



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 754**

January Session, 2025

Substitute House Bill No. 7236

*House of Representatives, April 23, 2025*

The Committee on Judiciary reported through REP. STAFSTROM of the 129th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## **AN ACT CONCERNING HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS.**

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

1 Section 1. Subsection (b) of section 46a-170 of the general statutes is  
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*  
3 *passage*):

4 (b) The council shall consist of the following members: (1) The Chief  
5 State's Attorney, or a designee; (2) the Chief Public Defender, or a  
6 designee; (3) the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public  
7 Protection, or the commissioner's designee; (4) the Labor Commissioner,  
8 or the commissioner's designee; (5) the Commissioner of Social Services,  
9 or the commissioner's designee; (6) the Commissioner of Public Health,  
10 or the commissioner's designee; (7) the Commissioner of Mental Health  
11 and Addiction Services, or the commissioner's designee; (8) the  
12 Commissioner of Children and Families, or the commissioner's  
13 designee; (9) the Commissioner of Consumer Protection, or the  
14 commissioner's designee; (10) the Commissioner of Developmental

15 Services, or the commissioner's designee; (11) the Commissioner of  
16 Transportation, or the commissioner's designee; (12) the director of the  
17 Basic Training Division of the Police Officer Standards and Training  
18 Council, or the director's designee; [(12)] (13) the Child Advocate, or the  
19 Child Advocate's designee; [(13)] (14) the Victim Advocate, or the  
20 Victim Advocate's designee; [(14)] (15) a chairperson of the Commission  
21 on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, or the  
22 chairperson's designee; [(15)] (16) one representative of the Office of  
23 Victim Services of the Judicial Branch appointed by the Chief Court  
24 Administrator; [(16)] (17) a municipal police chief appointed by the  
25 Connecticut Police Chiefs Association, or a designee; [(17)] (18) the  
26 Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee; [(18) an  
27 adult victim of trafficking, appointed by the Governor;] (19) a judge of  
28 the Superior Court, appointed by the Chief Court Administrator; (20) a  
29 state's attorney appointed by the Chief State's Attorney; (21) a public  
30 defender appointed by the Chief Public Defender; and (22) [fifteen]  
31 sixteen public members appointed as follows: The Governor shall  
32 appoint [three] four members, one of whom shall represent victims of  
33 commercial exploitation of children, one of whom shall represent sex  
34 trafficking victims who are children and one of whom shall represent a  
35 coalition of children's advocacy centers and multidisciplinary teams  
36 that are dedicated to serving child abuse victims and their families, the  
37 president pro tempore of the Senate shall appoint two members, one of  
38 whom shall represent the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence  
39 and one of whom shall represent an organization that provides civil  
40 legal services to low-income individuals, the speaker of the House of  
41 Representatives shall appoint two members, one of whom shall  
42 represent the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence and one  
43 of whom shall represent the Connecticut Lodging Association, the  
44 majority leader of the Senate shall appoint two members, one of whom  
45 shall represent an organization that deals with behavioral health needs  
46 of women and children and one of whom shall represent the  
47 Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness, the majority leader of the  
48 House of Representatives shall appoint two members, one of whom  
49 shall represent an organization that advocates on social justice and

50 human rights issues and one of whom shall represent the Connecticut  
51 Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, the minority leader of the  
52 Senate shall appoint two members, one of whom shall represent the  
53 Connecticut Immigrant and Refugee Coalition and one of whom shall  
54 represent massage therapists, and the minority leader of the House of  
55 Representatives shall appoint two members, one of whom shall  
56 represent the Motor Transport Association of Connecticut, Inc. and one  
57 of whom shall represent an organization that works with adult victims  
58 of trafficking.

59 Sec. 2. Section 46a-51 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
60 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

61 As used in section 4a-60a and this chapter:

62 (1) "Blind" refers to an individual whose central visual acuity does  
63 not exceed 20/200 in the better eye with correcting lenses, or whose  
64 visual acuity is greater than 20/200 but is accompanied by a limitation  
65 in the fields of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field  
66 subtends an angle no greater than twenty degrees;

67 (2) "Commission" means the Commission on Human Rights and  
68 Opportunities created by section 46a-52;

69 (3) "Commission legal counsel" means a member of the legal staff  
70 employed by the commission pursuant to section 46a-54;

71 (4) "Commissioner" means a member of the commission;

72 (5) "Court" means the Superior Court or any judge of said court;

73 (6) "Discrimination" includes segregation and separation;

74 (7) "Discriminatory employment practice" means any discriminatory  
75 practice specified in subsection (b), (d), (e) or (f) of section 31-51i or  
76 section 46a-60, as amended by this act, or 46a-81c;

77 (8) "Discriminatory practice" means a violation of section 4a-60, as  
78 amended by this act, 4a-60a, 4a-60g, 31-40y, subsection (b), (d), (e) or (f)

79 of section 31-51i, subparagraph (C) of subdivision (15) of section 46a-54,  
80 subdivisions (16) and (17) of section 46a-54, section 46a-58, as amended  
81 by this act, 46a-59, as amended by this act, 46a-60, as amended by this  
82 act, 46a-64, 46a-64c, as amended by this act, 46a-66, as amended by this  
83 act, or 46a-68, sections 46a-68c to 46a-68f, inclusive, sections 46a-70 to  
84 46a-78, inclusive, as amended by this act, subsection (a) of section 46a-  
85 80, sections 46a-81b to 46a-81o, inclusive, sections 46a-80b to 46a-80e,  
86 inclusive, sections 46a-80k to 46a-80m, inclusive, or section 19a-498c;

87 (9) "Employee" means any person employed by an employer but shall  
88 not include any individual employed by such individual's parents,  
89 spouse or child. "Employee" includes any elected or appointed official  
90 of a municipality, board, commission, counsel or other governmental  
91 body;

92 (10) "Employer" includes the state and all political subdivisions  
93 thereof and means any person or employer with one or more persons in  
94 such person's or employer's employ;

95 (11) "Employment agency" means any person undertaking with or  
96 without compensation to procure employees or opportunities to work;

97 (12) "Labor organization" means any organization which exists for the  
98 purpose, in whole or in part, of collective bargaining or of dealing with  
99 employers concerning grievances, terms or conditions of employment,  
100 or of other mutual aid or protection in connection with employment;

101 (13) "Intellectual disability" means intellectual disability as defined in  
102 section 1-1g;

103 (14) "Person" means one or more individuals, partnerships,  
104 associations, corporations, limited liability companies, legal  
105 representatives, trustees, trustees in bankruptcy, receivers and the state  
106 and all political subdivisions and agencies thereof;

107 (15) "Physically disabled" refers to any individual who has any  
108 chronic physical handicap, infirmity or impairment, whether congenital  
109 or resulting from bodily injury, organic processes or changes or from

110 illness, including, but not limited to, epilepsy, deafness or being hard of  
111 hearing or reliance on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or  
112 device;

113 (16) "Respondent" means any person alleged in a complaint filed  
114 pursuant to section 46a-82 to have committed a discriminatory practice;

115 (17) "Discrimination on the basis of sex" includes but is not limited to  
116 discrimination related to pregnancy, child-bearing capacity,  
117 sterilization, fertility or related medical conditions;

118 (18) "Discrimination on the basis of religious creed" includes but is  
119 not limited to discrimination related to all aspects of religious  
120 observances and practice as well as belief, unless an employer  
121 demonstrates that the employer is unable to reasonably accommodate  
122 to an employee's or prospective employee's religious observance or  
123 practice without undue hardship on the conduct of the employer's  
124 business;

125 (19) "Learning disability" refers to an individual who exhibits a severe  
126 discrepancy between educational performance and measured  
127 intellectual ability and who exhibits a disorder in one or more of the  
128 basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using  
129 language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in a diminished  
130 ability to listen, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical  
131 calculations;

132 (20) "Mental disability" refers to an individual who has a record of, or  
133 is regarded as having one or more mental disorders, as defined in the  
134 most recent edition of the American Psychiatric Association's  
135 "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders";

136 (21) "Gender identity or expression" means a person's gender-related  
137 identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related  
138 identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally  
139 associated with the person's physiology or assigned sex at birth, which  
140 gender-related identity can be shown by providing evidence including,

141 but not limited to, medical history, care or treatment of the gender-  
142 related identity, consistent and uniform assertion of the gender-related  
143 identity or any other evidence that the gender-related identity is  
144 sincerely held, part of a person's core identity or not being asserted for  
145 an improper purpose;

146 (22) "Veteran" means veteran as defined in subsection (a) of section  
147 27-103;

148 (23) "Race" is inclusive of ethnic traits historically associated with  
149 race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles;

150 (24) "Protective hairstyles" includes, but is not limited to, wigs,  
151 headwraps and hairstyles such as individual braids, cornrows, locs,  
152 twists, Bantu knots, afros and afro puffs;

153 (25) "Domestic violence" has the same meaning as provided in  
154 subsection (b) of section 46b-1; [and]

155 (26) "Sexual orientation" means a person's identity in relation to the  
156 gender or genders to which they are romantically, emotionally or  
157 sexually attracted, inclusive of any identity that a person (A) may have  
158 previously expressed, or (B) is perceived by another person to hold;

159 (27) "Victim of sexual assault" means a victim of sexual assault under  
160 section 53a-70, 53a-70a, 53a-70b, revision of 1958, revised to January 1,  
161 2019, 53a-70c, 53a-71, 53a-72, revision of 1958, revised to January 1, 1975,  
162 53a-72a, 53a-72b, 53a-73, revision of 1958, revised to the 1969  
163 supplement of the general statutes or 53a-73a; and

164 (28) "Victim of trafficking in persons" means a victim of trafficking in  
165 persons under section 53a-192a.

166 Sec. 3. Section 46a-64c of the general statutes is repealed and the  
167 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

168 (a) It shall be a discriminatory practice in violation of this section:

169 (1) To refuse to sell or rent after the making of a bona fide offer, or to

170 refuse to negotiate for the sale or rental of, or otherwise make  
171 unavailable or deny, a dwelling to any person because of race, creed,  
172 color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression,  
173 marital status, age, lawful source of income, familial status, status as a  
174 veteran, [or] status as a victim of domestic violence, status as a victim of  
175 sexual assault or status as a victim of trafficking in persons.

176 (2) To discriminate against any person in the terms, conditions, or  
177 privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling, or in the provision of services  
178 or facilities in connection therewith, because of race, creed, color,  
179 national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, marital  
180 status, age, lawful source of income, familial status, [or] status as a  
181 veteran, status as a victim of sexual assault or status as a victim of  
182 trafficking in persons.

183 (3) To make, print or publish, or cause to be made, printed or  
184 published any notice, statement, or advertisement, with respect to the  
185 sale or rental of a dwelling that indicates any preference, limitation, or  
186 discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex,  
187 gender identity or expression, marital status, age, lawful source of  
188 income, familial status, learning disability, physical or mental disability,  
189 [or] status as a veteran, status as a victim of sexual assault or status as a  
190 victim of trafficking in persons, or an intention to make any such  
191 preference, limitation or discrimination.

192 (4) (A) To represent to any person because of race, creed, color,  
193 national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, marital  
194 status, age, lawful source of income, familial status, learning disability,  
195 physical or mental disability, [or] status as a veteran, status as a victim  
196 of sexual assault or status as a victim of trafficking in persons, that any  
197 dwelling is not available for inspection, sale or rental when such  
198 dwelling is in fact so available.

199 (B) It shall be a violation of this subdivision for any person to restrict  
200 or attempt to restrict the choices of any buyer or renter to purchase or  
201 rent a dwelling (i) to an area which is substantially populated, even if  
202 less than a majority, by persons of the same protected class as the buyer

203 or renter, (ii) while such person is authorized to offer for sale or rent  
204 another dwelling which meets the housing criteria as expressed by the  
205 buyer or renter to such person, and (iii) such other dwelling is in an area  
206 which is not substantially populated by persons of the same protected  
207 class as the buyer or renter. As used in this subdivision, "area" means  
208 municipality, neighborhood or other geographic subdivision which  
209 may include an apartment or condominium complex; and "protected  
210 class" means race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender  
211 identity or expression, marital status, age, lawful source of income,  
212 familial status, learning disability, physical or mental disability, [or]  
213 status as a veteran, status as a victim of sexual assault or status as a  
214 victim of trafficking in persons.

215 (5) For profit, to induce or attempt to induce any person to sell or rent  
216 any dwelling by representations regarding the entry or prospective  
217 entry into the neighborhood of a person or persons of a particular race,  
218 creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression,  
219 marital status, age, lawful source of income, familial status, learning  
220 disability, physical or mental disability, [or] status as a veteran, status  
221 as a victim of sexual assault or status as a victim of trafficking in persons.

222 (6) (A) To discriminate in the sale or rental, or to otherwise make  
223 unavailable or deny, a dwelling to any buyer or renter because of a  
224 learning disability or physical or mental disability of: (i) Such buyer or  
225 renter; (ii) a person residing in or intending to reside in such dwelling  
226 after it is so sold, rented, or made available; or (iii) any person associated  
227 with such buyer or renter.

228 (B) To discriminate against any person in the terms, conditions or  
229 privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling, or in the provision of services  
230 or facilities in connection with such dwelling, because of a learning  
231 disability or physical or mental disability of: (i) Such person; or (ii) a  
232 person residing in or intending to reside in such dwelling after it is so  
233 sold, rented, or made available; or (iii) any person associated with such  
234 person.

235 (C) For purposes of this subdivision, discrimination includes: (i) A



236 refusal to permit, at the expense of a person with a physical or mental  
237 disability, reasonable modifications of existing premises occupied or to  
238 be occupied by such person if such modifications may be necessary to  
239 afford such person full enjoyment of the premises; except that, in the  
240 case of a rental, the landlord may, where it is reasonable to do so,  
241 condition permission for a modification on the renter agreeing to restore  
242 the interior of the premises to the condition that existed before the  
243 modification, reasonable wear and tear excepted; (ii) a refusal to make  
244 reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices or services,  
245 when such accommodations may be necessary to afford such person  
246 equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling; (iii) in connection with  
247 the design and construction of covered multifamily dwellings for the  
248 first occupancy after March 13, 1991, a failure to design and construct  
249 those dwellings in such manner that they comply with the requirements  
250 of Section 804(f) of the Fair Housing Act or the provisions of the state  
251 building code as adopted pursuant to the provisions of sections 29-269  
252 and 29-273, whichever requires greater accommodation. "Covered  
253 multifamily dwellings" means buildings consisting of four or more units  
254 if such buildings have one or more elevators, and ground floor units in  
255 other buildings consisting of four or more units.

256 (7) For any person or other entity engaging in residential real-estate-  
257 related transactions to discriminate against any person in making  
258 available such a transaction, or in the terms or conditions of such a  
259 transaction, because of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex,  
260 gender identity or expression, marital status, age, lawful source of  
261 income, familial status, learning disability, physical or mental disability,  
262 [or] status as a veteran, status as a victim of sexual assault or status as a  
263 victim of trafficking in persons.

264 (8) To deny any person access to or membership or participation in  
265 any multiple-listing service, real estate brokers' organization or other  
266 service, organization, or facility relating to the business of selling or  
267 renting dwellings, or to discriminate against him in the terms or  
268 conditions of such access, membership or participation, on account of  
269 race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or

270 expression, marital status, age, lawful source of income, familial status,  
271 learning disability, physical or mental disability, [or] status as a veteran,  
272 status as a victim of sexual assault or status as a victim of trafficking in  
273 persons.

274 (9) To coerce, intimidate, threaten, or interfere with any person in the  
275 exercise or enjoyment of, or on account of his having exercised or  
276 enjoyed, or on account of his having aided or encouraged any other  
277 person in the exercise or enjoyment of, any right granted or protected  
278 by this section.

279 (b) (1) The provisions of this section shall not apply to (A) the rental  
280 of a room or rooms in a single-family dwelling unit if the owner actually  
281 maintains and occupies part of such living quarters as his residence or  
282 (B) a unit in a dwelling containing living quarters occupied or intended  
283 to be occupied by no more than two families living independently of  
284 each other, if the owner actually maintains and occupies the other such  
285 living quarters as his residence. (2) The provisions of this section with  
286 respect to the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of marital status  
287 shall not be construed to prohibit the denial of a dwelling to a man or a  
288 woman who are both unrelated by blood and not married to each other.  
289 (3) The provisions of this section with respect to the prohibition of  
290 discrimination on the basis of age shall not apply to minors, to special  
291 discount or other public or private programs to assist persons sixty  
292 years of age and older or to housing for older persons as defined in  
293 section 46a-64b, provided there is no discrimination on the basis of age  
294 among older persons eligible for such housing. (4) The provisions of this  
295 section with respect to the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of  
296 familial status shall not apply to housing for older persons as defined in  
297 section 46a-64b or to a unit in a dwelling containing units for no more  
298 than four families living independently of each other, if the owner of  
299 such dwelling resides in one of the units. (5) The provisions of this  
300 section with respect to the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of  
301 lawful source of income shall not prohibit the denial of full and equal  
302 accommodations solely on the basis of insufficient income. (6) The  
303 provisions of this section with respect to the prohibition of

304 discrimination on the basis of sex shall not apply to the rental of sleeping  
305 accommodations to the extent they utilize shared bathroom facilities  
306 when such sleeping accommodations are provided by associations and  
307 organizations which rent such sleeping accommodations on a  
308 temporary or permanent basis for the exclusive use of persons of the  
309 same sex based on considerations of privacy and modesty.

310 (c) Nothing in this section limits the applicability of any reasonable  
311 state statute or municipal ordinance restricting the maximum number  
312 of persons permitted to occupy a dwelling.

313 (d) Nothing in this section or section 46a-64b shall be construed to  
314 invalidate or limit any state statute or municipal ordinance that requires  
315 dwellings to be designed and constructed in a manner that affords  
316 persons with physical or mental disabilities greater access than is  
317 required by this section or section 46a-64b.

318 (e) Nothing in this section prohibits a person engaged in the business  
319 of furnishing appraisals of real property to take into consideration  
320 factors other than race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex,  
321 gender identity or expression, marital status, age, lawful source of  
322 income, familial status, learning disability, physical or mental disability,  
323 [or] status as a veteran, status as a victim of sexual assault or status as a  
324 victim of trafficking in persons.

325 (f) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, complaints  
326 alleging a violation of this section shall be investigated within one  
327 hundred days of filing and a final administrative disposition shall be  
328 made within one year of filing unless it is impracticable to do so. If the  
329 Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities is unable to complete  
330 its investigation or make a final administrative determination within  
331 such time frames, it shall notify the complainant and the respondent in  
332 writing of the reasons for not doing so.

333 (g) Any person who violates any provision of this section shall be  
334 guilty of a class D misdemeanor.

335 Sec. 4. Section 46a-58 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
336 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

337 (a) It shall be a discriminatory practice in violation of this section for  
338 any person to subject, or cause to be subjected, any other person to the  
339 deprivation of any rights, privileges or immunities, secured or protected  
340 by the Constitution or laws of this state or of the United States, on  
341 account of religion, national origin, alienage, color, race, sex, gender  
342 identity or expression, sexual orientation, blindness, mental disability,  
343 physical disability, age, status as a veteran, [or] status as a victim of  
344 domestic violence, status as a victim of sexual assault or status as a  
345 victim of trafficking in persons.

346 (b) Any person who intentionally desecrates any public property,  
347 monument or structure, or any religious object, symbol or house of  
348 religious worship, or any cemetery, or any private structure not owned  
349 by such person, shall be in violation of subsection (a) of this section. For  
350 the purposes of this subsection, "desecrate" means to mar, deface or  
351 damage as a demonstration of irreverence or contempt.

352 (c) Any person who places a burning cross or a simulation thereof on  
353 any public property, or on any private property without the written  
354 consent of the owner, and with intent to intimidate or harass any other  
355 person or group of persons, shall be in violation of subsection (a) of this  
356 section.

357 (d) Any person who places a noose or a simulation thereof on any  
358 public property, or on any private property without the written consent  
359 of the owner, and with intent to intimidate or harass any other person  
360 on account of religion, national origin, alienage, color, race, sex, gender  
361 identity or expression, sexual orientation, blindness, mental disability,  
362 physical disability, age, status as a veteran, [or] status as a victim of  
363 domestic violence, status as a victim of sexual assault or status as a  
364 victim of trafficking in persons, shall be in violation of subsection (a) of  
365 this section.

366 (e) (1) Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, any

367 person who violates any provision of this section shall be guilty of a  
368 class A misdemeanor and shall be fined not less than one thousand  
369 dollars, except that if property is damaged as a consequence of such  
370 violation in an amount in excess of one thousand dollars, such person  
371 shall be guilty of a class D felony and shall be fined not less than one  
372 thousand dollars.

373 (2) Any person who violates the provisions of this section by  
374 intentionally desecrating a house of religious worship (A) shall be guilty  
375 of a class D felony and shall be fined not less than one thousand dollars  
376 if property is damaged as a consequence of such violation in an amount  
377 up to and including ten thousand dollars, and (B) shall be guilty of a  
378 class C felony and shall be fined not less than three thousand dollars if  
379 the property damaged as a consequence of such violation is in an  
380 amount in excess of ten thousand dollars.

381 (3) The minimum amount of any fine imposed by the provisions of  
382 this section may not be remitted or reduced by the court unless the court  
383 states on the record its reasons for remitting or reducing such fine.

384 (4) The court may order restitution for any victim of a violation of this  
385 section pursuant to subsection (c) of section 53a-28.

386 Sec. 5. Section 46a-59 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
387 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

388 (a) It shall be a discriminatory practice in violation of this section for  
389 any association, board or other organization the principal purpose of  
390 which is the furtherance of the professional or occupational interests of  
391 its members, whose profession, trade or occupation requires a state  
392 license, to refuse to accept a person as a member of such association,  
393 board or organization because of his race, national origin, creed, sex,  
394 gender identity or expression, color, status as a veteran, [or] status as a  
395 victim of domestic violence, status as a victim of sexual assault or status  
396 as a victim of trafficking in persons.

397 (b) Any association, board or other organization which violates the

398 provisions of this section shall be fined not less than one hundred  
399 dollars nor more than five hundred dollars.

400 Sec. 6. Subsection (b) of section 46a-60 of the general statutes is  
401 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*  
402 *1, 2025*):

403 (b) It shall be a discriminatory practice in violation of this section:

404 (1) For an employer, by the employer or the employer's agent, except  
405 in the case of a bona fide occupational qualification or need, to refuse to  
406 hire or employ or to bar or to discharge from employment any  
407 individual or to discriminate against any individual in compensation or  
408 in terms, conditions or privileges of employment because of the  
409 individual's race, color, religious creed, age, sex, gender identity or  
410 expression, marital status, national origin, ancestry, present or past  
411 history of mental disability, intellectual disability, learning disability,  
412 physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, status as a  
413 veteran, [or] status as a victim of domestic violence, status as a victim of  
414 sexual assault or status as a victim of trafficking in persons;

415 (2) For any employment agency, except in the case of a bona fide  
416 occupational qualification or need, to fail or refuse to classify properly  
417 or refer for employment or otherwise to discriminate against any  
418 individual because of such individual's race, color, religious creed, age,  
419 sex, gender identity or expression, marital status, national origin,  
420 ancestry, present or past history of mental disability, intellectual  
421 disability, learning disability, physical disability, including, but not  
422 limited to, blindness, status as a veteran, [or] status as a victim of  
423 domestic violence, status as a victim of sexual assault or status as a  
424 victim of trafficking in persons;

425 (3) For a labor organization, because of the race, color, religious creed,  
426 age, sex, gender identity or expression, marital status, national origin,  
427 ancestry, present or past history of mental disability, intellectual  
428 disability, learning disability, physical disability, including, but not  
429 limited to, blindness, status as a veteran, [or] status as a victim of

430 domestic violence, status as a victim of sexual assault or status as a  
431 victim of trafficking in persons of any individual to exclude from full  
432 membership rights or to expel from its membership such individual or  
433 to discriminate in any way against any of its members or against any  
434 employer or any individual employed by an employer, unless such  
435 action is based on a bona fide occupational qualification;

436 (4) For any person, employer, labor organization or employment  
437 agency to discharge, expel or otherwise discriminate against any person  
438 because such person has opposed any discriminatory employment  
439 practice or because such person has filed a complaint or testified or  
440 assisted in any proceeding under section 46a-82, 46a-83 or 46a-84;

441 (5) For any person, whether an employer or an employee or not, to  
442 aid, abet, incite, compel or coerce the doing of any act declared to be a  
443 discriminatory employment practice or to attempt to do so;

444 (6) For any person, employer, employment agency or labor  
445 organization, except in the case of a bona fide occupational qualification  
446 or need, to advertise employment opportunities in such a manner as to  
447 restrict such employment so as to discriminate against individuals  
448 because of their race, color, religious creed, age, sex, gender identity or  
449 expression, marital status, national origin, ancestry, present or past  
450 history of mental disability, intellectual disability, learning disability,  
451 physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, status as a  
452 veteran, [or] status as a victim of domestic violence, status as a victim of  
453 sexual assault or status as a victim of trafficking in persons;

454 (7) For an employer, by the employer or the employer's agent: (A) To  
455 terminate a woman's employment because of her pregnancy; (B) to  
456 refuse to grant to that employee a reasonable leave of absence for  
457 disability resulting from her pregnancy; (C) to deny to that employee,  
458 who is disabled as a result of pregnancy, any compensation to which  
459 she is entitled as a result of the accumulation of disability or leave  
460 benefits accrued pursuant to plans maintained by the employer; (D) to  
461 fail or refuse to reinstate the employee to her original job or to an  
462 equivalent position with equivalent pay and accumulated seniority,

463 retirement, fringe benefits and other service credits upon her signifying  
464 her intent to return unless, in the case of a private employer, the  
465 employer's circumstances have so changed as to make it impossible or  
466 unreasonable to do so; (E) to limit, segregate or classify the employee in  
467 a way that would deprive her of employment opportunities due to her  
468 pregnancy; (F) to discriminate against an employee or person seeking  
469 employment on the basis of her pregnancy in the terms or conditions of  
470 her employment; (G) to fail or refuse to make a reasonable  
471 accommodation for an employee or person seeking employment due to  
472 her pregnancy, unless the employer can demonstrate that such  
473 accommodation would impose an undue hardship on such employer;  
474 (H) to deny employment opportunities to an employee or person  
475 seeking employment if such denial is due to the employee's request for  
476 a reasonable accommodation due to her pregnancy; (I) to force an  
477 employee or person seeking employment affected by pregnancy to  
478 accept a reasonable accommodation if such employee or person seeking  
479 employment (i) does not have a known limitation related to her  
480 pregnancy, or (ii) does not require a reasonable accommodation to  
481 perform the essential duties related to her employment; (J) to require an  
482 employee to take a leave of absence if a reasonable accommodation can  
483 be provided in lieu of such leave; and (K) to retaliate against an  
484 employee in the terms, conditions or privileges of her employment  
485 based upon such employee's request for a reasonable accommodation;

486 (8) For an employer, by the employer or the employer's agent, for an  
487 employment agency, by itself or its agent, or for any labor organization,  
488 by itself or its agent, to harass any employee, person seeking  
489 employment or member on the basis of sex or gender identity or  
490 expression. If an employer takes immediate corrective action in  
491 response to an employee's claim of sexual harassment, such corrective  
492 action shall not modify the conditions of employment of the employee  
493 making the claim of sexual harassment unless such employee agrees, in  
494 writing, to any modification in the conditions of employment.  
495 "Corrective action" taken by an employer, includes, but is not limited to,  
496 employee relocation, assigning an employee to a different work  
497 schedule or other substantive changes to an employee's terms and



498 conditions of employment. Notwithstanding an employer's failure to  
499 obtain a written agreement from an employee concerning a modification  
500 in the conditions of employment, the commission may find that  
501 corrective action taken by an employer was reasonable and not of  
502 detriment to the complainant based on the evidence presented to the  
503 commission by the complainant and respondent. As used in this  
504 subdivision, "sexual harassment" means any unwelcome sexual  
505 advances or requests for sexual favors or any conduct of a sexual nature  
506 when (A) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or  
507 implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, (B)  
508 submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as  
509 the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (C)  
510 such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with  
511 an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or  
512 offensive working environment;

513 (9) For an employer, by the employer or the employer's agent, for an  
514 employment agency, by itself or its agent, or for any labor organization,  
515 by itself or its agent, to request or require information from an  
516 employee, person seeking employment or member relating to the  
517 individual's child-bearing age or plans, pregnancy, function of the  
518 individual's reproductive system, use of birth control methods, or the  
519 individual's familial responsibilities, unless such information is directly  
520 related to a bona fide occupational qualification or need, provided an  
521 employer, through a physician may request from an employee any such  
522 information which is directly related to workplace exposure to  
523 substances which may cause birth defects or constitute a hazard to an  
524 individual's reproductive system or to a fetus if the employer first  
525 informs the employee of the hazards involved in exposure to such  
526 substances;

527 (10) For an employer, by the employer or the employer's agent, after  
528 informing an employee, pursuant to subdivision (9) of this subsection,  
529 of a workplace exposure to substances which may cause birth defects or  
530 constitute a hazard to an employee's reproductive system or to a fetus,  
531 to fail or refuse, upon the employee's request, to take reasonable

532 measures to protect the employee from the exposure or hazard  
533 identified, or to fail or refuse to inform the employee that the measures  
534 taken may be the subject of a complaint filed under the provisions of  
535 this chapter. Nothing in this subdivision is intended to prohibit an  
536 employer from taking reasonable measures to protect an employee from  
537 exposure to such substances. For the purpose of this subdivision,  
538 "reasonable measures" are those measures which are consistent with  
539 business necessity and are least disruptive of the terms and conditions  
540 of the employee's employment;

541 (11) For an employer, by the employer or the employer's agent, for an  
542 employment agency, by itself or its agent, or for any labor organization,  
543 by itself or its agent: (A) To request or require genetic information from  
544 an employee, person seeking employment or member, or (B) to  
545 discharge, expel or otherwise discriminate against any person on the  
546 basis of genetic information. For the purpose of this subdivision,  
547 "genetic information" means the information about genes, gene  
548 products or inherited characteristics that may derive from an individual  
549 or a family member;

550 (12) For an employer, by the employer or the employer's agent, to  
551 request or require a prospective employee's age, date of birth, dates of  
552 attendance at or date of graduation from an educational institution on  
553 an initial employment application, provided the provisions of this  
554 subdivision shall not apply to any employer requesting or requiring  
555 such information (A) based on a bona fide occupational qualification or  
556 need, or (B) when such information is required to comply with any  
557 provision of state or federal law; and

558 (13) (A) For an employer or the employer's agent to deny an employee  
559 a reasonable leave of absence in order to: (i) Seek attention for injuries  
560 caused by domestic violence, sexual assault or trafficking in persons,  
561 including for a child who is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault  
562 or trafficking in persons, provided the employee is not the perpetrator  
563 of [the] any act of domestic violence, sexual assault or trafficking in  
564 persons committed against [the] a child; (ii) obtain services including

565 safety planning from a domestic violence agency or rape crisis center, as  
566 those terms are defined in section 52-146k, as a result of domestic  
567 violence, sexual assault or trafficking in persons; (iii) obtain  
568 psychological counseling related to an incident or incidents of domestic  
569 violence, sexual assault or trafficking in persons, including for a child  
570 who is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or trafficking in  
571 persons, provided the employee is not the perpetrator of [the] any act of  
572 domestic violence, sexual assault or trafficking in persons committed  
573 against [the] a child; (iv) take other actions to increase safety from future  
574 incidents of domestic violence, sexual assault or trafficking in persons,  
575 including temporary or permanent relocation; or (v) obtain legal  
576 services, assisting in the prosecution of the offense, or otherwise  
577 participate in legal proceedings in relation to the incident or incidents of  
578 domestic violence, sexual assault or trafficking in persons.

579 (B) An employee who is absent from work in accordance with the  
580 provisions of subparagraph (A) of this subdivision shall, within a  
581 reasonable time after the absence, provide a certification to the employer  
582 when requested by the employer. Such certification shall be in the form  
583 of: (i) A police report indicating that the employee or the employee's  
584 child was a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or trafficking in  
585 persons; (ii) a court order protecting or separating the employee or  
586 employee's child from the perpetrator of an act of domestic violence,  
587 sexual assault or trafficking in persons; (iii) other evidence from the  
588 court or prosecuting attorney that the employee appeared in court; or  
589 (iv) documentation from a medical professional, including a domestic  
590 violence counselor or sexual assault counselor, as those terms are  
591 defined in section 52-146k, or other health care provider, that the  
592 employee or the employee's child was receiving services, counseling or  
593 treatment for physical or mental injuries or abuse resulting in  
594 victimization from an act of domestic violence, sexual assault or  
595 trafficking in persons.

596 (C) Where an employee has a physical or mental disability resulting  
597 from an incident or series of incidents of domestic violence, sexual  
598 assault or trafficking in persons, such employee shall be treated in the

599 same manner as an employee with any other disability.

600 (D) To the extent permitted by law, employers shall maintain the  
601 confidentiality of any information regarding an employee's status as a  
602 victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or trafficking in persons.

603 Sec. 7. Subsection (a) of section 46a-64 of the general statutes is  
604 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*  
605 *1, 2025*):

606 (a) It shall be a discriminatory practice in violation of this section: (1)  
607 To deny any person within the jurisdiction of this state full and equal  
608 accommodations in any place of public accommodation, resort or  
609 amusement because of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex,  
610 gender identity or expression, marital status, age, lawful source of  
611 income, intellectual disability, mental disability, physical disability,  
612 including, but not limited to, blindness or deafness, status as a veteran,  
613 [or] status as a victim of domestic violence, status as a victim of sexual  
614 assault or status as a victim of trafficking in persons, of the applicant,  
615 subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law and  
616 applicable alike to all persons; (2) to discriminate, segregate or separate  
617 on account of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender  
618 identity or expression, marital status, age, lawful source of income,  
619 intellectual disability, mental disability, learning disability, physical  
620 disability, including, but not limited to, blindness or deafness, status as  
621 a veteran, [or] status as a victim of domestic violence, status as a victim  
622 of sexual assault or status as a victim of trafficking in persons; (3) for a  
623 place of public accommodation, resort or amusement to restrict or limit  
624 the right of a mother to breast-feed her child; (4) for a place of public  
625 accommodation, resort or amusement to refuse entry to a person with a  
626 disability who is accompanied by a service animal; or (5) to deny any  
627 person with a disability or any person training an animal as a service  
628 animal to assist a person with a disability, accompanied by such service  
629 animal, full and equal access to any place of public accommodation,  
630 resort or amusement. Any person with a disability or any person  
631 training an animal as a service animal may keep such service animal at

632 all times in such place of public accommodation, resort or amusement  
633 at no extra charge, provided such service animal is in the direct custody  
634 and control of such person. When it is not obvious what service an  
635 animal provides, staff of a place of public accommodation, resort or  
636 amusement may inquire of the owner or keeper whether such animal is  
637 a service animal required because of a disability and what work or task  
638 the animal has been trained to perform. Nothing in this subsection shall  
639 preclude a business owner's ability to recover for damage caused to a  
640 person or property by a service animal. For the purposes of this  
641 subsection, "disability" and "service animal" have the same meanings as  
642 provided in section 22-345 and "place of public accommodation, resort  
643 or amusement" has the same meaning as provided in section 46a-44.

644 Sec. 8. Subsection (a) of section 46a-66 of the general statutes is  
645 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*  
646 *1, 2025*):

647 (a) It shall be a discriminatory practice in violation of this section for  
648 any creditor to discriminate on the basis of sex, gender identity or  
649 expression, age, race, color, religious creed, national origin, ancestry,  
650 marital status, intellectual disability, learning disability, blindness,  
651 physical disability, status as a veteran, [or] status as a victim of domestic  
652 violence, status as a victim of sexual assault or status as a victim of  
653 trafficking in persons against any person eighteen years of age or over  
654 in any credit transaction.

655 Sec. 9. Subsection (a) of section 46a-70 of the general statutes is  
656 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*  
657 *1, 2025*):

658 (a) State officials and supervisory personnel shall recruit, appoint,  
659 assign, train, evaluate and promote state personnel on the basis of merit  
660 and qualifications, without regard for race, color, religious creed, sex,  
661 gender identity or expression, marital status, age, national origin,  
662 ancestry, status as a veteran, status as a victim of domestic violence,  
663 status as a victim of sexual assault, status as a victim of trafficking in  
664 persons, intellectual disability, mental disability, learning disability or

665 physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is  
666 shown by such state officials or supervisory personnel that such  
667 disability prevents performance of the work involved.

668 Sec. 10. Subsection (a) of section 46a-71 of the general statutes is  
669 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*  
670 *1, 2025*):

671 (a) All services of every state agency shall be performed without  
672 discrimination based upon race, color, religious creed, sex, gender  
673 identity or expression, marital status, age, national origin, ancestry,  
674 intellectual disability, mental disability, learning disability, physical  
675 disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, status as a veteran,  
676 [or] status as a victim of domestic violence, status as a victim of sexual  
677 assault or status as a victim of trafficking in persons.

678 Sec. 11. Subsection (b) of section 46a-72 of the general statutes is  
679 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*  
680 *1, 2025*):

681 (b) Any job request indicating an intention to exclude any person  
682 because of race, color, religious creed, sex, gender identity or expression,  
683 marital status, age, national origin, ancestry, status as a veteran, status  
684 as a victim of domestic violence, status as a victim of sexual assault or  
685 status as a victim of trafficking in persons, intellectual disability, mental  
686 disability, learning disability or physical disability, including, but not  
687 limited to, blindness, shall be rejected, unless it is shown by such public  
688 or private employers that such disability prevents performance of the  
689 work involved.

690 Sec. 12. Subsection (a) of section 46a-73 of the general statutes is  
691 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*  
692 *1, 2025*):

693 (a) No state department, board or agency may grant, deny or revoke  
694 the license or charter of any person on the grounds of race, color,  
695 religious creed, sex, gender identity or expression, marital status, age,

696 national origin, ancestry, status as a veteran, status as a victim of  
697 domestic violence, status as a victim of sexual assault, status as a victim  
698 of trafficking in persons, intellectual disability, mental disability,  
699 learning disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to,  
700 blindness, unless it is shown by such state department, board or agency  
701 that such disability prevents performance of the work involved.

702 Sec. 13. Subsection (a) of section 46a-75 of the general statutes is  
703 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*  
704 *1, 2025*):

705 (a) All educational, counseling, and vocational guidance programs  
706 and all apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs of state  
707 agencies, or in which state agencies participate, shall be open to all  
708 qualified persons, without regard to race, color, religious creed, sex,  
709 gender identity or expression, marital status, age, national origin,  
710 ancestry, intellectual disability, mental disability, learning disability,  
711 physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, status as a  
712 veteran, [or] status as a victim of domestic violence, status as a victim of  
713 sexual assault or status as a victim of trafficking in persons.

714 Sec. 14. Subsection (a) of section 46a-76 of the general statutes is  
715 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*  
716 *1, 2025*):

717 (a) Race, color, religious creed, sex, gender identity or expression,  
718 marital status, age, national origin, ancestry, intellectual disability,  
719 mental disability, learning disability, physical disability, including, but  
720 not limited to, blindness, status as a veteran, [or] status as a victim of  
721 domestic violence, status as a victim of sexual assault or status as a  
722 victim of trafficking in persons, shall not be considered as limiting  
723 factors in state-administered programs involving the distribution of  
724 funds to qualify applicants for benefits authorized by law.

725 Sec. 15. Subsection (a) of section 4a-60 of the general statutes is  
726 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*  
727 *1, 2025*):

728 (a) Except as provided in section 10a-151i, every contract to which an  
729 awarding agency is a party, every quasi-public agency project contract  
730 and every municipal public works contract shall contain the following  
731 provisions:

732 (1) The contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the  
733 contract such contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination  
734 against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race, color,  
735 religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender  
736 identity or expression, status as a veteran, status as a victim of domestic  
737 violence, status as a victim of sexual assault or status as a victim of  
738 trafficking in persons, intellectual disability, mental disability or  
739 physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is  
740 shown by such contractor that such disability prevents performance of  
741 the work involved, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United  
742 States or of the state of Connecticut; and the contractor further agrees to  
743 take affirmative action to ensure that applicants with job-related  
744 qualifications are employed and that employees are treated when  
745 employed without regard to their race, color, religious creed, age,  
746 marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or  
747 expression, status as a veteran, status as a victim of domestic violence,  
748 status as a victim of sexual assault or status as a victim of trafficking in  
749 persons, intellectual disability, mental disability or physical disability,  
750 including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by such  
751 contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work  
752 involved;

753 (2) The contractor agrees, in all solicitations or advertisements for  
754 employees placed by or on behalf of the contractor, to state that it is an  
755 "affirmative action-equal opportunity employer" in accordance with  
756 regulations adopted by the Commission on Human Rights and  
757 Opportunities;

758 (3) The contractor agrees to provide each labor union or  
759 representative of workers with which such contractor has a collective  
760 bargaining agreement or other contract or understanding and each



761 vendor with which such contractor has a contract or understanding, a  
762 notice to be provided by the Commission on Human Rights and  
763 Opportunities advising the labor union or workers' representative of the  
764 contractor's commitments under this section, and to post copies of the  
765 notice in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for  
766 employment;

767 (4) The contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this  
768 section and sections 46a-68e and 46a-68f and with each regulation or  
769 relevant order issued by said commission pursuant to sections 46a-56,  
770 46a-68e, 46a-68f and 46a-86; and

771 (5) The contractor agrees to provide the Commission on Human  
772 Rights and Opportunities with such information requested by the  
773 commission, and permit access to pertinent books, records and  
774 accounts, concerning the employment practices and procedures of the  
775 contractor as relate to the provisions of this section and section 46a-56.

776 Sec. 16. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2025*) In the prosecution of or  
777 delinquency proceeding for any misdemeanor offense, it shall be an  
778 affirmative defense that the defendant was under eighteen years of age  
779 at the time the defendant committed the offense and the defendant's  
780 participation in the offense was a result of having been a victim of  
781 trafficking in persons in violation of subsection (a) of section 53a-192a of  
782 the general statutes.

783 Sec. 17. Subsection (b) of section 17a-106h of the general statutes is  
784 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*  
785 *passage*):

786 (b) The training program shall include a [video] presentation,  
787 developed and approved by said commissioners, that offers awareness  
788 of human trafficking issues and guidance to (1) law enforcement  
789 personnel, (2) judges of the Superior Court, (3) prosecutors, (4) public  
790 defenders and other attorneys who represent criminal defendants, (5)  
791 hospital emergency room staff, urgent care facility staff and emergency  
792 medical services personnel who have contact with patients, and (6)

793 persons employed by a local or regional board of education or a  
 794 constituent unit, as defined in section 10a-1, who have contact with  
 795 students.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	46a-170(b)
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	46a-51
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	46a-64c
Sec. 4	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	46a-58
Sec. 5	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	46a-59
Sec. 6	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	46a-60(b)
Sec. 7	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	46a-64(a)
Sec. 8	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	46a-66(a)
Sec. 9	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	46a-70(a)
Sec. 10	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	46a-71(a)
Sec. 11	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	46a-72(b)
Sec. 12	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	46a-73(a)
Sec. 13	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	46a-75(a)
Sec. 14	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	46a-76(a)
Sec. 15	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	4a-60(a)
Sec. 16	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 17	<i>from passage</i>	17a-106h(b)

**JUD**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

*The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.*

## **OFA Fiscal Note**

### **State Impact:**

<b>Agency Affected</b>	<b>Fund-Effect</b>	<b>FY 26 \$</b>	<b>FY 27 \$</b>
Human Rights & Opportunities, Com.	GF - Potential Cost	Minimal	Minimal
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Potential Revenue Gain	Minimal	Minimal
Judicial Dept. (Probation); Correction, Dept.	GF - Potential Cost	Minimal	Minimal
Various State Agencies	GF - Potential Cost	Minimal	Minimal

Note: GF=General Fund

### **Municipal Impact:** None

### **Explanation**

The bill 1) expands what is a "discriminatory practice" for the purpose of Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) laws, 2) expands certain criminal charges ranging from a class D misdemeanor to a class D felony, and 3) prohibits discrimination by state agencies based on victim status for sexual assault and human trafficking. The fiscal impacts are described below.

### **CHRO Discriminatory Practice**

The bill expands what is a "discriminatory practice" for the purpose of CHRO laws to include protections for sexual assault and human trafficking victims resulting in a potential cost<sup>1</sup> to CHRO and potential revenue to the General Fund.

<sup>1</sup> This cost is associated with additional staff time, materials, and resources to facilitate additional proceedings.

The exact cost will depend on the number of additional cases brought due to the legislation. The exact revenue would depend on the number of additional fines imposed due to the legislation.

### **Criminal Penalties**

The bill expands certain criminal charges for discrimination that range from a class D misdemeanor to a class C felony which results in a potential cost to the Department of Correction and the Judicial Department for incarceration or probation and a potential revenue gain to the General Fund from fines. On average, the marginal cost to the state for incarcerating an offender for the year is \$3,300<sup>2</sup> while the average marginal cost for supervision in the community is less than \$600<sup>3</sup> each year for adults and \$450 each year for juveniles. Few, if any, additional violations are anticipated.<sup>4</sup>

### **Prohibition of Discrimination by State Agencies**

The bill prohibits discrimination by state agencies based on victim status for sexual assault and human trafficking regarding public benefits, educational programs, state employment, contracts, etc. To the extent that this requires any state entity to alter their current practice, there may be a potential cost beginning in FY 26.

The bill makes various other changes that do not result in a fiscal impact to the state or municipalities.

### **The Out Years**

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<sup>2</sup> Inmate marginal cost is based on increased consumables (e.g., food, clothing, water, sewage, living supplies, etc.) This does not include a change in staffing costs or utility expenses because these would only be realized if a unit or facility opened.

<sup>3</sup> Probation marginal cost is based on services provided by private providers and only includes costs that increase with each additional participant. This does not include a cost for additional supervision by a probation officer unless a new offense is anticipated to result in enough additional offenders to require additional probation officers.

<sup>4</sup> From FY 20 -24, there were 17 charges recorded and no associated revenue collected under CGS § 46a-58. No charges were recorded, nor revenue collected under CGS §§ 46a-64c nor 46a-64(a).

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation and actual violations.

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**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 7236*****AN ACT CONCERNING HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill makes various changes in laws related to sexual assault and human trafficking victims (see definitions below).

First, the bill changes the composition of the Trafficking in Persons Council by (1) increasing its membership, from 36 to 37, by adding the Department of Transportation commissioner, or his designee and (2) removing the specified qualifications of one of the governor's four appointees (§ 1).

The bill also makes sexual assault victim status and trafficking in persons victim status protected classes under the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) antidiscrimination laws. It does so by prohibiting various forms of discrimination based on someone's status as a sexual assault or human trafficking victim, such as in employment, public accommodations, housing sales or rentals, granting credit, and several other areas. In several cases, the bill classifies discrimination on this basis as a "discriminatory practice" under the CHRO laws. By doing so, it allows CHRO or individuals aggrieved by these violations to file a complaint with CHRO alleging discrimination (§§ 2-15).

The bill also creates an affirmative defense for certain offenders charged with a misdemeanor (1) who were minors (under age 18) at the time they committed the offense and (2) whose participation in the offense was a result of having been a human trafficking victim (§ 16).

Lastly, it allows the mandatory human trafficking awareness course

to be provided in any format, rather than only by video. By law, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) in consultation with the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), must develop and provide this training program for specified professionals, such as law enforcement officers, judges, public defenders, and certain professionals who have contact with students (§ 17).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025, except the provisions increasing the council's membership and revising DCF's training program are effective upon passage.

## **§ 1 — TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS COUNCIL**

The bill changes the composition of the Trafficking in Persons Council in two ways. First, it increases the membership, from 36 to 37, by adding the Department of Transportation commissioner, or his designee. Second, it changes one of the governor's four appointees by no longer requiring him to specifically appoint an adult trafficking victim but instead requires him to add a fourth member of the public without specifying any qualifications.

Existing law, unchanged by the bill, specifies that the governor's appointees who are members of the public must represent each of the following groups: (1) victims of commercial exploitation of children, (2) sex trafficking victims who are children, and (3) a coalition of children's advocacy centers and multidisciplinary teams that are dedicated to serving child abuse victims and their families.

By law, among other things, the Trafficking in Persons Council coordinates human trafficking data collection and consults with government and nongovernment organizations in developing recommendations to strengthen state and local efforts to prevent trafficking, protect and help victims, and prosecute traffickers.

## **§§ 2-15 — SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS AS PROTECTED CLASS UNDER ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS**

The bill prohibits various forms of discrimination based on

someone's status as a sexual assault or human trafficking victim, such as in employment, public accommodations, housing sales or rentals, granting credit, and several other areas. In several cases, it classifies discrimination on this basis as a "discriminatory practice" under the CHRO laws. By doing so, the bill allows CHRO or individuals aggrieved by these violations to file a complaint with CHRO alleging discrimination.

***Sexual Assault Victim Defined (§ 2)***

The bill defines the term "victim of sexual assault" under the CHRO laws as a victim of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th degree sexual assault; 3rd degree sexual assault with a firearm; aggravated sexual assault; aggravated sexual assault of a minor; sexual assault in a spousal or cohabiting relationship; and 1st and 2nd degree rape.

***Human Trafficking Victim Defined (§ 2)***

The bill applies a general definition for the term "victim of trafficking in persons" under the CHRO laws.

Under the bill, a human trafficking victim is a person who is a victim of the crime of "trafficking in persons," a class A felony, punishable by a fine up to \$20,000, 10 to 25 years in prison, or both. By law, a person commits trafficking in persons when he or she knowingly compels or induces another person to:

1. use fraud, coercion, or force (or threat of force) to compel or induce another person to (a) engage in conduct involving sexual contact with one or more third persons or (b) provide labor or services that the other person has a legal right to refrain from providing;
2. compel or induce a minor (under age 18) to engage in conduct with one or more third persons involving sexual contact for which the third person may be charged with a crime; or
3. otherwise knowingly commit a sex trafficking act (CGS § 53a-192a).



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**General Anti-Discriminatory Provision and Deprivation of Rights  
(§ 4)**

Under existing law, it is a discriminatory practice to deprive someone of any rights, privileges, or immunities secured or protected by Connecticut or federal laws or constitutions, or cause such a deprivation, because of religion, national origin, alienage, color, race, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, blindness, mental or physical disability, age, veteran status, or status as a domestic violence victim. The bill adds sexual assault and human trafficking victims to this list, thus authorizing CHRO to investigate claims of discrimination based on this status.

Under existing law, it is a crime to place a noose or simulation of one on public property, or on private property without the owner's written consent, with the intent to harass someone because of any protected class listed above. The bill adds sexual assault and human trafficking victims to the list of protected classes.

By law, a violation of these provisions is generally a class A misdemeanor; but, if the violation results in more than \$1,000 in property damage, then it is a class D felony. In either case, there is a minimum \$1,000 fine unless the court states on the record its reasons for reducing it. (A class A misdemeanor is punishable by a fine up to \$2,000, up to 364 days in prison, or both; a class D felony is punishable by a fine up to \$5,000, up to five years in prison, or both.)

**Employment Discrimination (§ 6)**

Unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification or need, the bill prohibits an employer or its agent from (1) refusing to hire or employ someone; (2) barring or discharging someone from employment; or (3) discriminating against someone in pay or in employment terms, conditions, or privileges because the person is a sexual assault or human trafficking victim. This prohibition applies to all employers, public or private, and all employees except those employed by their parents, spouse, or children.

The bill also prohibits the following kinds of employment

discrimination based on sexual assault or human trafficking victim status:

1. employers refusing to give a reasonable leave of absence to an employee whom the employer knows is a sexual assault or human trafficking victim unless the absence would cause an undue hardship (see below);
2. employment agencies failing or refusing to classify properly or refer for employment or otherwise discriminating against someone except in the case of a bona fide occupational qualification or need;
3. labor organizations excluding someone from full membership rights, expelling a member, or discriminating in any way against a member, employer, or employee unless the action is due to a bona fide occupational qualification;
4. employers, employment agencies, labor organizations, or anyone else taking adverse action against someone because he or she opposed a discriminatory employment practice, brought a complaint, or testified or assisted someone else in a complaint proceeding;
5. any person aiding, abetting, inciting, compelling, or coercing someone to commit a discriminatory employment practice or attempting to do so; and
6. employers, employment agencies, labor organizations, or anyone else advertising employment opportunities in a way that restricts employment and therefore discriminates except when involving a bona fide occupational qualification or need.

**Reasonable Leave of Absence.** As is the case for an employee who is a domestic violence victim under existing law, under the bill, it is a discriminatory practice for an employer or the employer's agent to deny the employee a reasonable leave of absence to do the following:

1. seek attention for injuries caused by sexual assault or human trafficking, including for a child who is a sexual assault or human trafficking victim, so long as the employee did not commit sexual assault or human trafficking against the child;
2. get services, including safety planning, from a sexual assault or human trafficking agency or rape crisis center;
3. get psychological counseling, including for a child, so long as the employee did not commit sexual assault or human trafficking against the child;
4. take other actions to increase safety from future incidents, including temporary or permanent relocation; or
5. get legal services, help with the offense's prosecution, or otherwise participate in related legal proceedings.

As is required for a domestic violence victim under existing law, the bill requires an employee who is a sexual assault or human trafficking victim who misses work under the circumstances described above to give a certification to the employer, if requested, within a reasonable time after the absence. The bill generally requires similar types of certifications for sexual assault and human trafficking victims as existing law requires for domestic violence victims, which must be one of the following:

1. a police report indicating that the employee or the employee's child was a sexual assault or human trafficking victim;
2. a court order protecting or separating the employee or employee's child from the perpetrator;
3. other evidence from the court or prosecutor that the employee appeared in court; or
4. documentation from a medical professional or a sexual assault counselor, or other health care provider, that the employee or

employee's child was receiving services, counseling, or treatment for physical or mental injuries or abuse caused by sexual assault or human trafficking.

Under the bill, if an employee has a physical or mental disability resulting from a sexual assault or human trafficking incident, then the employee must be treated the same as employees with other disabilities, as is the case for domestic violence victims under existing law.

The bill also requires employers, to the extent allowed by law, to keep confidential any information about an employee's status as a sexual assault or human trafficking victim as is required by law for domestic violence victims.

### ***Public Accommodations (§ 7)***

The bill prohibits anyone from denying someone, based on his or her status as a sexual assault or human trafficking victim, full and equal accommodations in any public establishment (i.e. one that caters to or offers its services, facilities, or goods to the general public), including any commercial property or building lot on which a commercial building will be built or offered for sale or rent, subject to lawful conditions and limitations that apply alike to everyone. It further prohibits discriminating, segregating, or separating people based on their status as a sexual assault or human trafficking victim. A violation is a class D misdemeanor, punishable by a fine up to \$250, up to 30 days in prison, or both.

### ***Housing (§ 3)***

The law provides protection against discriminatory housing practices to the protected classes under the CHRO statutes. The bill extends these protections to sexual assault and human trafficking victims. Specifically, the bill prohibits anyone from doing the following based on a person's status as a sexual assault or human trafficking victim:

1. refusing to sell or rent after the person makes a bona fide offer, refusing to negotiate for the sale or rental of a dwelling, or otherwise denying or making a dwelling unavailable;

2. discriminating against the person in the terms, conditions, or privileges of a dwelling's sale or rental, or in providing connected services or facilities, such as providing appraisals;
3. making, printing, or publishing, or causing such to occur, any notice, statement, or advertisement with a dwelling's sale or rental that indicates any preference, limitation, or discrimination;
4. representing that a dwelling is not available for inspection, sale, or rental when it is;
5. generally restricting or attempting to restrict the choices of any buyer or renter to buy or rent a dwelling;
6. for profit, inducing or attempting to induce the person to sell or rent any dwelling by representations about the entry or prospective entry into the neighborhood;
7. discriminating against the person in making available a residential real estate transaction, or in the terms or conditions of the transaction; or
8. denying the person access to, or membership or participation in, any multiple-listing service, real estate brokers' organization, or other service, organization, or facility relating to residential real estate business of selling or renting homes, or discriminating in the terms or conditions of them.

Under existing law and the bill, the above provisions do not apply to the rental of (1) a room in an owner-occupied single-family home or (2) part of an owner-occupied two-family home. A violation of any of them is a class D misdemeanor.

***Credit (§ 8)***

The bill prohibits a creditor from discriminating against an adult in a credit transaction based on the person's status as a sexual assault or human trafficking victim.

***Other Areas Subject to CHRO's Jurisdiction (§§ 5 & 9-15)***

The bill authorizes CHRO to investigate discrimination claims based on someone's status as a sexual assault or human trafficking victim under other laws over which CHRO has jurisdiction. Specifically, the bill does the following:

1. prohibits any professional or trade association, board, or other similar organization whose profession, trade, or occupation requires a state license from denying someone membership because of his or her status as a sexual assault or human trafficking victim (violators are subject to a \$100 to \$500 fine) (§ 5);
2. requires state officials and supervisory personnel to recruit, appoint, assign, train, evaluate, and promote state personnel based on merit and qualifications, without regard for their status as a sexual assault or human trafficking victim unless it prevents performance of the work involved (§ 9);
3. requires state agencies to deliver services without discrimination based on a person's status as a sexual assault or human trafficking victim (§ 10);
4. requires any state agency that provides employment referrals or placement services to public or private employers to reject any job request that indicates an intention to exclude anyone based on his or her status as a sexual assault or human trafficking victim (§ 11);
5. prohibits state departments, boards, or agencies from granting, denying, or revoking a person's license or charter because he or she is a sexual assault or human trafficking victim (§ 12);
6. requires all educational, counseling, and vocational guidance programs and all apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs of state agencies, or in which they participate, to be open to all qualified people, without regard for a person's status

as a sexual assault or human trafficking victim (§ 13);

7. prohibits a person's status as a sexual assault or human trafficking victim from being a limiting factor in state-administered programs involving the distribution of funds to qualified applicants for benefits authorized by law; and prohibits the state from giving financial assistance to public agencies, private institutions, or other organizations that discriminate on this basis (§ 14); and
8. generally requires state agency, municipal public works, and quasi-public agency project contracts to have a provision requiring the contractors to agree, with regard to someone's status as a victim of sexual assault or human trafficking, to (a) not discriminate or permit discrimination and (b) take affirmative action to ensure that applicants with job-related qualifications are employed and that employees are treated without regard to that status. (§ 15).

#### **§ 16 — AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE FOR MINOR VICTIMS IN MISDEMEANOR CASES**

In misdemeanor cases in Superior or Juvenile courts, the bill makes it an affirmative defense that (1) the defendant was a minor (under age 18) at the time he or she committed the offense and (2) his or her participation in the offense was a result of having been a human trafficking victim (as defined above).

Under existing law, it is already an affirmative defense in any human trafficking prosecution or delinquency proceeding that the defendant was a minor and his or her participation in the offense was a result of having been a victim of another person's human trafficking conduct.

#### **§ 17 — HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS COURSE**

The law requires the DCF commissioner, in consultation with the DESPP commissioner, to develop an initial and refresher training program to accurately and promptly identify and report suspected human trafficking.

Under current law, the training program must include a video presentation, developed and approved by the commissioners, that offers awareness of human trafficking issues and guidance to specific personnel. The bill allows this presentation to be in any format, not just video.

Existing law, unchanged by the bill, requires the following professionals to complete the training every three years: law enforcement personnel; Superior Court judges; prosecutors; public defenders and other criminal defense attorneys; hospital emergency room, urgent care facility staff, and emergency medical services personnel who have patient contact; and employees of local and regional school boards or public higher education constituent units who have contact with students.

#### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 36    Nay 5    (04/07/2025)