

# Government Administration and Elections Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-1433

AN ACT EXEMPTING THE RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS OF EMPLOYEES OF THE  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FROM DISCLOSURE UNDER THE

**Title:** FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.

**Vote Date:** 3/12/2025

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/7/2025

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Elections Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

Currently, employees of the Office of the Attorney General can have their residential addresses revealed by a Freedom of Information request. Office of the Attorney General employees are sometimes subject to harassment due to the nature of their job or direction of the political climate. There is a discrepancy in that the residential addresses of other state employees engaged in this judicial process are protected from public disclosure. This bill seeks to prevent the state from inadvertently giving personal information to someone who intends to use it to harass Office of the Attorney General employees.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

#### **William Tong, Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General:**

Employees of the Office of the Attorney General generate and save the State hundreds of millions of dollars each year, protect children from abuse and neglect, represent state agencies in employment disputes and matters of public safety, and appear in court to establish parentage and recover child support. The residential addresses of all the other state employee involved in these scenarios – judges, prosecutors, public defenders, employees of the Department of Children and Families and Corrections – are protected from public disclosure. Any disgruntled individual could obtain this personal information and these employees have direct experience with them doing so and levying threats to themselves and their families. Threats in the form of letters, disturbing mail, filing liens, online harassment, statements in open court, stalking and harassment, and countless instances of threatening

and profane ridden phone calls at home and at work. Just because someone may be able to find information on the internet does not mean the State should hand it over readily.

**Colleen M. Murphy, Executive Director and General Counsel, Freedom of Information Commission:**

The concept of protecting another classification of worker from Freedom of Information requests has been opposed by advocates of transparency and open records for years. The statute exempting certain "at risk" public officials should not be viewed as a cure for safety and privacy concerns. In 2012, the General Assembly basically eliminated the idea of restricting any address on a voter registration list in recognition of the reality that a complete prohibition on disclosure of certain residential addresses is unworkable, impossible, and ignores the public policy behind numerous provisions within Title 9. The statute only protects the residential addresses of protected employees in personnel, medical, or similar files. Moreover, providing special protections to certain classes of employees while not providing them to others may give rise to constitutional questions. Residential addresses of most people are now readily available for free, or for a nominal charge, on the Internet and through other commercial services.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Joan Andrews, President, Association of Connecticut Assistant Attorneys General.:**

Assistant Attorneys General have been subject to threats, harassment, stalking, and more for simply doing their jobs. Under Connecticut General Statutes, judges and prosecutors have their residential addresses exempt from disclosure but the AAG representing the prosecutors does not have the same protection. AAG represent state police, prosecutors, corrections officers, judges, Department of Children and Families employees, all of whom are exempt from disclosure under the statutes. Assistant Attorneys General are accountable by signing every pleading with Juris number, work address, work email, phone number, and fax number. They are accessible in numerous ways. It is not in the public interest that AAG be contactable at home where they reside with families, spouses, children, and pets. The state employs security guards at AAG office buildings and at courthouses. Information potentially being available online does not mean the State should facilitate providing information to dangerous people who wish to harm AAG for performing their job.

**Nancy A. Brouillet, Assistant Attorney General, Officer and Steward, Local 6574:**

Threats against Connecticut officials are all too common and have been increasing in frequency. While the attorneys understand the increasing risk of public employment, they hope to pass this amendment to protect their children, parents, and families from being targeted simply for living in the same household. As public servants, their email addresses, phone numbers, business addresses, bar discipline, and licensing information are all readily publicly available. The public does not need to know where they live with their families. Currently, the attorneys and other employees of the judicial branch, Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, Department of Correction, Division of Public Defender Service, and those who have represented the state in a criminal prosecution all have their information exempted from public disclosure by a Freedom of Information request. The Assistant Attorneys generals who represent those agencies and defend the state do not. Information potentially being available online does not mean the State should give this information over freely.

**Ed Hawthorne, President Connecticut AFL-CIO:**

We should be proud of our FOIA law and seek to protect its integrity, however we should be willing to reexamine it and make sure its scope appropriately preserves the law's intent without creating undue burdens for those who serve. Public servants can sometimes find themselves in difficult and sensitive situations. They can become targets during heated debates on controversial political or cultural topics and it is not uncommon for them to be harassed or receive threats in those situations. This threat is elevated when those who make them have access to their home addresses. Connecticut's Freedom of Information Act already protects the home addresses of law enforcement officers, firefighters, judicial employees, corrections officers, employees of the Commission on Human Rights, and Opportunities and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. This Bill would add assistant attorneys general to that list. Failure to act may cause them to leave public service, prioritizing safety of their families and themselves, a loss the state cannot afford.

**Ray Rossomando, Director, Connecticut Education Association:**

Civil service should not be accompanied by the fear that in carrying out your duties you may put your family, home, or self at risk. The concerns for educators, assistant attorneys general, and all public workers are the same. They face increasing numbers of threats, hateful messages, and false accusations, with fears that perpetrators will take their actions one step further.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Mike Savino, Co-President, Connecticut Council on Freedom of Information:**

This bill will limit the taxpayer's ability to hold certain public employees accountable. If a state employee is arrested, police only include occupation in arrest reports when it is relevant to the case. Journalists or concerned citizens can compare an employee's address to police records to determine if the person is a public employee or someone else who shares the same name. This bill will not provide the security employees seek; addresses are available online already.

**Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, ACLU-CT:**

Transparency is one of the best measures for ensuring a government serves its peoples. The Freedom of Information Act is a key tool for ensuring that government is open for, and therefore accountable to, the public.

**GENERAL COMMENTS:**

No opinions expressed.

**Reported by: Aston Foley**

**Date: 03/19/2025**