

General Assembly

February Session, 2022

## Substitute Bill No. 5137

## AN ACT STUDYING AND FUNDING THE ROBERTA B. WILLIS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) Not later than forty-five days after 2 the effective date of this section, the Chief Workforce Officer and the 3 executive director of the Office of Higher Education shall develop and 4 issue a request for proposals for a third party to make recommendations 5 for proposed changes to the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program 6 established under section 10a-173 of the general statutes. The Chief 7 Workforce Officer and the executive director shall consult with the 8 Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and representatives 9 from public and independent institutions of higher education in the 10 state in developing such request for proposals. The third party shall be 11 a national organization with expertise in financial aid programs for 12 institutions of higher education.

(b) The proposed changes to such program shall, at a minimum: (1)
Provide need-based financial aid to Connecticut residents enrolled at
public and independent institutions in a manner that promotes access
and choice to postsecondary education in the state and focuses on the
student, (2) ensure prospective and current students are notified of their
initial eligibility for a grant based on the completion of the Free

1 of 2

19 Application for Federal Student Aid and that an additional application 20 to the Office of Higher Education is not required for such grant, (3) 21 ensure participating public and independent institutions of higher 22 education are aware of the initial student eligibility criteria and 23 corresponding grant award amount for the following academic year on 24 or before December first, annually, the year prior to the grant year, and 25 (4) consider the feasibility of including the participation of private 26 occupational schools in such program and estimate the cost of providing 27 need and merit-based grants or need-based grants for the eligible 28 educational costs of state residents attending such schools.

(c) Not later than December 1, 2022, the Chief Workforce Officer and
the executive director of the Office of Higher Education shall jointly
submit a report of the recommended changes to the Roberta B. Willis
Scholarship program, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a
of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General
Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher education.

Sec. 2. (*Effective from passage*) The sum of thirty-three million three hundred eighty-eight thousand six hundred thirty-seven dollars is appropriated to the Office of Higher Education from the General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, for the Roberta A. Willis Scholarship Program established under section 10a-173 of the general statutes.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	from passage	New section
Sec. 2	from passage	New section

## Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 1(c), "jointly" was added for clarity.

HED Joint Favorable Subst.