**LEGISLATIVE TRACKING & ANALYSIS**

**MEMORANDUM**

**Bill Number:**

Sub. H.B. 71

**Sponsor**:

Representative Nick Santucci

**Co-sponsors**:

Representatives Williams, Abdullahi, Humphrey, Johnson, Hillyer, Dobos, Barhorst, Bird, Fowler Arthur, Click, Lear, Miller, J.

**Bill Title:**

To enact section 3301.25 of the Revised Code to establish the Community Connectors Workforce Program and to make an appropriation.

**Operation of the Bill:**

The bill requires the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) to establish and oversee the Community Connectors Workforce Program that is designed to connect students to jobs and internships in their communities and includes the following specific provisions:

* The program will be overseen by DEW and administered by educational service centers.
* DEW will distribute funds to educational service centers (ESCs) to employ at least one, but not more than three, directors to administer the program in the high schools the ESC serves.
* The requirement for ESCs to employ the program directors is contingent on state appropriations.
* ESCs are responsible for determining the appropriate number of program directors and any eligibility or application requirements for them.
  + However, the bill requires the program directors to have experience in job placement, school counseling, or primary and secondary education. *(The substitute bill provided additional flexibility by changing “guidance counseling” to “school counseling” and indicating directors can have experience in any one of those areas as opposed to all three as was in the original bill*)
* The bill outlines the director’s responsibilities and reporting requirements back to the state of Ohio.
  + Directors’s Responsibilities:
    - Collaborate with OhioMeansJobs and other community partners to identify jobs and internships in the community;
    - Determine the number of students that may participate in the program at the district or school;
    - Create an application and interview process to assess a student’s preparedness to participate in the program;
    - At the discretion of the district or school, provide instruction in soft skills and professional skills training, which may be used to qualify a student for the OhioMeansJobs-readiness seal. If a district already offers similar instruction, the director must collaborate with the instructors;
  + Reporting Requirements
    - The number of students participating in the program;
    - The number of students who are placed in jobs or internships through the program; and
    - The number of students who receive soft skills and professional skills training through the director.
* The bill requires any business or organization that employs a student through the program to comply with minor labor laws.

**Fiscal Impact of the Bill:**

The bill appropriates $8.0 million from lottery profits in each of FY 2024 and FY 2025 for the DEW to support ESCs and the required Directors in connecting students to jobs and internships in their communities.

**Proponents:**

The following have testified in support of HB 71:

* Craig Burford, Ohio ESC Association
* Paul Imhoff, Buckeye Association of School Administrators, Nicole Piscitani, Ohio School Boards Association, Katie Johnson, Ohio Association of School Business Officials
* Alexandra Denney, Ohio Business Roundtable
* Dr. Traci Hostetler, ESC of Eastern Ohio
* Donna Lauver, Hamilton County ESC

**Interested Parties:**

The following testified as interested parties:

* Jennifer M. Meek Eells, Ohio Workforce Association
  + Position: *“Local workforce boards want to make sure that the bill honors the current relationships that have been established and take into account that our OhioMeansJobs centers are already investing funds into this effort. Funds provided by the state outside of WIOA and TANF could fill the gap and expand opportunities for OhioMeansJobscenters’ staff to provide guidance to students outside our eligibility. Any solution provided to better engage graduating seniors with workforce opportunities must have performance and accountability built into it. Our 20 local public workforce systems report to business-led boards and must meet rigorous performance measures.”*

**Opponents:**

None on public record.

**Current Status:**

Favorably voted out of House Primary and Secondary Education on 6/28/2023

Referred to House Finance Committee on 9/26/2023 because it includes an appropriation. No additional hearings have been held at this time.

**Assigned Committee (Currently):**

House Finance Committee

**Are Future Hearings Scheduled?:**

Not currently.

**Position on the bill:**

Support

**Bill Text:**  [https://search-prod.lis.state.oh.us/solarapi/v1/general\_assembly\_135/bills/hb71/RCH/02/hb71\_02\_RCH?format=pdf](%09https://search-prod.lis.state.oh.us/solarapi/v1/general_assembly_135/bills/hb71/RCH/02/hb71_02_RCH?format=pdf)

**LSC Analysis**: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/download?key=20958&format=pdf>

**Fiscal Note**: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/download?key=21265&format=pdf>