



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 448

January Session, 2025

Substitute Senate Bill No. 1492

Senate, April 2, 2025

The Committee on Public Safety and Security reported through SEN. GASTON of the 23rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING LAW ENFORCEMENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.

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

1 Section 1. (*Effective July 1, 2025*) Not later than January 1, 2026, the
2 Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection shall
3 consult with the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association, institutions of
4 higher education in this state and any other entities the commissioner
5 deems appropriate to develop, coordinate and implement a plan to
6 promote the law enforcement profession. In implementing such plan,
7 the commissioner shall use a variety of media, including social media.

8 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) The Department of Emergency
9 Services and Public Protection shall employ a full-time cadet or explorer
10 program coordinator, who shall coordinate and oversee police cadet or
11 explorer programs, implement state standards and a best practices
12 guide for such programs and encourage establishment and expansion
13 of such programs throughout the state.

14 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year
15 thereafter, the department shall allocate five thousand dollars to each
16 municipal police department that operates, or plans to operate in the
17 following fiscal year, a cadet or explorer program.

18 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) For the fiscal year ending June 30,
19 2026, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Department of Emergency
20 Services and Public Protection shall establish a grant program to
21 reimburse municipal police departments for the cost of basic training of
22 police officers. Not later than October 1, 2025, the department shall post
23 in a conspicuous place on the department's Internet web site a
24 description of the grant program, including, but not limited to,
25 eligibility criteria and the application process for the program. A
26 municipal police department shall apply for such grants on such forms
27 and in such manner as determined by the department.

28 Sec. 4. (*Effective from passage*) (a) For the purposes of this section,
29 "academy" and "basic training" have the same meanings as provided in
30 section 7-294a of the general statutes.

31 (b) The Police Officer Standards and Training Council shall examine
32 criminal justice courses offered by colleges and universities in the state,
33 and determine (1) whether any such courses are equivalent to courses
34 required as part of basic training at the academy, and (2) under what
35 conditions an individual attending the academy for basic training need
36 not complete a course at the academy because the individual completed
37 an equivalent course at a college or university in the state. Not later than
38 January 1, 2026, the council shall submit a report of such examination
39 and determination, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of
40 the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General
41 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public safety and
42 security.

43 (c) Not later than January 1, 2026, the Police Officer Standards and
44 Training Council shall establish a pilot program with the University of
45 New Haven to permit an individual who attends the academy for basic
46 training to complete such training by taking (1) courses related to legal

47 issues at such university, and (2) the remaining courses at the academy.
48 Not later than January 1, 2027, the council shall submit a report, in
49 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes,
50 to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
51 cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security. Such report
52 shall include (A) a description of the pilot program; (B) an analysis of
53 the impact of such program on police recruitment and training
54 procedures and resources; and (C) recommendations on whether to
55 terminate, continue, revise or expand such program.

56 Sec. 5. Subsection (b) of section 7-294d of the general statutes is
57 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
58 *2025*):

59 (b) (1) No person may be employed as a police officer by any law
60 enforcement unit for a period exceeding one year unless such person
61 has been certified under the provisions of subsection (a) of this section
62 or has been granted an extension by the council. No person may serve
63 as a police officer during any period when such person's certification
64 has been cancelled or revoked pursuant to the provisions of subsection
65 (c) of this section. In addition to the requirements of this subsection, the
66 council may establish other qualifications for the employment of police
67 officers and require evidence of fulfillment of these qualifications. No
68 law enforcement unit shall deny employment as a police officer to a
69 prospective employee, and the council shall not deny certification under
70 the provisions of subsection (a) of this section to an individual, solely on
71 the basis of such prospective employee's or such individual's status as a
72 noncitizen of the United States, provided such prospective employee or
73 such individual is lawfully admitted for permanent residence of the
74 United States under federal law and regulations.

75 (2) The certification of any police officer who is not employed by a
76 law enforcement unit for a period of time in excess of two years, unless
77 such officer is on leave of absence, shall be considered lapsed. Upon
78 reemployment as a police officer, such officer shall apply for
79 recertification in a manner provided by the council, provided such

80 recertification process requires the police officer to submit to a urinalysis
81 drug test that screens for controlled substances, including, but not
82 limited to, anabolic steroids, and receive a result indicating no presence
83 of any controlled substance not prescribed for the officer. The council
84 shall certify any applicant who presents evidence of satisfactory
85 completion of a program or course of instruction in another state or, if
86 the applicant is a veteran or a member of the armed forces or the
87 National Guard, as part of training during service in the armed forces,
88 that is equivalent in content and quality to that required in this state,
89 provided such applicant passes an examination or evaluation as
90 required by the council. For the purposes of this section, "veteran" and
91 "armed forces" have the same meanings as provided in section 27-103.

92 Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) For the fiscal year ending June 30,
93 2026, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Commissioner of Emergency
94 Services and Public Protection shall provide a grant to each of the top
95 ten most populous municipalities in the state in order to increase the
96 salaries of police officers serving such municipalities. A municipality
97 receiving such a grant shall not use the grant for any purpose other than
98 increasing the salaries of such officers.

99 Sec. 7. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Not later than January 1, 2026,
100 the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and the
101 Police Officer Standards and Training Council shall jointly submit a
102 report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general
103 statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly
104 having cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security. Such
105 report shall include recommendations for a schedule of bonuses to be
106 awarded to individuals upon entering service as a police officer, as
107 defined in section 7-294a of the general statutes, and to be awarded to
108 such officers based on years of service, in order to encourage individuals
109 to begin and continue careers as police officers. The department and
110 council may consult with chiefs of municipal police departments and
111 any other individuals or entities in developing such recommendations.

112 Sec. 8. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) Not later than January 1, 2026,

113 the Board of Regents for Higher Education, the Board of Trustees of The
114 University of Connecticut and the Police Officer Standards and Training
115 Council shall jointly develop a career pathway to assist police officers in
116 obtaining higher education degrees. Such pathway shall include a
117 schedule of credits that officers may receive at each constituent unit of
118 higher education, as defined in section 10a-1 of the general statutes, for
119 the training such officers received in order to be certified, and maintain
120 their certification, as police officers pursuant to section 7-294d of the
121 general statutes, as amended by this act. Such boards and council shall
122 promote such pathway in order to encourage police officers to earn
123 higher education degrees.

124 (b) Not later than January 1, 2026, the Board of Regents for Higher
125 Education, the Board of Trustees of The University of Connecticut and
126 the Police Officer Standards and Training Council shall jointly submit a
127 report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general
128 statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly
129 having cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security. Such
130 report shall include the pathway and schedule developed pursuant to
131 subsection (a) of this section and a description of plans to promote such
132 pathway.

133 Sec. 9. Subsection (d) of section 10a-77 of the general statutes is
134 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
135 *2025*):

136 (d) Said board of trustees shall waive the payment of tuition at any of
137 the regional community-technical colleges (1) for any dependent child
138 of a person whom the armed forces of the United States has declared to
139 be missing in action or to have been a prisoner of war while serving in
140 such armed forces after January 1, 1960, which child has been accepted
141 for admission to such institution and is a resident of the state at the time
142 such child is accepted for admission to such institution, (2) subject to the
143 provisions of subsection (e) of this section, for any veteran, as defined in
144 section 27-103, who performed service in time of war, as defined in
145 section 27-103, except that for purposes of this subsection, "service in

146 time of war" shall not include time spent in attendance at a military
147 service academy, which veteran has been accepted for admission to such
148 institution and is domiciled in this state at the time such veteran is
149 accepted for admission to such institution, (3) for any resident of the
150 state sixty-two years of age or older, provided, at the end of the regular
151 registration period, there are enrolled in the course a sufficient number
152 of students other than those residents eligible for waivers pursuant to
153 this subdivision to offer the course in which such resident intends to
154 enroll and there is space available in such course after accommodating
155 all such students, (4) for any student attending the Connecticut State
156 Police Academy who is enrolled in a law enforcement program at said
157 academy offered in coordination with a regional community-technical
158 college which accredits courses taken in such program, (5) for any active
159 member of the Connecticut Army or Air National Guard who (A) has
160 been certified by the Adjutant General or such Adjutant General's
161 designee as a member in good standing of the guard, and (B) is enrolled
162 or accepted for admission to such institution on a full-time or part-time
163 basis in an undergraduate degree-granting program, (6) for any
164 dependent child of a (A) police officer, as defined in section 7-294a, or
165 supernumerary or auxiliary police officer, (B) firefighter, as defined in
166 section 7-323j, or member of a volunteer fire company, (C) municipal
167 employee, or (D) state employee, as defined in section 5-154, killed in
168 the line of duty, (7) for any resident of the state who is a dependent child
169 or surviving spouse of a specified terrorist victim who was a resident of
170 this state, (8) for any dependent child of a resident of the state who was
171 killed in a multivehicle crash at or near the intersection of Routes 44 and
172 10 and Nod Road in Avon on July 29, 2005, [and] (9) for any resident of
173 the state who is a dependent child or surviving spouse of a person who
174 was killed in action while performing active military duty with the
175 armed forces of the United States on or after September 11, 2001, and
176 who was a resident of this state, (10) for a police officer, as defined in
177 section 7-294a, who has been employed as such an officer in the state for
178 not less than two years, and (11) for any dependent child of a police
179 officer, as defined in section 7-294a, who has been employed as such an
180 officer in the state for not less than five years. If any person who receives

181 a tuition waiver in accordance with the provisions of this subsection also
182 receives educational reimbursement from an employer, such waiver
183 shall be reduced by the amount of such educational reimbursement.
184 Veterans and members of the National Guard described in subdivision
185 (5) of this subsection shall be given the same status as students not
186 receiving tuition waivers in registering for courses at regional
187 community-technical colleges. Notwithstanding the provisions of
188 section 10a-30, as used in this subsection, "domiciled in this state"
189 includes domicile for less than one year.

190 Sec. 10. Subsection (d) of section 10a-99 of the general statutes is
191 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
192 *2025*):

193 (d) Said board shall waive the payment of tuition fees for
194 undergraduate and graduate degree programs at the Connecticut State
195 University System (1) for any dependent child of a person whom the
196 armed forces of the United States has declared to be missing in action or
197 to have been a prisoner of war while serving in such armed forces after
198 January 1, 1960, which child has been accepted for admission to such
199 institution and is a resident of the state at the time such child is accepted
200 for admission to such institution, (2) subject to the provisions of
201 subsection (e) of this section, for any veteran, as defined in section 27-
202 103, who performed service in time of war, as defined in section 27-103,
203 except that for purposes of this subsection, "service in time of war" shall
204 not include time spent in attendance at a military service academy,
205 which veteran has been accepted for admission to such institution and
206 is domiciled in this state at the time such veteran is accepted for
207 admission to such institution, (3) for any resident of the state sixty-two
208 years of age or older who has been accepted for admission to such
209 institution, provided (A) such resident is enrolled in a degree-granting
210 program, or (B) at the end of the regular registration period, there are
211 enrolled in the course a sufficient number of students other than those
212 residents eligible for waivers pursuant to this subdivision to offer the
213 course in which such resident intends to enroll and there is space
214 available in such course after accommodating all such students, (4) for

215 any student attending the Connecticut Police Academy who is enrolled
216 in a law enforcement program at said academy offered in coordination
217 with the university which accredits courses taken in such program, (5)
218 for any active member of the Connecticut Army or Air National Guard
219 who (A) has been certified by the Adjutant General or such Adjutant
220 General's designee as a member in good standing of the guard, and (B)
221 is enrolled or accepted for admission to such institution on a full-time
222 or part-time basis in an undergraduate or graduate degree-granting
223 program, (6) for any dependent child of a (A) police officer, as defined
224 in section 7-294a, or supernumerary or auxiliary police officer, (B)
225 firefighter, as defined in section 7-323j, or member of a volunteer fire
226 company, (C) municipal employee, or (D) state employee, as defined in
227 section 5-154, killed in the line of duty, (7) for any resident of this state
228 who is a dependent child or surviving spouse of a specified terrorist
229 victim who was a resident of the state, (8) for any dependent child of a
230 resident of the state who was killed in a multivehicle crash at or near the
231 intersection of Routes 44 and 10 and Nod Road in Avon on July 29, 2005,
232 [and] (9) for any resident of the state who is a dependent child or
233 surviving spouse of a person who was killed in action while performing
234 active military duty with the armed forces of the United States on or
235 after September 11, 2001, and who was a resident of this state, (10) for a
236 police officer, as defined in section 7-294a, who has been employed as
237 such an officer in the state for not less than two years, and (11) for any
238 dependent child of a police officer, as defined in section 7-294a, who has
239 been employed as such an officer in the state for not less than five years.
240 If any person who receives a tuition waiver in accordance with the
241 provisions of this subsection also receives educational reimbursement
242 from an employer, such waiver shall be reduced by the amount of such
243 educational reimbursement. Veterans and members of the National
244 Guard described in subdivision (5) of this subsection shall be given the
245 same status as students not receiving tuition waivers in registering for
246 courses at Connecticut state universities. Notwithstanding the
247 provisions of section 10a-30, as used in this subsection, "domiciled in
248 this state" includes domicile for less than one year.

249 Sec. 11. Subsection (e) of section 10a-105 of the general statutes is

250 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
251 *2025*):

252 (e) Said board of trustees shall waive the payment of tuition fees for
253 any undergraduate or graduate degree program at The University of
254 Connecticut (1) for any dependent child of a person whom the armed
255 forces of the United States has declared to be missing in action or to have
256 been a prisoner of war while serving in such armed forces after January
257 1, 1960, which child has been accepted for admission to The University
258 of Connecticut and is a resident of the state at the time such child is
259 accepted for admission to said institution, (2) subject to the provisions
260 of subsection (f) of this section, for any veteran, as defined in section 27-
261 103, who performed service in time of war, as defined in section 27-103,
262 except that for purposes of this subsection, "service in time of war" shall
263 not include time spent in attendance at a military service academy,
264 which veteran has been accepted for admission to said institution and is
265 domiciled in this state at the time such veteran is accepted for admission
266 to said institution, (3) for any resident of the state sixty-two years of age
267 or older who has been accepted for admission to said institution,
268 provided (A) such resident is enrolled in a degree-granting program, or
269 (B) at the end of the regular registration period, there are enrolled in the
270 course a sufficient number of students other than those residents eligible
271 for waivers pursuant to this subdivision to offer the course in which
272 such resident intends to enroll and there is space available in such
273 course after accommodating all such students, (4) for any active member
274 of the Connecticut Army or Air National Guard who (A) has been
275 certified by the Adjutant General or such Adjutant General's designee
276 as a member in good standing of the guard, and (B) is enrolled or
277 accepted for admission to said institution on a full-time or part-time
278 basis in an undergraduate or graduate degree-granting program, (5) for
279 any dependent child of a (A) police officer, as defined in section 7-294a,
280 or supernumerary or auxiliary police officer, (B) firefighter, as defined
281 in section 7-323j, or member of a volunteer fire company, (C) municipal
282 employee, or (D) state employee, as defined in section 5-154, killed in
283 the line of duty, (6) for any resident of the state who is the dependent
284 child or surviving spouse of a specified terrorist victim who was a

285 resident of the state, (7) for any dependent child of a resident of the state
286 who was killed in a multivehicle crash at or near the intersection of
287 Routes 44 and 10 and Nod Road in Avon on July 29, 2005, [and] (8) for
288 any resident of the state who is a dependent child or surviving spouse
289 of a person who was killed in action while performing active military
290 duty with the armed forces of the United States on or after September
291 11, 2001, and who was a resident of this state, (9) for a police officer, as
292 defined in section 7-294a, who has been employed as such an officer in
293 the state for not less than two years, and (10) for any dependent child of
294 a police officer, as defined in section 7-294a, who has been employed as
295 such an officer in the state for not less than five years. If any person who
296 receives a tuition waiver in accordance with the provisions of this
297 subsection also receives educational reimbursement from an employer,
298 such waiver shall be reduced by the amount of such educational
299 reimbursement. Veterans and members of the National Guard
300 described in subdivision (4) of this subsection shall be given the same
301 status as students not receiving tuition waivers in registering for courses
302 at The University of Connecticut. Notwithstanding the provisions of
303 section 10a-30, as used in this subsection, "domiciled in this state"
304 includes domicile for less than one year.

305 Sec. 12. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) For the fiscal year ending
306 June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Office of Higher
307 Education, in collaboration with the Department of Emergency Services
308 and Public Protection, shall administer a police officer loan
309 reimbursement grant program for individuals who have been employed
310 as a police officer, as defined in section 7-294a of the general statutes, in
311 the state for not less than ten years.

312 (b) Any individual who satisfies the eligibility requirements
313 prescribed by the office may receive an annual grant for reimbursement
314 of federal or state educational loans (1) in an amount up to ten per cent
315 of such individual's federal or state educational loans but not exceeding
316 five thousand dollars in any year, and (2) for a period not to exceed ten
317 years. Such individual shall only be reimbursed for loan payments made
318 while such person is employed as a police officer in the state.

319 (c) Individuals may apply to the Office of Higher Education for grants
320 under this section at such time and in such manner as the Commissioner
321 of Higher Education prescribes.

322 (d) Any unexpended funds appropriated for purposes of this section
323 shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal year but shall be available for
324 expenditure during the next fiscal year.

325 (e) The Office of Higher Education may accept gifts, grants and
326 donations, from any source, public or private, for the police officer loan
327 reimbursement grant program.

328 Sec. 13. Section 12-81 of the general statutes is amended by adding
329 subdivision (84) as follows (*Effective October 1, 2025, and applicable to*
330 *assessment years commencing on or after October 1, 2025*):

331 (NEW) (84) Property to the amount of ten thousand dollars belonging
332 to, or held in trust for, any resident of this state who is a police officer,
333 as defined in section 7-294a, and resides in a distressed municipality, as
334 defined in section 32-9p.

335 Sec. 14. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The Connecticut Housing
336 Finance Authority shall enhance assistance available to police officers
337 who seek to purchase a house as such officer's principal residence in the
338 community served by such officer. Such assistance shall prioritize first-
339 time homebuyers and include mortgage assistance, down payment
340 assistance or any other appropriate housing subsidies. The terms of any
341 mortgage assistance shall allow the mortgagee to realize a reasonable
342 portion of the equity gain upon sale of the mortgaged property.

343 Sec. 15. (*Effective from passage*) The State Retirement Commission shall
344 (1) study deferred retirement option plans and make recommendations
345 for development of such a plan that (A) is administered by the state, and
346 (B) permits any police officer, as defined in section 7-294a of the general
347 statutes, in the state to participate in the plan, and (2) study the types
348 and levels of retirement medical benefits provided to such officers and
349 the spouses of such officers in the state and make recommendations

350 regarding the provision of such benefits. The commission may consult
351 with the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection,
352 municipal police departments and any other entities the commission
353 deems appropriate. Not later than January 1, 2026, the commission shall
354 report the results of such studies and any recommendations, in
355 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes,
356 to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
357 cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security.

358 Sec. 16. (*Effective from passage*) Not later than October 1, 2025, the
359 Governor shall enter into negotiations with the employee organization
360 that is the representative of state police officers to seek amendments to
361 any collective bargaining agreement to establish conditions under
362 which a state police officer who retired from service as such an officer
363 may return to such service and (1) resume earning credit toward
364 retirement benefits, in the same manner as such officer earned such
365 credit prior to such officer's retirement, and (2) be eligible for earning
366 the same benefits as such officer was eligible for prior to such officer's
367 retirement.

368 Sec. 17. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Each collective bargaining
369 agreement entered into on or after July 1, 2025, or amended on or after
370 July 1, 2025, between a municipality and an employee organization that
371 is the representative of police officers in the municipality shall permit
372 police officers who retire and remain certified by the Police Officer
373 Standards and Training Council pursuant to section 7-294d of the
374 general statutes, as amended by this act, to return to part-time or full-
375 time employment as a police officer with the municipality while
376 collecting such officer's pension, to the maximum extent permissible
377 under state and federal law and regulations.

378 Sec. 18. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force to
379 study the volunteer police auxiliary force authorized under section 29-
380 22 of the general statutes and make recommendations for improving the
381 organization of such auxiliary force and maximizing the services that
382 may be provided by auxiliary state police and municipal police officers.

- 383 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:
- 384 (1) One appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;
- 385 (2) One appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate;
- 386 (3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of
387 Representatives;
- 388 (4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;
- 389 (5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of
390 Representatives;
- 391 (6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;
- 392 (7) The Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection,
393 or the commissioner's designee; and
- 394 (8) Two persons appointed by the Governor.
- 395 (c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (1),
396 (2), (3), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member
397 of the General Assembly.
- 398 (d) All initial appointments to the task force shall be made not later
399 than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall
400 be filled by the appointing authority.
- 401 (e) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro
402 tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the task force from
403 among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons shall schedule
404 the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later than sixty
405 days after the effective date of this section.
- 406 (f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
407 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public safety
408 and security shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.
- 409 (g) Not later than January 1, 2026, the task force shall submit a report

410 on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of
411 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public
412 safety and security, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a
413 of the general statutes. The task force shall terminate on the date that it
414 submits such report or January 1, 2026, whichever is later.

415 Sec. 19. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) For purposes of this section,
416 "law enforcement unit" has the same meaning as provided in section 7-
417 294a of the general statutes.

418 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, the Department of
419 Emergency Services and Public Protection shall develop a pilot program
420 to provide law enforcement units with unmanned aerial vehicles to
421 respond to requests for service, assist such units in assessing the dangers
422 and needs at the scene where service is requested prior to the arrival of
423 a police officer and enhance the safety of police officers and the services
424 such units provide to the public. In identifying units for participation in
425 the pilot program, the department shall give priority to units that would
426 most benefit from such program, including those with reduced staffing
427 levels.

428 (c) Not later than October 1, 2025, the department shall (1) develop
429 eligibility criteria to be used in selecting among applicants for
430 participation in the pilot program, (2) develop application forms and
431 deadlines, (3) post in a conspicuous location on the department's
432 Internet web site a description of the pilot program that includes, but is
433 not limited to, such criteria, forms and deadlines, and (4) notify law
434 enforcement units of the opportunity to apply for participation in such
435 program.

436 (d) (1) Not later than January 1, 2027, each law enforcement unit
437 participating in the pilot program pursuant to subsection (b) of this
438 section shall submit a report to the department describing the unit's use
439 of unmanned aerial devices, their impact on the unit's ability to provide
440 services to the public and any recommendations for the continuation of
441 or improvements to such pilot program.

442 (2) Not later than July 1, 2027, the department shall submit a report,
443 in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes,
444 to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
445 cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security. Such report
446 shall include (A) information on the law enforcement units that applied
447 for participation in the pilot program, which units were chosen for
448 participation and the reasons for choosing such units, (B) a summary of
449 the reports submitted by units pursuant to subdivision (1) of this
450 subsection and an analysis of the results of the pilot program, and (C)
451 recommendations regarding the continuation or expansion of the pilot
452 program, funding needs and any necessary legislation.

453 Sec. 20. (*Effective from passage*) (a) For purposes of this section, "law
454 enforcement unit" and "police officer" have the same meanings as
455 provided in section 7-294a of the general statutes.

456 (b) The Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection
457 shall investigate ways to develop and enhance programs and initiatives
458 that address the mental health needs of police officers. Such
459 investigation shall include, but need not be limited to, an examination
460 of peer-to-peer support programs, programs that train officers to help
461 themselves and fellow officers deal with mental health issues associated
462 with their jobs, programs that employ a psychologist or other mental
463 health professionals within a unit to assist officers with their mental
464 health needs, employee assistance programs and any other programs
465 and resources that may address the mental health needs of police
466 officers. In conducting such investigation, the department shall consult
467 with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the
468 Police Officer Standards and Training Council, the Connecticut Police
469 Chiefs Association, law enforcement units throughout the state,
470 employee organizations that represent police officers and any other
471 entities the commissioner deems appropriate.

472 (c) Not later than January 1, 2026, the commissioner shall submit a
473 report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general
474 statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly

475 having cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security. Such
 476 report shall include the results of such investigation, a list of programs,
 477 services and resources identified as best practices that could be
 478 implemented by units across the state to address the mental health
 479 needs of officers and any recommendations for legislation.

480 Sec. 21. (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The sum of five hundred thousand
 481 dollars is appropriated to the Department of Emergency Services and
 482 Public Protection from the General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June
 483 30, 2026, for the plan developed, coordinated and implemented
 484 pursuant to section 1 of this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	7-294d(b)
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 7	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 8	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 9	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10a-77(d)
Sec. 10	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10a-99(d)
Sec. 11	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10a-105(e)
Sec. 12	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 13	<i>October 1, 2025, and applicable to assessment years commencing on or after October 1, 2025</i>	12-81(84)
Sec. 14	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 15	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 16	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 17	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 18	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 19	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 20	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 21	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 12(c), "executive director of the Office" was changed to "Commissioner" for consistency with the general statutes; and in Section 21, "state-wide campaign implemented" was changed to "plan developed, coordinated and implemented" for consistency with the provisions of Section 1.

PS *Joint Favorable Subst. -LCO*

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:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection	GF - Cost	7.5 - 15 million	7.5 - 15 million
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection	GF - Cost	Potential Significant	Potential Significant
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Appropriation	500,000	None
Constituent Units of Higher Education	GF - Revenue Loss	Potential Significant	Potential Significant
Higher Ed., Off.	GF - Cost	Potential Significant	Potential Significant
CHFA	CHFA - Potential Cost/Revenue Impact	Minimal	Minimal
Comptroller	GF - Cost	50,000	None
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Cost	See Below	See Below

Note: GF=General Fund; CHFA=Resources of CHFA

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Hartford; New Haven; Waterbury; Bridgeport; Stamford; Greenwich; Norwalk; Danbury; New Britain; West Hartford	Revenue Gain	See Below	See Below
Various Municipalities	Grand List Reduction	None	See Below

¹The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 40.71% of payroll in FY 26.

Various Municipalities	Potential Revenue Gain	See Below	See Below
Various Municipalities	Potential Savings	See Below	See Below
Various Municipalities	Potential Cost	See Below	See Below

Explanation

The bill makes various changes regarding the recruitment and retention of law enforcement officers, resulting in the various impacts described below.

Section 1 requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to develop a state-wide campaign to promote the law enforcement profession. Section 21 appropriates \$500,000 in FY 26 to DESPP for this purpose.

Section 2 requires DESPP to employ a full-time cadet or explorer program coordinator, resulting in an estimated total cost of \$115,533 annually beginning in FY 26. The starting salary of the program coordinator is approximately \$75,000, with associated fringe benefits of \$30,533. There is also an estimated cost of \$10,000 for other expenses, including educational supplies and promotional materials.

This section also requires DESPP to allocate \$5,000 to each municipal police department that operates or plans to operate a cadet or explorer program each year, resulting in a potential cost to the state of up to \$475,000² in FY 26 and FY 27. There is a corresponding potential revenue gain of \$5,000 to each municipal police department that operates or plans to operate a cadet or explorer program each year.

Section 3 requires DESPP to establish a grant program to reimburse municipal police departments for the cost of basic training for police officers, resulting in a cost to the state and savings to municipalities

² As of October 2023, Connecticut had 95 municipal police departments.

ranging from about \$5,000 to \$70,000 per officer.³ Costs will vary widely because the bill does not specify which expenses the grant covers. For every 100 officers that attend basic training, the cost can range from \$500,000 to \$7 million each year.

Section 4 requires the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) to examine criminal justice courses offered by colleges and universities in the state, resulting in no fiscal impact to the state because POST has the expertise to meet the requirements of the section.

This section also requires POST to establish a pilot program with the University of New Haven to permit an individual who attends the academy for basic training to complete a portion such training at the university, which results in no fiscal impact to the state.

Section 5 prohibits POST from denying police officer certification and law enforcement units from denying someone employment as a police officer solely because they are a lawful permanent resident noncitizen, resulting in no fiscal impact to the state or municipalities.

Section 6 requires DESPP to provide a grant to each of the top ten most populous municipalities in the state to increase the salaries of police officers serving such municipalities, resulting in a cost to the state ranging from \$7.3 million to \$14.6 million in FY 26 and FY 27. It is estimated that each of these approximately 2440 officers⁴ will receive an additional \$3,000 to \$6,000 annually to make their salaries competitive with surrounding communities. The cost may be reduced if these grants are only applied to starting salaries. The following table shows the estimated revenue gain by municipality:

Municipality	Officers ⁴	Revenue Gain Estimate \$
Hartford	382	1,146,000 - 2,292,000
New Haven	352	1,056,000 - 2,112,000
Waterbury	293	879,000 - 1,758,000
Bridgeport	289	867,000 - 1,734,000
Stamford	273	819,000 - 1,638,000

³ The cost of tuition and fees for a police officer to attend basic training may potentially be as low as \$5,000 per student, while including the cost of uniforms, equipment, and salary while attending training can result in a cost of up to \$70,000 per student.

⁴ From Office of Legislative Research Report 2023-R-0265.

Greenwich	182	546,000 - 1,092,000
Norwalk	179	537,000 - 1,074,000
Danbury	178	534,000 - 1,068,000
New Britain	162	486,000 - 972,000
West Hartford	150	450,000 - 900,000
Total:	2440	7,320,000 - 14,640,000

Section 7 requires DESPP and POST to jointly submit a report to the Public Safety and Security Committee with recommendations on giving bonuses to encourage people to begin and continue careers as police officers, resulting in no fiscal impact because the agencies have the expertise to meet the requirements of the section.

Section 8 has no fiscal impact. It requires the constituent units of higher education, and POST to develop a pathway to help police officers earn higher education degrees. It is anticipated that the agencies have the expertise to meet the requirements of the section.

Sections 9 -11 result in a potentially significant revenue loss annually beginning in FY 26 to the constituent units of higher education. The sections waive tuition for: (1) certain police officers, and (2) dependent children of certain police officers. There are an estimated 8,092 state and local police officers in Connecticut.

The revenue loss to the constituent units will vary based on the number of waivers and the institution waiving tuition. The table below shows the per student value of a tuition waiver from the University of Connecticut (UConn), the Connecticut State Universities (CSUs), and CT State. It also shows what the potential revenue loss would be in FY 26 if an additional 500, 1,000, and 1,500 students received the waiver at each institution.

Examples of Tuition Waiver Value, FY 26			
FY 26 Per Student Waiver Value	17,012	6,998	4,608
# Addtl Students Receiving Waiver	UConn Est. Revenue Loss \$	CSUs Est. Revenue Loss \$	CT State Est. Revenue Loss\$
500	8,506,000	3,499,000	2,304,000
1,000	17,012,000	6,998,000	4,608,000
1,500	25,518,000	10,497,000	6,912,000

Section 12 results in a potential significant cost to the Office of Higher Education (OHE) annually beginning in FY 26. It establishes a student loan reimbursement program for individuals employed as police officers in Connecticut for at least ten years. Eligible participants may receive an annual grant for up to ten years. The grant may equal up to 10% of their loans and is capped at \$5,000 per year.

The costs will vary based on the number of grants awarded, and level of award provided, and could be significant. It is not known how many police officers would be eligible for the program, or the amount of student loans they have. If five percent of sworn police officers in the state received grants of \$5,000 annually as a result of the bill, the total cost would be approximately \$2 million annually.

Given the potential scope of the new program, it is anticipated that OHE will need to hire a Program Manager for administration. This results in annual costs of approximately \$100,000 in salary and \$40,700 in fringe benefits (for a total of \$140,700). Costs in FY 26 would likely be \$105,500 (\$75,000 salary and \$30,500 fringe benefits), given an October 1 start date.

Section 13 exempts \$10,000 in property taxes on property belonging to or held in trust for a police officer who resides in a distressed municipality. This results in a grand list reduction to distressed municipalities beginning in FY 26. A grand list reduction results in a revenue loss given a constant mill rate, however it is likely that a municipality will adjust its mill rate to offset any predicted revenue loss.

According to a 2023 report, 18 of the 2024 distressed municipalities had municipal police departments. If every one of these police officers received the full exemption, it would result in a cumulative grand list reduction of approximately \$20 million. There would be an additional grand list reduction for any state police that also qualified for the exemption.

Section 14 requires the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) to enhance assistance available to police officers purchasing a

home, which results in costs to CHFA from the quasi-public's own resources beginning in FY 26 associated with developing and administering the program.⁵

Costs or revenue loss for providing other forms of assistance would depend on: (1) the number of police officers assisted and (2) the type of enhancement developed. Given the low utilization rate of CHFA's Police Officer Homeownership Program, the bill is not anticipated to materially change the rate of spending.⁶

Section 15 results in a cost of approximately \$50,000 to the Office of the State Comptroller in FY 26 in consulting fees to study retirement options and make police health care coverage recommendations.

Section 16 directs the Governor to enter negotiations to amend any collective bargaining agreement with state police officers to establish conditions for retired officers to return to service, resulting in no fiscal impact to the state or municipalities.

Section 17 requires collective bargaining agreements between municipalities and municipal police officers to allow retired, POST certified officers to return to part or full-time employment, while collecting a pension, resulting in an indeterminate fiscal impact to municipalities beginning in FY 26. The fiscal impact is dependent on the extent the costs associated with the reemployment of retirees (including wages, fringe benefits and additional pension liability), offset current overtime costs incurred by the municipalities.

Section 18 creates a task force to study the volunteer police auxiliary force resulting in no fiscal impact to the state because the task force has the expertise to meet the requirements of the bill.

Section 19 requires DESPP to develop a pilot program to provide law

⁵ CHFA is a quasi-public authority that issues its own federally tax-exempt and taxable mortgage revenue bonds. The authority pays its operating expenses using funds derived from the excess of interest income from loans over bond interest expenses.

⁶ In 2024, 2 utilized the existing Police Officer Homeownership Program.

enforcement units with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), resulting in a one-time cost in FY 26 that will vary widely depending on the scale of the program and number of participating law enforcement units. To administer the program, DESPP will need to hire one emergency management program specialist, resulting in a total cost of \$122,000 (\$83,000 salary, \$34,000 fringe benefits, \$5,000 other expenses). UAVs used by law enforcement typically cost approximately \$10,000 each but may range in price from \$5,000 to over \$50,000. There are also additional training, software, and equipment expenses that are incidental to purchasing a UAV. The bill does not limit which law enforcement units are eligible to participate in this program, but should ten law enforcement units participate, it is estimated to cost the state at least \$500,000.

Section 20 requires DESPP, in consultation with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and several other law enforcement organizations, to investigate and report on ways to develop and enhance programs and initiatives that address the mental health needs of police officers. This results in no fiscal impact because DESPP has the expertise to meet the requirements of the section

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the number of grants administered, tuition waivers granted, property tax exemptions granted, employee wage increases, and inflation.

The impacts identified in sections 15, 19 and 21 are one-time costs and have no out years effect.

OLR Bill Analysis**SB 1492****AN ACT CONCERNING LAW ENFORCEMENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.**

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§ 19 — DRONE PILOT PROGRAM

Gives drones to law enforcement units in FY 26 through a DESPP pilot program

§ 20 — POLICE MENTAL HEALTH

Requires DESPP to investigate ways to develop and enhance programs addressing police officer mental health

BACKGROUND

SUMMARY

This bill requires various entities to develop and implement certain plans or pilot programs, or study and report, on ways to recruit and retain police officers and related matters.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Various; see below.

§§ 1 & 21 — LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFESSION PROMOTION CAMPAIGN

Requires DESPP to develop a plan to promote the law enforcement profession and appropriates \$500,000 for this purpose

The bill requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) commissioner, by January 1, 2026, to develop, coordinate, and implement a plan to promote the law enforcement profession using a variety of media, including social media. In developing the campaign, the commissioner must consult with the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association, in-state higher education institutions, and any other entities he deems appropriate.

The bill appropriates \$500,000 from the General Fund for FY 26 to DESPP for the campaign.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§ 2 — POLICE CADET/EXPLORER PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Requires DESPP to (1) employ a full-time program coordinator to oversee police cadet and explorer programs and (2) allocate \$5,000 each fiscal year to every municipal police department that operates or plans to operate these programs

The bill requires DESPP to employ a full-time program coordinator to coordinate and oversee police cadet and explorer programs, implement state standards and a best practices guide for them, and encourage creating and expanding the programs throughout the state.

Starting with FY 26, the department must annually allocate \$5,000 to each municipal police department that operates, or plans to operate, a cadet or explorer program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§ 3 — POLICE BASIC TRAINING REIMBURSEMENT GRANTS

Requires DESPP to reimburse municipal police departments for the cost of police officer basic training through an annual grant program

The bill requires DESPP to create a grant program for reimbursing municipal police departments for the cost of police officer basic training. The department must (1) set the grant application process and forms and (2) post a description of the program that includes the eligibility criteria and application process. The posting must be in a conspicuous place on DESPP's website by October 1, 2025. Grants must be provided annually starting FY 26.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§ 4 — STUDY AND PILOT PROGRAM ON SUBSTITUTING COLLEGE COURSES FOR POLICE BASIC TRAINING

Requires POST to (1) study whether college-level criminal justice courses can be substituted for its police basic training courses and (2) create a related pilot program at the University of New Haven

The bill requires the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) to examine the criminal justice courses offered by colleges and universities in Connecticut and determine (1) if the courses equal those required as part of a police officer's minimum basic law enforcement

training at the Connecticut Police Academy and (2) under what conditions a police trainee would not need to complete an academy course because he or she had already completed an equivalent college-level course. By January 1, 2026, POST must submit a report of its examination and determination to the Public Safety and Security Committee.

By that same date, the bill requires POST to establish a pilot program with the University of New Haven to allow someone who attends the police academy for basic training to complete it by taking (1) courses related to legal issues at the university and (2) the remaining courses at the academy.

By January 1, 2027, POST must submit a report to the Public Safety and Security Committee that:

1. describes the pilot program;
2. analyzes the program's impact on police recruitment and training procedures and resources; and
3. recommends whether to end, continue, revise, or expand the program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 5 — LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENT NONCITIZENS AS POLICE OFFICERS

Prohibits denying someone certification or employment as a police officer only because he or she is a lawful permanent resident noncitizen

The bill prohibits POST from denying police officer certification and law enforcement units from denying someone employment as a police officer only because he or she is a lawful permanent resident noncitizen. (See BACKGROUND for the bill's definition of "law enforcement units" and "police officer.")

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§ 6 — POLICE SALARY INCREASE GRANTS

Requires DESPP, starting in FY 26, to give annual grants to the top 10 most populous municipalities to increase their police officers' salaries

The bill requires DESPP to create a grant program for increasing police officer salaries in the top 10 most populous municipalities. Grants must be provided annually starting in FY 26. The bill prohibits recipients from using the grant for any purpose other than increasing their police officers' salaries.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§ 7 — RECOMMENDATIONS ON POLICE BONUSES

Requires DESPP and POST to create a report with recommendations on awarding bonuses to new and existing police officers

By January 1, 2026, the bill requires DESPP and POST to jointly submit a report to the Public Safety and Security Committee with recommendations on awarding bonuses to encourage individuals to begin and continue careers as police officers. Specifically, the report must include recommendations for a schedule of bonuses to be awarded to (1) new officers when they begin service and (2) existing officers based on years of service.

Under the bill, DESPP and POST may consult with municipal police chiefs and anyone else in developing their recommendations.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 8 — HIGHER EDUCATION DEGREES PATHWAY

Requires the Board of Regents, UConn Board of Trustees, and POST to take specific actions towards helping police officers earn higher education degrees

By January 1, 2026, the bill requires the Board of Regents for Higher Education, UConn's Board of Trustees, and POST to jointly submit a report to the Public Safety and Security Committee that includes a career pathway and schedule that they must develop. The pathway must help police officers earn higher education degrees and include a schedule of credits that officers may receive at UConn (and all its campuses) and the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities for the training they received in order to be certified, and maintain their certification, as police officers.

The boards and POST must promote this pathway to encourage police officers to earn higher education degrees, and their report must describe their plans for promoting it.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 9-11 — TUITION WAIVERS FOR POLICE OFFICERS AND DEPENDENT CHILDREN

Provides tuition waivers for the state's public colleges and universities to police officers employed for at least two years and any dependent child of an officer employed for at least five years

The bill requires UConn, the Connecticut State University System, and the regional community-technical colleges to waive tuition for (1) a police officer who has at least two years of service as an officer in Connecticut and (2) any dependent child of a police officer who has at least five years of service as an officer in the state. The waivers apply to tuition fees for any undergraduate or graduate degree programs as applicable.

Under existing law, the schools must waive tuition for certain other categories of students (including surviving children of police officers who were killed in the line of duty).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§ 12 — LOAN REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM FOR POLICE OFFICERS

Requires OHE to create an annual grant program to give up to \$5,000 a year, for up to 10 years, to police officers who have been employed for at least 10 years to reimburse their federal or state educational loans

The bill requires the Office of Higher Education (OHE), in collaboration with DESPP, to create a loan reimbursement program for individuals employed as police officers in Connecticut for at least 10 years and who otherwise satisfy OHE's eligibility criteria.

Under the program, eligible officers may receive an annual grant to help reimburse their federal or state educational loan payments for up to 10 years. The grant may be for up to 10% of their loans, but no more than \$5,000 in any year, and only to reimburse loan payments made

while the person is employed as a police officer.

Under the bill, the OHE commissioner sets the program application process. The office may accept gifts, grants, and donations from any source, public or private, for the program. Grants must be awarded annually starting in FY 26. The bill prohibits unexpended funds from lapsing at the end of a fiscal year and instead requires that they be available for the next fiscal year.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§ 13 — PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

Exempts from property taxes \$10,000 of the property of police officers residing in distressed municipalities

The bill exempts from property tax \$10,000 of property belonging to, or held in trust for, a police officer who resides in a Connecticut distressed municipality. (See BACKGROUND for existing law's definition of "distressed municipality.")

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025, and applicable to assessment years starting on or after that date.

§ 14 — CONNECTICUT HOUSING FINANCE AUTHORITY (CHFA) ASSISTANCE FOR HOME PURCHASES

Requires enhanced assistance by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority to police officers seeking to buy a house in the communities they serve

The bill requires CHFA to enhance assistance available to police officers who seek to purchase a house as an officer's principal residence in the community he or she serves. This assistance must prioritize first-time homebuyers and include mortgage or down payment assistance or any other appropriate housing subsidies. The terms of any mortgage assistance must allow the mortgagee to realize a reasonable portion of the equity gain when the property is sold.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§ 15 — STUDIES ON DEFERRED RETIREMENT OPTION PLANS AND RETIREMENT MEDICAL BENEFITS

Requires the State Retirement Commission to study (1) deferred retirement option plans towards developing one for police officers and (2) existing retirement medical benefits provided to police officers and their spouses

The bill requires the State Retirement Commission to study:

1. deferred retirement option plans and make recommendations for developing a state-administered plan open to any police officer in Connecticut and
2. the types and levels of retirement medical benefits provided to police officers and their spouses in the state and make recommendations on providing the benefits.

As part of its studies, the commission may consult with DESPP, municipal police departments, and any other entities it deems appropriate. The commission must report its findings and recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2026.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 16 — STATE POLICE OFFICER RETIREES RETURNING TO SERVICE

Directs the governor to enter negotiations to amend the state police officers collective bargaining agreement to set conditions for retired officers to return to service

The bill requires the governor, by October 1, 2025, to start negotiating with the State Police officers union to seek amendments to their collective bargaining agreement that would set conditions under which a retired officer may return to service and (1) resume earning credit toward retirement benefits, in the same way as the retired officer did before retirement, and (2) be eligible for earning his or her pre-retirement benefits.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 17 — MUNICIPAL POLICE OFFICER RETIREES RETURNING TO SERVICE

Generally, requires collective bargaining agreements between municipalities and municipal police officers to allow retired, POST-certified officers to return to part- or full-time employment

The bill requires each collective bargaining agreement entered into or amended on or after July 1, 2025, between a municipality and a union that represents the municipality's police officers, to allow officers who retire and remain POST-certified to return to part- or full-time employment as a police officer with the municipality while collecting his or her pension, to the maximum extent allowed under state and federal law.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 18 — VOLUNTEER POLICE AUXILIARY TASK FORCE

Creates a nine-member task force to (1) study the volunteer police auxiliary force and (2) make recommendations for improving and maximizing it

The bill creates a nine-member task force to study the volunteer police auxiliary force and recommend ways to improve its organization and maximize the services that auxiliary state police and municipal police officers may provide.

The task force members must be appointed within 30 days after the bill passes. The members and appointees are as follows:

1. two appointments by the governor;
2. one appointment each by the top six legislative leaders; and
3. the DESPP commissioner, or his designee.

The bill allows legislative appointees to be General Assembly members. The House speaker and Senate president pro tempore must select the task force's chairpersons from the members. The chairpersons must schedule and hold the first task force meeting within 60 days after the bill passes, and the Public Safety and Security Committee administrative staff must serve as the task force's administrative staff.

The bill requires the task force to report its findings and recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2026. The task force terminates on that date or when it submits the report, whichever is later.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 19 — DRONE PILOT PROGRAM

Gives drones to law enforcement units in FY 26 through a DESPP pilot program

For FY 26, the bill requires DESPP to develop a pilot program to give law enforcement units unmanned aerial vehicles (i.e. drones) to respond to service requests, assist units in assessing the dangers and needs at the scene of a request before a police officer arrives, and enhance police officer safety and the services that units provide to the public.

By October 1, 2025, the department must (1) develop the program's eligibility criteria, application forms, and deadlines; (2) post a description of the program on DESPP's website that includes the criteria, forms, and deadlines; and (3) notify units about the opportunity to apply for the program. In identifying units for participation, DESPP must give priority to those that would most benefit from the program, including those with reduced staffing levels.

By January 1, 2027, each participating unit must submit a report to DESPP describing the unit's use of its drones, their impact on its ability to serve the public, and any recommendations for continuing or improving the pilot program.

DESPP must also report, by July 1, 2027, to the Public Safety and Security Committee on the program. The report must include (1) information on the units that applied, which ones were chosen to participate, and the reasons for choosing them; (2) a summary of the reports submitted by participating units; (3) an analysis of the pilot program's results; and (4) recommendations on continuing or expanding the pilot, funding needs, and any necessary legislation.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 20 — POLICE MENTAL HEALTH

Requires DESPP to investigate ways to develop and enhance programs addressing police officer mental health

The bill requires the DESPP commissioner to investigate ways to

develop and enhance programs and initiatives addressing the mental health needs of police officers.

The investigation must examine peer-to-peer support programs, programs that train officers to help themselves and fellow officers deal with work-related mental health issues, programs that employ a psychologist or other mental health professionals within a unit to help officers with their mental health needs, employee assistance programs, and any other programs and resources that may address officers' mental health needs.

In its investigation, DESPP must consult with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, POST, the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association, law enforcement units throughout the state, employee organizations that represent police officers, and any other entities the commissioner deems appropriate.

By January 1, 2026, the DESPP commissioner must submit a report to the Public Safety and Security Committee with the investigation results; a list of programs, services, and resources identified as best practices that could be implemented by units across the state to address officers' mental health needs; and any legislative recommendations.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

BACKGROUND

Police Officer and Law Enforcement Unit Definitions

By law and under sections 5, 7-13, 15, 17, and 20 of the bill, "police officers" are sworn members of an organized local police department or the State Police; appointed constables who perform criminal law enforcement duties; special police officers appointed under law (e.g., public assistance fraud investigators); or any members of a law enforcement unit who perform police duties (CGS § 7-294a(9)). A "law enforcement unit" is any state or municipal agency or department (or tribal agency or department created and governed under a memorandum of agreement) whose primary functions include enforcing criminal or traffic laws; preserving public order; protecting

life and property; or preventing, detecting, or investigating crime (CGS § 7-294a(8)).

Distressed Municipality

The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) annually ranks municipalities based on their relative economic and fiscal distress and designates the top 25 as “distressed municipalities” (CGS § 32-9p(b)). Most recently, in 2024, DECD designated the following municipalities as distressed: Ansonia, Bridgeport, Chaplin, Derby, East Hartford, Griswold, Hartford, Lisbon, Mansfield, Meriden, Montville, Naugatuck, New Britain, New London, Norwich, Plainfield, Plymouth, Putnam, Sprague, Sterling, Torrington, Waterbury, West Haven, Winchester, and Windham.

Related Act

PA 25-1, among other things, generally prohibits, beginning on varying dates, state agencies, municipalities, and those who contract with either from purchasing or using certain drones assembled or manufactured by a covered foreign entity (e.g., China or Russia) (§ 5). It also prohibits, with certain exceptions, (1) operating drones near critical infrastructure facilities or to surveil these facilities or (2) equipping an aircraft or drone with a deadly weapon or certain other dangerous devices.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 29 Nay 0 (03/18/2025)