

# Public Safety and Security Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-7053

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP UNIFORM  
STATUTORY DEFINITIONS OF "FIRST RESPONDER" AND "ESSENTIAL

**Title:** WORKER".

**Vote Date:** 3/18/2025

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 2/27/2025

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

[Rep. Tony J. Scott, 112th Dist.](#)

[Rep. Patrick S. Boyd, 50th Dist.](#)

[Rep. Eleni Kavros DeGraw, 17th Dist.](#)

[Rep. Robin E. Comey, 102nd Dist.](#)

[Rep. Jane M. Garibay, 60th Dist.](#)

### REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill would establish a working group to examine the definitions of "essential worker" and "first responder" under current statute and recommend changes as necessary. Currently, the definitions in statute exclude the roles of many who carry out duties like those included in the current definition. The goal of the working group is to ensure that those who carry out said duties are included in statutory definitions.

### SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE

Subsection (b) of section 1 added that a member of the working group can be from the Connecticut General Assembly.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Garrett T. Eucalitto, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Transportation](#)

Eucalitto notes that the bill would establish a working group to develop clear statutory definitions of the roles of "first responders" and "essential workers" and would include representatives from several departments. The testifier requests that the CTDOT be included in the working group as members of their department often serve as first responders.

Commissioner Eucalitto notes that the majority of those employed by the department are trained in the Traffic Incident Management System, a training taken by many other types of first responders.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

### **Greg Allard, President, Association of Connecticut Ambulance Providers**

Allard supports the proposed legislation and requests that the committee add Emergency Medical Services representatives. Specifically, they request a member of the Connecticut Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board and a member of their organization: the Association of Connecticut Ambulance Providers.

### **John Brady, Executive Vice President, AFT Connecticut**

Brady supports the proposed bill but suggests that the working group contain active members of the essential worker and first responder fields such as EMTs, paramedics, firefighters, police, and nurses. Brady finds that the input of people from the fields in question are necessary for understanding the issue.

### **Jaime Foster, Representative, 57<sup>th</sup> District, Connecticut General Assembly**

Foster notes that current terminology for first responders overlooks roles played by public safety dispatchers and public workers in emergency response scenarios. Dispatchers are often the first point of contact for emergency scenarios and have substantial impact on the situation at hand. Additionally, certain public works employees serve many duties that should make them eligible for the title of first responder.

### **Zak Leavy, Legislative and Political Associate Director, AFSCME Council 4**

The testifiers believe there is a benefit to developing consistent language for the statutory definitions of the roles in question. However, the committee has neglected to include active first responders and essential workers in the working group. The testifiers believe these members would add significant expertise to the discourse of the working group.

### **Mike Muszynski, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities**

The testifier urges the committee to include local officials in the working group proposed. Doing so would ensure a wholesale review of the definitions in question and the anticipated effects of any changes.

### **Ray Rossomando, Director of Policy, Research, and Government Relations, Connecticut Education Association**

The testifier urges the committee to include those who fell under the "essential worker" category during the Covid-19 pandemic in the working group. Specifically, the testifier mentions educators as a role to be included.

### **Sean O'Sullivan, Public Safety Dispatcher**

The testifier is in particular support of recognizing 911 dispatchers as first responders under the proposed legislation. O'Sullivan notes the rigorous selection process dispatchers must go through and the sensitive information to which they are entrusted. Furthermore, there are several certifications which a dispatcher must obtain. Enacting the proposed legislation would

acknowledge the reality of the work that dispatchers do and provide them with mental health resources.

**Phillip Petit, National Director, International Association of EMTs and Paramedics**

Members of the testifiers organization asked for the testifier to speak in favor of the proposed legislation. The testifier believes that a working group is the proper method to address this issue as it allows for open dialogue about the definitions in question. Petit wants to ensure that provider level perspective is included in the working group, such as the inclusion of active first responders in the group.

**The following members of the public submitted words in support of the bill**

[Spejtim Fejzulai](#)

[Ryan Johnson](#)

[Dylan Martinez](#)

[Henry Orlich](#)

[Christopher Cherry](#)

[Zachary Dyson](#)

[Nicholas Kittle](#)

[Luis Martinez](#)

[Anthony Mele](#)

[Ryan Naranjo](#)

[Johnny Nucifora](#)

[Ed Hawthorne,](#)

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Connecticut Hospital Association Government Relations**

The testifier has concerns with the bill as it neglects certain areas where the term first responder is used in current law such as education, social services, courts, and criminal matters. Additionally, the membership of the working group indicate that the group would be too focused on safety and security, which would neglect certain stakeholders. The organization finds that a study may more adequately address the legislative goals intended by the proposed bill.

**Reported by: Jack Stein**

**Date: 3/21/25**