



2015 CCIC Legislative Update

This update summarizes legislation passed this year that impacts CCIC member institutions as well as highlights other relevant actions taken during the 2015 regular legislative session and the June 30th Special Session. The regular legislative session ended on June 3, 2015.

Key Legislation that Passed

Impacting Connecticut Independent Colleges and Universities

Public Act 15-244: AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2017, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR, AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE, DEFICIENCY APPROPRIATIONS AND TAX FAIRNESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

- Makes adjustments to the general fund appropriations to state agencies for the 2016 and 2017 fiscal years. Funding for line items impacting the independent colleges are as follows:

Line Item	FY 16	FY 17
Governor's Scholarship Fund Appropriation (§1)	\$39,638,381	\$41,023,498
Reimbursements to Towns for Private Tax-Exempt Property (PILOT) (§1)	\$125,431,737	\$125,431,737

- Restructures the state's PILOT programs by establishing minimum annual reimbursement rates and a method for disbursing PILOT grants when appropriations are not enough to fund the full grant amounts, beginning in FY 17. (§§ 183-205)

Public Act 15-5: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS OF THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2017, CONCERNING GENERAL GOVERNMENT, EDUCATION, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND BONDS OF THE STATE.

- Requires institutions of higher education to pay property taxes on “any residential real property intended for use or used as student housing, except a dormitory,” which is defined as 20 or more beds. (§241)
- Makes adjustments to the grant formula for magnet schools that use a trimester school calendar and are operated by an independent college or university. (§307)

Impacting Higher Education Generally

Public Act 15-5: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS OF THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2017, CONCERNING GENERAL GOVERNMENT, EDUCATION, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND BONDS OF THE STATE.

- The bill establishes a two-generational school readiness and workforce development pilot program, paid for with state and available private funds. The program operates through June 30, 2017 and may operate in the following six locations: (1) Bridgeport, (2) Colchester, (3) Greater Hartford, (4)

Meriden, (5) New Haven, and (6) Norwalk. The pilot sites must work together as a learning community, informed by technical assistance in best practices. (§ 401)

Public Act 15-16: AN ACT CONCERNING SEXUAL ASSAULT FORENSIC EXAMINERS AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

- This bill allows sexual assault forensic examiners (SAFEs) to treat sexual assault victims who are patients in a health care facility operated by a higher education institution. The health care facility must be:
 1. licensed by the Department of Public Health (DPH) as an infirmary operated by an educational institution as an outpatient clinic and
 2. accredited by the Joint Commission or the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care.
- The bill requires SAFE services to be:
 1. aligned with the policies and accreditation standards of the respective health care facility and
 2. pursuant to a written agreement between the health care facility and (a) DPH and (b) the Office of Victim Services, about the facility's participation in the SAFE program.

Public Act 15-75: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

- This bill requires the state, the Board of Regents of Higher Education (BOR), and the UConn Board of Trustees (BOT) to align their higher education policies with the goals of the Planning Commission for Higher Education's strategic master plan for higher education. These goals aim to:
 1. increase the state's adult population education levels,
 2. develop a globally competitive workforce and economy in the state, and
 3. ensure higher education affordability.
- The bill also requires the Planning Commission, in collaboration with the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), to establish working groups and consult with any existing working groups, commissions, or task forces to investigate and offer specific objectives identified by the Planning Commission or OPM, include outcomes-based funding and workforce development.

Public Act 15-82: AN ACT CONCERNING IN-STATE TUITION ELIGIBILITY

- This act reduces, from four to two, the number of years of high school education that certain students must complete in Connecticut to receive in-state tuition benefits at the state's public higher education institutions.
- The act also extends in-state tuition eligibility to nonimmigrant aliens who, as specified in federal law, (1) are human trafficking victims or (2) have suffered substantial physical or mental abuse as a result of certain criminal activity (8 USC § 1101(a)(15)(T-U)) if they meet the requirements laid out in statute for students without legal immigration status. Under prior law, no nonimmigrant aliens were eligible for in-state tuition.

Public Act 15-138: AN ACT CONCERNING FINANCIAL LITERACY EDUCATION

- This bill requires that any financial literacy instruction plan that the State Department of Education (SDE), Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR), and UConn Board of Trustees (BOT) develop in consultation with the Banking Department shall include instruction in banking, investing, saving, and handling of personal finance in addition to credit and debit cards as already required by law.

Public Act 15-162: AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDENT LOAN BILL OF RIGHTS

- This bill requires the banking commissioner, within available appropriations, to create a new position in the Banking Department, a student loan borrower ombudsman, to provide timely

assistance to “student loan borrowers” (borrowers). It establishes the ombudsman's duties and requires him or her, in consultation with the commissioner, within available appropriations, to implement and maintain a prescribed student loan borrower education course.

- The bill also establishes a separate non-lapsing account, within the Banking Fund, called the student loan ombudsman account to be funded by student loan servicers' licensing and investigation fees and any other money required by law. The bill authorizes the commissioner to use the money in the account to implement the ombudsman position and the education course.
- The bill establishes licensure requirements and standards of conduct for student loan servicers and specifies the scope of services subject to licensure.
- The bill authorizes the commissioner to conduct investigations and examinations and take enforcement action against violators. He must also report annually, starting by January 1, 2016, to the Banking and Higher Education committees on, among other things, the overall effectiveness of the ombudsman position.

Public Act 15-200: AN ACT CONCERNING THE DUTIES AND AUTHORITY OF THE CONNECTICUT HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPLEMENTAL LOAN AUTHORITY

- This bill allows the Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA) to issue loans to certain borrowers to refinance certain public or private student loans, including CHESLA loans. It appears to similarly allow Connecticut higher education institutions to issue refinancing loans. The bill requires that refinancing loans not exceed the outstanding aggregate principal amount of the original loan. It allows CHESLA to establish guidelines, criteria, and procedures for issuing refinancing loans.
- By law, CHESLA may issue tax-exempt bonds backed by the authority's revenues. The bill additionally allows CHESLA to issue taxable revenue bonds, including bonds that are eligible for federal tax credits, exemptions, or payments. Before issuing the bonds, CHESLA must find that their issuance is necessary, in the public interest, and in furtherance of the authority's powers and purposes.
- Under the bill, CHESLA must incorporate information about refinancing loans (e.g., number of applications received, number of students assisted) in its annual report.
- The bill also (1) allows CHESLA to issue education grants, (2) revises the membership criteria of CHESLA's board of directors, (3) requires the board chairperson to report to the Banking and Higher Education committees on the authority's progress toward (a) targeting lending to individuals with a demonstrated financial need and (b) effectively serving the highest number of such individuals, and (4) makes technical and conforming changes.

Public Act 15-201: AN ACT REQUIRING CERTAIN HIGHER EDUCATION FACILITIES THAT CONDUCT RESEARCH USING CATS OR DOGS TO OFFER SUCH CATS OR DOGS TO ANIMAL RESCUE ORGANIZATIONS PRIOR TO EUTHANIZING ANY SUCH CAT OR DOG

- This bill requires public and private higher education institutions, under certain circumstances, to offer any cat or dog on which they have conducted research or testing to an animal adoption or rescue organization for adoption. An adoption offer must only occur when the (1) research or testing is complete, (2) destruction of the animal is not required, and (3) animal is no longer needed by the institution.
- The bill allows the institutions to enter into agreements with the adoption or rescue organizations for this purpose.

Public Act 15-231: AN ACT REQUIRING A REPORT CONCERNING INSTITUTIONAL FINANCIAL AID FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT AND THE BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

- This bill requires that not later than November 1, 2015, and annually thereafter, the University of Connecticut and the Board of Regents for Higher Education shall submit a report, in accordance

with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the higher education committee describing how institutional financial aid was awarded to its undergraduate students during the previous academic year.

- Such report shall include, but need not be limited to, a separate description for in-state and out-of-state students of the aggregate amount of institutional (1) financial aid funding available, (2) need-based financial aid awarded, and (3) merit-based financial aid awarded.

Public Act 15-242: AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH STATUTES

- The bill, among other things, eliminates DPH's authority to (1) enforce specified laws concerning stem cell research and (2) adopt implementing regulations. Among other things, these laws establish conditions under which someone may conduct research involving embryonic stem cells. By law, this research must continue to be overseen by an embryonic stem cell research oversight committee established under national guidelines. (§ 4)
- The bill also eliminates the requirement for a researcher to provide documentation to the department before someone may perform this research, verifying the voluntary nature of the donation of the stem cells and related materials or adherence to national guidelines for embryonic stem cells derived from out of state. (§ 4)

Special Act 15-9: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP A PILOT EARN AND LEARN PROGRAM

- This bill establishes a task force to develop a pilot earn and learn program for implementation not later than July 1, 2016, at a regional community-technical college, a state university and an independent institution of higher education. "Earn and learn program" means an academic program that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting in the context of a program of supervised employment that compensates the student at a level sufficient to assist such student in financing his or her higher education, as determined by the task force, but in no case less than the minimum fair wage,
- The pilot earn and learn program shall:
 1. provide opportunities for students of institutions of higher education in the state to engage in applied, work-based learning while earning money to pay for higher education,
 2. provide incentives for institutions of higher education in the state to develop the curricula, faculty incentives and support structures to implement work-based learning,
 3. encourage employers in the state to foster existing work-based learning experiences and provide additional work-based learning opportunities, and
 4. identify ways in which work-based learning is fiscally viable for institutions of higher education and employers in the state.
- The CCIC President sits on this task force.

Special Act 15-1: AN ACT CONCERNING SERVICES AVAILABLE TO VETERANS ON STATE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

- This bill requires the Board of Regents for Higher Education and the Board of Trustees for The University of Connecticut to conduct a study to:
 1. evaluate and assess programming at Operation Academic Support for Incoming Service Members centers at public institutions of higher education; and
 2. identify successful programming at such centers.
- Not later than January 15, 2016, the boards shall report the results of the study including any recommendations as to enhancing services at all such centers in the state to the veterans and military affairs and higher education committees of the General Assembly.

Special Act 15-11: AN ACT CONCERNING A PLAN FOR THE CONNECTICORPS PROGRAM

- This bill requires the Labor Department, in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Board of Regents for Higher Education and The University of Connecticut, to develop a plan to establish the Connecticorps program to capitalize on the skills of students enrolled in the state system of higher education to improve the quality of life for Connecticut residents.
- Such plan shall include, but not be limited to: (1) An assessment of the feasibility of establishing the Connecticorps program not later than September 1, 2017, (2) the identification of existing or potential job sites for students participating in such program; (3) comprehensive research regarding the availability of stipends, housing and health care options for students participating in such program; and (4) a programmatic design for the coordination and state oversight of the Connecticorps program.

Special Act 15-18: AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF DIGITAL OPEN-SOURCE TEXTBOOKS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- This bill requires the Board of Regents for Higher Education and The University of Connecticut shall each establish an open-source textbook pilot program to:
 1. assess the use of high-quality digital open-source textbooks, and
 2. promote the use of and access to open-source textbooks within their respective constituent units.
- The programming for such pilot programs, shall include, but not be limited to, seminars and workshops on awareness and implementation of open-source textbooks and open educational resources for faculty and staff of the institutions of higher education under the jurisdiction of such constituent units and workshops on supportive open educational resources policy and administration for academic leaders of such institutions. The Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium may share such programming with its private members at a cost to be determined by said consortium.
- The bill further requires There is established a task force to study best practices with regard to open educational resources. The task force shall consider the development of a program to incentivize the creation or adaptation of open educational resources that will significantly reduce the cost to students of course materials, including, but not limited to, offering financial or academic or professional credit to faculty to create open educational resources. One faculty member and one administrator from an **independent institution of higher education** shall serve on this task force.

Special Act 15-20: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE CONCERNING OUTCOMES-BASED FINANCING

- This bill establishes a task force to develop a strategic outcomes-based plan for financing higher education that shall be aligned with the goals and benchmarks for higher education recommended by the **Planning Commission for Higher Education**. The task force shall consider the interrelationships among state appropriations, tuition and student financial aid in developing such plan. Such plan shall include base funding of public institutions of higher education, an investment fund for public institutions of higher education and performance-based funding of public and **independent institutions of higher education**. For purposes of developing the performance-based funding component of such plan, the task force shall examine performance-based funding models, including, but not limited to, models implemented in other states, and consider the following objectives:
 1. Rewarding public and **independent institutions of higher education** for (A) increasing the number of degrees awarded to residents of the state, including, but not limited to, degrees awarded (i) in areas with workforce shortages, and (ii) to students from underrepresented populations
 2. Rewarding public institutions of higher education for improving their productivity, which may be measured in part by decreasing the cost of earning a degree.

- For purposes of this subsection, "investment fund" means an account that shall fund projects and programs proposed by the public institutions of higher education that (A) meet criteria developed by the Planning Commission for Higher Education, in consultation with the president of the Board of Trustees for The University of Connecticut, the Office of the Governor and the chairpersons of the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher education and appropriations, and (B) are in alignment with the goals and benchmarks for higher education recommended by the Planning Commission for Higher Education and adopted by the General Assembly in accordance with section 10a-11b of the general statutes.
- The task force shall submit a report by January 1, 2016 on its findings to the General Assembly. The President of CCIC shall sit on this task force as well as a faculty member from an independent institution of higher education.

Impacting Teacher Preparation Programs (Public and Private)

Public Act 15-5: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS OF THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2017, CONCERNING GENERAL GOVERNMENT, EDUCATION, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND BONDS OF THE STATE.

- Establishes a Planning Commission for Education to develop and recommend the implementation of a strategic master plan for public education in Connecticut (§ 263)
- The bill expands special education coursework requirements for teacher certification beginning July 1, 2016. To obtain an initial educator certificate on and after that date, a person must complete A) a course of study in special education comprised of not fewer than thirty-six hours, which shall include an understanding of the growth and development of exceptional children, including handicapped and gifted and talented children and children who may require special education, and methods for identifying, planning for and working effectively with special needs children in a regular classroom, and (B) a course or courses of study in special education relating to instruction on classroom techniques in reading, differentiated instruction, social-emotional learning, cultural competencies and assistive technology (§ 276)
- The bill mandates that districts unable to hire enough certified bilingual teachers for a school year, must apply to the education commissioner for permission to use certified English as a second language teachers instead. Current law permits, rather than requires, districts to do this. By law, the commissioner may grant a request for good cause. (§ 280)
- By July 1, 2016, the bill requires SDE, in consultation with public higher education institutions, bilingual education programming experts, and bilingual education teachers, to develop standards for determining whether an extension of is necessary for a student who has already received 30 months of bilingual education. (§ 290)
- The bill requires SDE to establish an ELL pilot program for school districts with high percentages of ELL students for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years in consultation with higher education public institutions and language acquisition experts. The RESC that serves the region in which each participant is located must provide administrative support to the participating district to implement the pilot program. SDE shall contract with an independent evaluator from an institution of higher education or a professional evaluator with expertise in language acquisition to evaluate the English language learner pilot program. (§ 294)
- The bill makes several changes to the bilingual teacher certification and the international teacher permit laws, making it easier for applicants to obtain these credentials. (§ 339)

Public Act 15-97: AN ACT CONCERNING STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA

- This bill requires, among other things, that as part of the training a teacher preparation program must offer as of July 1, 2015 on the detection and recognition of and interventions for students

with dyslexia, that such instruction 1) be not fewer than 12 clock hours and 2) must include evidence-based “structured literacy” interventions for students with dyslexia.

Public Act 15-108: AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHER CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR SHORTAGE AREAS, INTERSTATE AGREEMENTS FOR TEACHER CERTIFICATION RECIPROcity, MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION AND CULTURAL COMPETENCY INSTRUCTION

Among other things, this bill:

- decreases, from three to two years, the number of years of teaching experience an out-of-state teacher needs to qualify for a professional teacher certificate;
- requires the SDE to establish or join interstate agreements to facilitate certification of qualified out-of-state teachers;
- creates an 11-member minority teacher recruitment task force and requires it to submit its report and recommendations to the Education Committee by February 1, 2016;
- requires the Office of Higher Education to issue an annual demographics report on candidates enrolled in teacher preparation programs; and
- adds training in cultural competency to the teacher preparation and in-service training laws. Such training shall include instruction concerning the awareness of students' background and experience that lead to the development of skills, knowledge and behaviors that enable educators and students to build positive relationships and work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

Public Act No. 15-134: AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS AND INITIATIVES

- This bill requires the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to (a) collect and publicly post data for a trend analysis of regionally accredited bachelor's degree programs in early childhood education or child development that have not been approved by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or the Office of Higher Education and the Office of Early Childhood from institutions of higher education, (b) review analysis results when considering for approval bachelors' degrees that lack state or regional accreditation, and (c) make school readiness staff qualification findings based upon trend analysis results. (§ 1)
- The bill further requires local or regional boards of education and regional education service centers operating preschool magnet programs, as well as state or local charter school governing councils offering preschool programs, to obtain National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) program accreditation beginning in the 2017-18 school year. (§ 2)
- OEC is required under this bill to report to the Education Committee, by July 1 annually, on the status of school readiness program providers' compliance with the stricter staff qualification requirements. (§ 5)
- The bill postpones the deadline for the first phase of heightened staff qualifications by two years to June 1, 2017. The second phase, under existing law and unchanged by the bill, must begin July 1, 2020.
- Under the bill, school readiness staff members are considered to meet stricter staff qualifications (“grandfathered”) until June 30, 2025 if they have: 1) an associate's degree with at least 12 credits in early childhood education or child development from a higher education institution accredited by BOR or OHE and regionally accredited and 2) been employed by the same school readiness program since 1995. Beginning July 1, 2025, these staff members must hold a childhood development associate credential or an equivalent credential or otherwise meet existing law's heightened qualification requirements (either a teaching certificate with an early childhood education or early childhood special education endorsement or a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education). If such a staff member terminates his or her employment with the program on or before June 30, 2025 and accepts a position at another program, he or she must submit documentation showing progress toward meeting the heightened requirements.2025. (§ 8)

Public Act 15-215: AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES

This bill makes a number of changes to the education statutes including:

- extending the legal indemnity currently given to teachers, administrators, and others to teacher mentors and teacher reviewers (§ 5);
- allowing the State Department of Education (SDE) to use a nationally recognized exam as part of a program that allows boards of education to permit high school students to substitute certain evidence of academic achievement for existing high school graduation requirements (§ 7);
- adds additional criteria that SDE must consider for proposed administrator ARC programs that universities, boards of education, regional educational service centers, or administrator training organizations submit. By law, SDE can only approve such programs with specific criteria for accepting applicants who have a minimum of 40 months' teaching experience with at least 10 of those months in a position requiring certification at a public school in Connecticut or another state. The bill modifies this by specifying that such applicants must (1) have no more than 10 months' teaching experience in a public school in another state while holding professional certification, (2) provide a statement of justification for participation in ARC, and (3) receive approval from SDE to participate in the program. Furthermore, the bill provides that participants with less than 10 months' teaching in another state can comprise no more than 10% of the participants in the proposed ARC program (§ 12);
- allowing a board of education that cannot find a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) - certified teacher to employ a person enrolled in an armed forces JROTC instructor program to teach the JROTC program at a public school.

For a complete summary of this bill, click [here](#).

Public Act 15-243: AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM EFFICACY

- Effective this year, this bill requires the Department of Education to annually submit a report on the quality of teacher preparation programs at institutions of higher education in the state to the education and higher education committees of the General Assembly. Such report shall include, but not be limited to:
 1. information and data relating to the extent to which graduates of such teacher preparation programs help their students learn, including, but not limited to, data relating to the academic achievement and progress of the students of such graduates;
 2. measures for assessing the classroom teaching performance of such graduates;
 3. retention rates in the teaching profession of such graduates;
 4. survey results from such graduates and the employers of such graduates regarding such teacher preparation programs;
 5. data relating to the employment of such graduates in a teaching position;
 6. certification issuance rates, including first-time pass rates for such graduates; and
 7. recommendations regarding the recruitment of minority teachers and administrators pursuant to section 10-155l of the general statutes.
- In addition, the bill delays, from July 1, 2015 to July 1, 2016, the requirement that all teacher preparation programs in the state place their students in four semesters of field work or clinical or student teaching classroom experience.
- The bill also requires that the students gain this experience at (1) a school in a school district in one of the five highest school district reference groups (DRG) (A, B, C, D or E) and (2) a school in a district in one of the four lowest DRGs (F, G, H or I). Such clinical experience, field experience or student teaching experience may include a cooperating teacher serving as a mentor to student teachers, provided such cooperating teacher has received a performance evaluation designation of exemplary or proficient, pursuant to section 10-151b, for the prior school year.

Public Act 15-237: AN ACT CONCERNING HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- This bill delays, by one year, until 2021, implementation of the scheduled changes to the state's school requirements that (1) increase the minimum number of credits, from 20 to 25, required for high school graduation; (2) require students to pass state examinations in certain courses and complete a senior project in order to graduate; and (3) require school districts to offer students support and alternative ways to meet the new graduation requirements.
- The bill also creates a nine-member task force to study the alignment of the high school graduation requirement changes with the Common Core State Standards adopted by the State Board of Education.

Impacting Economic Development

Public Act 15-5: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS OF THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2017, CONCERNING GENERAL GOVERNMENT, EDUCATION, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND BONDS OF THE STATE.

- Establishes a Commission on Economic Competitiveness to analyze the implications of state tax policy on state business and industry and to develop policies that promote economic growth. In addition, the commission shall: (1) Examine and report on the implications of the tax revisions set forth in public act 15-244, as amended by this act, on state business and industry; (2) examine the needs of large and small state businesses and industries as relates to their ability to maintain economic competitiveness; and (3) offer legislative recommendations that promote the growth and prosperity of state business and industry, including, but not limited to, recommendations relating to state tax policy. (§498)
- The Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, or the secretary's designee, shall review the reports of the Connecticut Institute for the 21st Century entitled "Framework for Connecticut's Fiscal Future" and, not later than February 1, 2016, the secretary shall, in accordance with section 11-4a of the general statutes, submit any recommendations concerning the findings contained in such reports to the Governor and the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and finance, revenue and bonding. (§423)

Public Act 15-222: AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE REGENERATIVE MEDICINE RESEARCH FUND AND THE CONNECTICUT BIOSCIENCE INNOVATION FUND, AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF CERTAIN FUNDS OF CONNECTICUT INNOVATIONS, INCORPORATED

- This bill makes several programmatic and administrative changes to Connecticut Innovations programs. It:
 1. allows CI to award additional forms of financing from the Regenerative Medicine Research Fund (RMRF),
 2. requires RMRF's advisory committee to contract with a third party to select peer reviewers to review financial assistance applications,
 3. expands eligibility for financial assistance from the Bioscience Innovation Fund to include businesses operating for three to seven years,
 4. limits Bioscience Innovation Fund eligibility to businesses in certain clinical trial phases, and
 5. folds two CI funds into the Connecticut Growth Fund.
- For a complete overview of the bill, click [here](#).

Other Bills of Interest

Public Act 15-206: AN ACT REGULATING ELECTRONIC NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND VAPOR PRODUCTS

- Among other things, this act prohibits the use of “electronic nicotine delivery systems” and “vapor products” (“e-cigarettes”) in dormitories at public or private higher education institutions.

Special Act No. 15-13: AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF CYBERSECURITY

- The Department of Administrative Services, in consultation with the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, shall conduct a study to identify cybersecurity issues facing the state and to make recommendations regarding specific actions that the state can implement to promote and coordinate communication between government entities, law enforcement, **institutions of higher education**, the private sector and the public to improve cybersecurity preparedness.
- Not later than January 1, 2017, the Department of Administrative Services shall submit the results of such study and any recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee.

Public Act 15-207: AN ACT CONCERNING THE TIMELY TRANSFER AND PROCESSING OF SEXUAL ASSAULT EVIDENCE COLLECTION KITS

- This bill makes various changes affecting evidence in sexual assault cases and establishes deadlines for transferring and processing sexual assault evidence police obtain from health care facilities that collect such evidence.
- If an accused seeks to introduce evidence of a victim's sexual conduct in a sexual assault case, the bill requires the hearing on the motion to be held in camera (i.e., in private), rather than allowing the court to grant a motion to hold the hearing in that manner. The bill requires motions, supporting documents, and related court documents concerning these hearings to be sealed, and unsealed only if the court rules that the evidence is admissible and the case goes to trial. If the state discloses any such evidence, the bill limits further disclosure of that evidence by defense counsel.

Public Act 15-142: AN ACT IMPROVING DATA SECURITY AND AGENCY EFFECTIVENESS

- The bill amends existing law's security breach notification requirements in existing law applicable to anyone who conducts business in Connecticut. It generally requires the person to (1) notify impacted state residents of a breach within 90 days after discovering it and (2) offer at least one year of free identity theft prevention and mitigation services.
- The bill also requires the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) secretary to (1) develop a program to access, link, analyze, and share data maintained by executive agencies (including the Office of Higher Education) and (2) respond to queries from state agencies and private requestors. It requires the OPM secretary to:
 1. establish policies and procedures to review and respond to queries while protecting confidential data,
 2. develop and implement a secure information technology solution to link data across executive agencies, and
 3. execute an agreement with each agency on data-sharing.

Public Act 15-24: AN ACT CONCERNING ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR

- This bill bans anyone from knowingly purchasing, possessing, or selling powdered alcohol. Powdered alcohol means molecularly encapsulated alcohol in powdered form that may be used in such form or reconstituted as an alcoholic beverage.
- Anyone who knowingly (1) purchases or possesses powdered alcohol is subject to a \$100 fine for the first offense, \$250 for the second offense, and \$500 for subsequent offenses or (2) sells

powdered alcohol is subject to a \$250 fine for the first offense, \$500 for the second offense, and \$1,000 for subsequent offenses.

Key Legislation that Did Not Pass

SB 636: AN ACT CONCERNING AFFIRMATIVE CONSENT

Public Act 15-111: AN ACT CONCERNING PROGRAM APPROVAL FOR INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION (passed both chambers but vetoed by the Governor)

HB 6715: AN ACT REQUIRING CONNECTICUT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT REGARDING DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS