallworth did that, so I think we're fine. We just want to make sure that the computer vote shows up on your board and it looks like it does. If you go by it, you can see it here so I think we're all set. Representative Perone if there is anything, obviously let the Speaker know but I think we're all set. Sorry about

that. Thank you.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, Representative. Have all the Members voted. If all the Members have voted, please check the board to ensure that your vote has been properly cast. If all the Members have voted, the machine will be locked. The Clerk will take a tally.

The Clerk will announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Amendment Schedule "A"

Total Number Voting	137
Necessary for Adoption	69
Those voting Yea	51
Those voting Nay	86
Absent not voting	14

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The Amendment is rejected [Gavel]. Will you remark further on the Bill before us?
Representative Gucker of the 138th sir, you have the floor.

REP. GUCKER (138TH):

Good Morning, Mr. Speaker. We seem to have these late nights together and it's great to see you again.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

It's good to see you, sir.

REP. GUCKER (138TH):

I rise in strong support of this Bill. This is actually the Bill that I really wanted to talk about tonight because as you know, school construction has been very important to my district. Actually had three schools that are being directly affected by this. My little town of New Fairfield where I grew up is in dire need of two new schools. We've gone through the process. Knowing that I've gong to those schools myself and being a graduate of those schools, I knew the poor conditions of them, I hate to tell you how long ago, probably some 35 years ago and they haven't gotten much better. So I support us going forward with that.

Second of all supporting the City of Danbury.

The City of Danbury, we as you know are dealing with an overpopulation problem in our schools. We have the largest high school in the State of Connecticut and we're looking to expand beyond that. These Bills, this Bill would go very far to helping us achieve those goals. So I request that all my colleagues on both side of the aisle support this. This is great for our communities and I believe that it's a long time waiting. So again, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. Representative Godfrey of the 110th, sir, you have the floor.

REP. GODFREY (110TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to do some thank yous, certainly to the both the Ranking Member, thank you Representative McCarty for talking about the Danbury Section of this Bill and certainly Bobby Sanchez. The Danbury delegation, both parties, all that good stuff, both Houses, came and started talking about this proposal BC - Before

Covid, so we've been working on it a long time and I know that the language didn't actually coalesce until yesterday. Working out, you know, the devil is always in the details and so working out those details was a problematic, cause we had as Representative McCarty already observed we're trying something new. We're trying to deal with using, of purchasing a commercial property in order to build a, in order to build a high school. The population in the Danbury School System is tremendously overcrowded. I think you mentioned this year's numbers, last year there was 650 kids more than anticipated. It go to the point where in our high school, they had to extend the time between classes because the corridors were so crowded the kids couldn't move in the time allotted from one room to another. It got that bad and this particular proposal is for, what we're calling, the Danbury Academy which is a high school level school. And it kinda just begins that due to overcrowding, don't be surprised if we're gonna be coming back asking for

more help for additional schooling next year. But when Commissioner Cordona has been just wonderful in coming to Danbury very early in his term, seeing the overcrowding in person, kind of shaking his head and making a promise he's keeping, to help us out with this huge overcrowding issue. I know around the State a lot of school districts, most school districts are seeing decreasing enrollment. Not true in Danbury and some of our suburban towns too. It's just climbing rapidly and, you know, we haven't seen census numbers yet and we haven't seen the projections but you're absolutely right, we're seeing a very large influx since the coronavirus started from nearby New York State, from Westchester that are coming in that are buying homes, the realtors are really happy about it but's it gonna put additional pressure on our school system and being able to work this out with the commissioner with the leadership of the Education Committee with the governor's office to get this in. We're very, very grateful. I think I can speak for the entire

delegation to say, thank you, thank you so very much. Thank you all for the work you've done on this and for including in this Bill. So I certainly urge everybody to vote for and Mr. Speaker, it has been a delight working with you for a very long time it seems. We go back more than a few years don't we? And thank you for your trust and your confidence, your hard work and your friendship. Thank you.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you, Bob. I really appreciate that. Thank you, Representative. Will you remark further on the Bill before us? Representative D'Agostino of the 91st you have the floor, sir.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you as well for, conveying for the Town of Hampton, to the Chairman to the Ranking Member for shepherding this Bill through. We've got a school, a middle school waiting on the project list. I won't go into the details of it. I just wanted to thank you, thank

the Finance, Revenue and Bond Chairs as well and also just note for the record as well, thanks to a group of people who we all know what I don't think are really recognized enough and that the School Construction Unit and the administration. We all know them very well. I have never run into a more dedicated, detail oriented and thoughtful group of administrators and professionals than the School Construction Unit. The Town of Hamden is facing racial imbalance, increased special education needs, increased poverty and this project involves the wholistic response to that taking our elementary schools and going from K-6, to K-5 and moving the sixth grade to the middle school. And the people at the School Construction Unit sat down with us, meeting after meeting to make sure that this plan wasn't just about constructing a new wing at the middle school but really dealt with the systemic response to these problems. They really worked their way through it. I was so impressed with them and I remember a lot of handwringing frankly around

here when it was announced that that group was moving from DAS to OPM and I am here to tell you, Mr. Speaker from my perspective titles don't matter, department doesn't matter, people matter and these are some of the best professionals the State has to offer so I wanted to thank them.

And as long as I've got the mic and you've got the dais, Mr. Speaker, real quick I just want to stay when I played high school football, you know, my coach was more than just a coach. We used to say about old Lon Carbone from Hamden that he taught you not only how to play football but how to live your life. The lessons you learned on the field translated into lessons to life. And I didn't think I'd really say that about anybody else again, until I got here. And I want to say unequivocally that the lessons you've conveyed to me, to all of us about how to conduct ourselves in here, about how to be legislators, about how to live, those lessons made us not only better legislators but better people and thank you for it. We're gonna miss you

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but we will miss your person but those lessons are gonna live on in this Chamber. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. Greatly appreciated. Thank you. Will you remark further on the Bill before us? Representative O'Dea of the 125th, sir you have the floor.

REP. O'DEA (125TH):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just a couple of questions to the good proponent. My understanding again with Section 5, my question addresses the number of students outside of Norwalk who are eligible for the program. My understanding in reading some press articles is that about a hundred students outside of Norwalk will be able to attend this school program or this new high school of about 2,000 people, about 100 from out of Norwalk. Is that your understanding?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Sanchez.

REP. SANCHEZ (25TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

You're correct.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative O'Dea.

REP. O'DEA (125TH):

And so there is gonna be a priority given to students from Stamford and Bridgeport according to Line 75. Does that mean all 100 will come from Stamford and Bridgeport the clarity or will there be kids from, for example, I represent New Canaan and Wilton, will students from New Canaan and Wilton be eligible?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Sanchez.

REP. SANCHEZ (25TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

It's my understanding that it might be even more than a hundred. But it is also my

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understanding that they want to bring in students from surrounding towns and when I spoke to the Senator it was a hundred probably from Stamford and probably a hundred from Bridgeport. So I think they're talking about a lot more students coming into the school.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative O'Dea.

REP. O'DEA (125TH):

Thank you very much. So the testing of. How does the process go as to which students will be eligible to go and which ones won't, or who is gonna develop that?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Sanchez.

REP. SANCHEZ (25TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I really don't know. I imagine it's through a lottery system but I don't know. I haven't checked on that. The good Representative from Norwalk may

know, I don't know.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative O'Dea.

REP. O'DEA (125TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I could just find out that information at some point that would be helpful. And then the natatorium, the indoor pool, are there gonna be students from outside of Norwalk be able to go to that indoor pool and what is it gonna be used for?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Sanchez.

REP. SANCHEZ (25TH):

It's my understanding that every student that goes to school will have access to that pool.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative O'Dea.

REP. O'DEA (125TH):

Including those outside who don't go to the school but live in surrounding towns? In other

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words, is it only for students at the school or can students from outside that school attend or use the pool?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Sanchez.

REP. SANCHEZ (25TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I think only students that attend the school.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative O'Dea.

REP. O'DEA (125TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I just want to say thank you to you, Mr. Speaker as someone who represented both sides of the aisle. I had known the previous Speaker, Speaker Sharkey well. He also was a Speaker for all of us as you have been. I've really enjoyed our time together and I am looking forward to working in whatever capacity going forward with you into the future and perhaps meeting on the football field, "Go Rams" and Dennis will

hopefully, we're gonna have a lot more time together outside the Chamber as well. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and thank you Dennis.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you very much, sir. Will you remark further? Representative Simms of the 140th, you have the floor.

REP. SIMMS (140TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to echo the words of my colleagues. You know, Norwalk High School, I'm an alma mater, that's my alma mater, I graduated from Norwalk High School when I'll tell you that stating that this school needs to be new, is an understatement. This school is something that is a threat to our children and I think first and foremost safety comes first for our faculty, our parents and most importantly for our students. And to state that we do not need a new school because of budgetary reasons or what have you, I think safety has to have precedence

here. Our kids are at a bad place with going to the school every day and I think that this school needs to be tore down, built new and this will be a great investment for Connecticut, it will be a great investment for Norwalk and most importantly for our students. So I ask all my colleagues to please support this initiative, this is well overdue and I thank you for the time, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY (110TH):

Thank you, sir. The gentleman from Brookfield, Representative Harding.

REP. HADDAD (54TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to rise and thank everyone, I want to thank the good Chair of the Educational Committee and the good Ranking Member for all their hard work on this particular Bill. I know that Representative Godfrey mentioned all the good work that will be addressing needs in Danbury in this Bill which I am fortunate to have a piece of Danbury with Representative Godfrey and be part of the Danbury delegation. And also to the new

elementary school that will be built in Brookfield and its critical funds to address a critical need in our growing town and addressing a new elementary school and it was a school that the elementary school that we currently have was really frankly in disrepair when I was in the elementary school and we need a new school and when this Bill is providing the funds to do that I want to thank the good Chairman and Ranking Member for making this possible and having that in the Bill. And just as everyone was saying, I want to thank the Speaker for his service to our State and our Country and thank the Minority Leader for all her great work over the years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY (110TH):

Thank you, sir. Representative Dathan.

REP. DATHAN (142ND):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker for giving me a second chance to speak this evening on this now, speaking on the Bill. First I wanted to thank the Educational Committee, our esteemed Chairman and our

Ranking Member you did a great job and thank you for your work on this. I'm also very pleased to see the investment going into Jefferson Elementary School also in Norwalk, it's really important for that elementary school.

The reason I wanted to speak, I just wanted to clarify Representative O'Dea's some of his questions in regards to the students. Norwalk has a couple of magnet schools that students are drawn in from other districts and that has been very successful. And also the other high school in Norwalk, Brian McMahon High School also has a number of choice programs where students come from other districts to attend those choice programs. It is my understanding now that the current P-Tech Program does draw from some students that applied for the program and they have to want to be able to come. It is definitely a choice program. So it's really just the expansion of that is from what my understanding is. So Thank you very much for letting me add those comments. And I urge my colleagues to support this Bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY (110TH):

Thank you, Madam. Will you remark further on the Bill? Will you remark further on the Bill? If not will the Staff and guests please come to the Well of the House. Members take your seats or your mouses and the machine will be open. [Ringing]

CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll,
Members please prepare to vote. The House of Representatives is voting by roll, Members prepare vote.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Mushinsky for what purpose do you rise, Madam?

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH):

Mr. Speaker, my computer is turned on in the other building but I'm over here so I request to vote in the affirmative from my desk.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Porter. Mushinsky in the affirmative.

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REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH):

Thank you.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thank you. Representative D'Agostino of the
91st for what purpose do you rise, sir?

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST):

In the affirmative, please Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative D'Agostino in the affirmative.
Representative Wilson-Pheanious for what purpose do
you rise, Madam?

REP. WILSON PHEANIOUS (53RD):

I rise to vote in the affirmative on this Bill.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Wilson-Pheanious in the
affirmative. Representative Simms of the 140th.

REP. SIMMS (140TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand to vote in the
affirmative.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Representative Simms in the affirmative. Are

there any other Members in the Chamber that are still logged on their computer who wish to vote here? Seeing none, have all members voted? Have all members voted? Will the members please check the board to determine if your vote is properly cast. If all members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

The Clerk will please announce the tally.

CLERK:

Mr. Speaker, if I may before I announce the tally, I would just like to say that it has been my honor to serve with you while you were Speaker of the House. I wish you nothing but the best going forward and rest assured you are and always will be the pride of Berlin.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

Thanks, Fred.

CLERK:

Bill No. HB 7010.

Total Number Voting	137
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Necessary for Passage	69
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sp

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Those voting Yea 99

Those voting Nay 38

Absent not voting 14

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ (30TH):

The Bill passes [Gavel]. Representative Ritter of the 1st District, sir for what purpose do you rise?

REP. RITTER (1ST):

I'm very confused. I thought the Pride of Berlin was Matt DeLorenzo, it's not. It's the Speaker. We need to show because he always tells me in Franklin that he is the pride of Berlin but the Clerk has set us straight. We also want to announce that I suspect we'll be back around Christmas because we all want to see each other again for the holidays, so don't think we're done. Okay, we'll do the speeches and videos, we'll do it all over again. But more importantly with business on the Chamber's desk here I would move that we immediately transmit all items awaiting further action in the Senate immediately. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

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Vol. 63

Part 3

931-1194

CLERK:

House Joint Resolution No. 7005.

Total number voting	36
Those voting Yea	35
Those voting Nay	1
Absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. The bill passes. [Gavel].
Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

House Bill No. 7010, AN ACT CONCERNING THE
AUTHORIZATION OF STATE GRANT COMMITMENTS FOR SCHOOL
BUILDING PROJECTS, THE RECOGNITION OF GOODWIN
UNIVERSITY AS A LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY FOR PURPOSES
OF FEDERAL LAW, CERTAIN EXCLUSIONS TO THE
CALCULATION OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT'S MINIMUM BUDGET
REQUIREMENT, AND DELAYING CERTAIN REVISIONS TO THE
LAW REGARDING THE PROVISION OF CONSTRUCTION
MANAGEMENT SERVICES.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Would the Senate stand at
ease for a moment?

THE CHAIR:

BB
Senate

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The Senate will stand at ease. Mr. Majority Leader.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I would now like to yield to Senator McCrory.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McCrory, do you accept the yield?

SENATOR MCCRORY (2ND):

Yes, Mr. President, thank you. Mr. President, I move passage of the emergency certified bill in concurrence with the House and seek leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is made for passage. Please summarize.

SENATOR MCCRORY (2ND):

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, this is our annual school construction bill. Basically, this bill authorizes 12 school construction grants totaling \$290 million dollars towards total project cost of \$503 million dollars. Under the State School Construction Grant Program, the state reimburses towns and local districts for a percentage of eligible school construction costs. The towns pay a portion of the cost and the state picks up the rest. This bill consists of 10 sections. Section 1 speaks to 12 districts that are on our school priority list. They include

Brookfield, Darien, Mansfield, New Britain, New Fairfield, Hamden, Manchester, Norwalk and Winchester. Sections 2-7 speak to the language we use as notwithstanding language. Basically our new projects that appear as notwithstanding can be given the status of being on the priority list by us, the legislature, if it misses its June 30 deadline. This is commonly referred to as jumping the list. Notwithstanding projects still must be verified with all expenses just as the priority list projects must be verified all expenses in order to, for DES to approve or reimburse them for construction.

Section 8 specifies that all magnet schools are operated by local boards of education or regional educational service centers. Goodwin University is a nonprofit higher education institution that is collaboration with LEARN. The rest board in New London operates two magnet schools. Section 9 speaks to our MBI process. Basically what we're referring to in section 9 is we're not allowing costs related to COVID-19 to affect our school districts MBR. And the last section, section 10, speaks to our construction management projects and basically, it delays the implementation of a bill we passed in 2019 in regard to construction management projects. With that being said, I will ask for adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator McCrory. Senator Berthel.

SENATOR BERTHEL (32ND):

Good evening, Mr. President. It is truly wonderful to see you on the dais this evening. Mr. President,

I rise in full support of the legislation before us. As my esteemed colleague, the Chair of the Education Committee just explained and summarized, the school construction projects were all properly vetted through the committee process before the shutdown of the regular session back in March. The Committee had actually finished all of its Committee work which is a tribute to a Committee working well together and getting things done for the people of the State of Connecticut and the children that we're entrusted to care for ultimately through this Committee.

Notwithstanding language is of course something that we endure every year in every session, and it while sometimes looked as maybe an unnecessary burden, it's something that we do and we allow because especially in this situation that we're in now with COVID-19, some systems lost track of what was going on and paying attention and had to be focused on other issues related to running their districts and getting schools back open and whatnot so I think this is a fair part of this legislation as well.

And then lastly, the other pieces were already summarized. Lastly, the only other piece I wanted to address is the MBR allowance that we're making, that should not be part of the consideration for budgets next year when we are perhaps in a more normal cycle so Mr. President, again, I rise in support of the bill and I urge adoption. Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Berthel. Would you remark further? Would you remark further? Senator Logan?

SENATOR LOGAN (17TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to speak in support of House Bill 7010. There are many good aspects and qualities of this bill and I think it's important that during this pandemic, we continue to do the work of the legislature, the work of the state and make sure, particularly when it comes to education, that we are here to do what we can to support our communities and support the good work of our teachers and administrators throughout the state.

One particular aspect of this bill is a prime example of that, is the fact that we're gonna be looking at providing for one of the Hamden schools, Hamden Middle School, nearly \$7.5 million dollars towards an estimated project construction costs of nearly over \$11 million dollars. I think it's imperative and important this being one prime example of where the state is putting money in an area, making it a priority to help a community that is certainly in need of this work. This work at the Hamden Middle School will help to make necessary maintenance improvements at the facility, something that we know is an issue in Hamden and in other of our communities and it allows a town like Hamden to consolidate and make sure that the work that they're doing in terms of trying to teach the children is in line with whether it's enrollment numbers, changing demographics in terms of where people are living throughout that particular town. It allows Hamden in this case to again consolidate, close a couple of schools that now the children will be, many of them will be at the middle school in a nice environment for learning, but what I like most about what these

funds are gonna allow us to do in the town of Hamden, something that I've always thought was incredibly important and necessary and I would love to see one day in all of the towns I represent, in all of the state, these monies, these dollars, this grant will allow us to have a universal pre-K in Hamden for our children and I think that is something that is going to benefit our children now and for years into the future. So for that and many other reasons, I stand here in support of House Bill 7010. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Logan. Will you remark further?
Senator Kushner.

SENATOR KUSHNER (24TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. I want to just thank our colleagues on the Education Committee, particularly my good friend, Representative, Senator McCrory, I'm so sorry. People do that to me all the time, [laughs] and I do want to say how important this bill is, this school construction bill is to our district. First of all, there are two new schools that are gonna be built in New Fairfield and you know, I am very proud to represent that city particularly after seeing how they took on the issue of building new schools. I've never been in such an environment where people were very thorough in understanding what was wrong with the schools, making sure that there were tours of the schools all summer long so we could go in and examine the problems and look at what needed to be done and really weigh the options before us, whether a renovation was better or a demolition and building

new schools, and in the end, there was obviously a referendum vote on that and the people spoke and the people said we want to build new schools. And I thought it was one of the best examples I've ever seen of participatory democracy where people really got involved and got something done and now, we get to play our part in helping to make that a reality and helping New Fairfield to be able to have these new schools that are so much needed. So that was a wonderful experience for me, but I think tonight what's even more heartening to me is to have the State come to the aid of Danbury. Danbury, where I've lived for almost 30 years, where I raised my three kids, where they went to the public schools had become incredibly overcrowded. We are one of the few school districts in the state that is growing and it's growing beyond what was anticipated. And I believe it will grow even more as a result of the crowd crisis that we've been in as we see people coming for New York in larger numbers to our community and we welcome them, and we welcome their families, but we also know that we have a serious problem because we don't have enough space for the children that we have. And the problem isn't a problem that we're gonna face in a few years. It's a problem that we have faced already for a few years.

Now, one of the problems in Danbury that doesn't make me very proud to acknowledge is that we are spending on our students the least amount of money per student in the State. We are 169 out of 169 towns and cities in the State of Connecticut. That's not something I'm proud of and it's something I believe we have to change on the local level as well as on the state level. And so when I see the state taking a very proactive approach through the

efforts of our leadership here in the Senate, through the efforts of our chair of this committee, I have to applaud them because they're coming to our rescue. We've looked at all kinds of solutions for Danbury and I think we landed upon the best solution, a career academy that will actually focus on taking high school students and giving them opportunities to really experience what the future might look like for them.

This is a new path for Danbury and it's something that's very badly needed. It will also be able to seat 1400 students. Now, if you've ever been to the Danbury Public High School, which my kids went to, it was big, it was the biggest one in the state when my kids went there. It's got over 3000 students. In this time of pandemic, we're not able to open it partly because of the spike, but even if a third of the students stay home and even if we do hybrid, we're gonna have 1000 kids in that building every day. It's just, we have just grown beyond what we can accommodate. So my deep appreciation to the State of Connecticut, and my, I'm so proud to be here to be able to vote on this because really, all of you, we're coming to the rescue of these students in Danbury in a much needed way and I'm so, you know I feel so honored to be part of the vote and so thankful to all of my colleagues who will vote for this school construction bill and so with that, I strongly urge support of this bill and intend, not just to vote for it, but to cheer and root for this bill. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kushner. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. I rise in support of this bill. This is for the Birch Grove Elementary School. This is a school that is being replaced due to crumbling foundation and the cost overruns due to material costs have pushed this a little out of reach for the school, and bringing the reimbursement rate to 100 percent and replacing this school, it means everything to this community. When you walked around the building prior to them tearing it down, the walls were literally bulging out. When you walked through the school, you could actually see where it was cracking because the walls, ceiling and the floor left their marks.

So to replace this school, to make it a safe school for the elementary school children in Tolland to learn is beyond words so I do rise in support of this. This will take care of the community and I urge everybody to vote for this. thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Champagne. Are there any other remarks? Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you for the opportunity to comment on the school construction bill as it is before us this session. There are some important parts of this bill of the communities which I represent, Norwalk and Darien. There's funding in there for the Ox Ridge Elementary School for a new building there. There's funding for renovation for Jefferson Elementary School. Both

schools are extremely old. Ox Ridge will be replaced. Jefferson will be renovated. It is high time that both of those see improvement, and then there is the Norwalk High School project.

Mr. President, I wanted to thank first of all senator McCrory, Senator Berthel, for their work in putting this bill together. There have not been any new schools built in Norwalk in at least 45-50 years. While other districts around the state for many years, decades, were building new fiscal plans, it went past, it went by the city of Norwalk. There was not the leadership to be able to build or renovate new schools and so what we saw at the time and up until now is basically schools that have been generations old falling apart, unhealthy, not up the standards that we expect from buildings today and therefore, needing some serious attention and so I am just very glad that we now have a mayor, a city council, Board of Education, superintendent that are putting these projects forward for us for consideration.

I'd just like to again thank everybody for their support of these projects, especially again the Norwalk High School project. Senator Looney, when we first talked about it was extremely supportive of it. It is a big project. We have a building that is 50 years old. I went to that building. You can't even get WiFi in that building because it is a concrete super structure. As a matter of fact, it was designed after a prison. That is no way to be teaching our kids today. I joke that you could be on the third floor of that building and use it as a fallout shelter because the concrete is so thick there, and it doesn't have the ability any longer to meet the needs of the students. There's mold, the

place is falling apart, and it in no way represents what we expect from our educational system. We put a lot of pressure on our teachers and our students to do the very best that they can and they're doing it in a building that is falling apart.

So I believe that time has come to move this forward. I want to also thank the Democratic staff for their help with this, Vinnie Morrow and Courtney Cullen and Ken Saccente, Shirley Harrell, for all their work and I want to thank the Department of Administrative Services, School Construction area, Costa Deamantes and his team along with the Office of Policy and Management, Department of Education, and the Governor and the Governor's office for their help as well. You don't do these things on your own. It takes a lot of people and I certainly appreciate that. I also want to thank Representatives Perone, Sims, and Dathan for their support as well.

So, Mr. President, again, I know I'm speaking more parochially for me on this bill. Generally, I also just wanted to again say thank you to the chairs and to the ranking members, Representative McCarty and then Representative Sanchez who led the bill last night in the House for his work because school construction again should not be a bipartisan issue. This should be an issue where we should be fixing up our schools all across the State of Connecticut. We should be saying that our kids should be learning in the best environments because it is a competitive world out there, and so whether it's in Danbury, whether it's in Senator Champagne's district, whether it is in Senator Looney's district or Senator Logan's district or any other district, Senator Kushner's district, we should be aiming for

good schools for the students around the State of Connecticut. Schools like the new Norwalk High School where it has a PTEC to it, where IBM is a partner and allows kids to get computer engineering or advanced degrees where they can get a high school diploma and an associate's degree within 4-6 years for free and get an internship with IBM and also get jobs with IBM. So this concept and this proposal I believe is a good one, a sound one, and will be one that only matches many other schools like we have like Brien McMahon High School in Norwalk, we have the Center for Global Studies. Kids from all over the place come to it. This will be the same and again, I think that any of these kinds of concepts we have that help to move our kids in a direction for advanced education to be prepared for the jobs of the 21st century is what we should be doing so thank you and thank you again, Senator Looney for all your support, Senator Berthel and Senator McCrory, Senator Fasano, thank you and I urge passage of the bill. thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Duff. Senate President, Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH):

Thank you very much, Mr. President. Rising in support of the emergency certified bill. This is always an important bill every year, the school construction bill is something that every legislator in every district, in every town, every Board of Ed, every mayor, every first selectman has an interest in because this is one of the true areas of partnership between the State of Connecticut and its

municipalities. As we know, we reimburse school construction at varying levels depending on the formula that we have, but it's critically important that this partnership occur because education is such an important function of government that the quality of the facilities in which that education occurs is also an emblem of how important we believe that function to be. And again, it's important not only in terms of that key mission of education which in many ways is more important than anything else we do because our future depends upon it, but also as a practical matter, it is a measure, a jobs bill for the construction trades, for all of the well-paid positions that exist in those varying industries and the more robust a school construction bill we have, the more economic stimulus there is. Certainly the city of New Haven greatly benefited from that over the years when it had a major program of building new schools and renovating older schools over a period of about a dozen years. It was a \$1.5-billion-dollar program of which \$1.2 billion dollars was paid by the State of Connecticut, just a complete transformation of the physical plan of the city schools and this is something that every community participates in to some degree and is one of the major areas of partnership between the state and its municipalities.

So again, I want to thank Senator McCrory, Senator Berthel, their counterparts in the House and everyone who worked on this certainly also with DAS and OPM as well in this product. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Looney. Senator Duff? Senator McCrory.

SENATOR MCCRORY (2ND):

Thank you, Mr. President. I just want to say again lastly, I want to thank Senator Berthel for all his work, Representative McCarthy, the ranking member in the House, and my colleague, Bobby Sanchez, for putting this together. Again, this is the bill that everyone loves. This is the Christmas tree and I think we did a great job working together making sure all of our communities are taken care of. And lastly, just on a personal note, Mr. President, I just want to say I know you're leaving. I will say this quick story. It was about six years ago I was in the House and it was the last night and you know we're rushing and trying to get bills done back and forth, back and forth, and I was trying to get a bill passed, it was about half an hour, 45 minutes before we end session and they told me I had to come upstairs to the Senate and I had to talk to you and if you were okay with it, then we would get it done and I'll never forget it. I came up here, I had to find out who you were. They pointed me to you. Then I explained to you why it was important to me and to my district, the piece of legislation, and it was a minor revision but you just looked at me, you asked me is this good for you and I said absolutely. And you said okay, we'll do it and I just think from that point on, I always saw you as a person of high standards and integrity and a person who did a very good representing your community and your party and I really respect that. I know you're leaving us, you're retiring, but I hope I can continue the same type of work you've been doing, being steadfast, being honest, holding people accountable cause

that's what I've seen you do, but also just being a good person in the circle so I appreciate that. I know you're retiring and I just want you to have a great career and also, send me your tailor cause I like your suits too. [Laughs]. Thank you and I ask my colleagues to support this measure. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you very much, Senator McCrory and thank you for those very, very kind words. Will you remark further on the bill? Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Mr. President. If there's no objection, I'd like to place this bill on the consent calendar, please.

THE CHAIR:

Is there an objection for it to be placed on the consent calendar? Is there objection? Seeing no objection, so ordered. [Gavel].

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I'd like the Clerk to please call the next bill and I will yield to Senator Cohen.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Consent Calendar No. 1. House Bill 7002, House Bill 7003, House Bill 7009, and House Bill 7010.

THE CHAIR:

Please call the bill for a vote and the machine will indeed be opened.

CLERK:

An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on House Bill, on Senate, I'm sorry, on Consent Bill 1.

THE CHAIR:

And this is Consent Calendar No. 1 for this second session and technology cannot capture that, but we'll make sure the journal does do that. Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? Indeed, they have. Mr. Clerk, would you please announce the tally?

CLERK:

Consent calendar No. 1.

Total number voting	36
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

BB
Senate

224
October 1, 2020

And the consent calendar is adopted and
congratulations on your last vote, Senator Fasano.
It's been a great pleasure working with you and
we'll miss you. And Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Before I move to point
of personal privilege, I just wanted to make a
motion to immediately transmit the bills to the
Governor, please.

THE CHAIR:

So moved. Thank you. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

I just want to clarify, all the bills we passed
today, not just the ones on the Consent Calendar,
every one. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

All of them are transmitted. All of them are
transmitted. Yes, indeed.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Right to the Governor. Right now. Thanks. Thank
you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Senator Looney.