

General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 6932

January Session, 2025



AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATE INTERPRETING STANDARDS BOARD.

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

- 1 Section 1. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2025) (a) There is established an
- 2 Interpreting Standards Board. The board shall be comprised of nine
- 3 members, who shall be appointed not later than October 1, 2025, by the
- 4 director of the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind
- 5 or Hard of Hearing, in accordance with subsection (b) of this section.
- 6 Said board shall be located within the Bureau of Services for Persons
- Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing within the Department of
- 8 Aging and Disability Services. The board shall:
- 9 (1) Establish education, training and certification requirements for
- 10 interpreters working in special settings, including community,
- 11 educational, legal and medical settings, to be used by the bureau and
- 12 the department when issuing annual interpreter registration cards that
- 13 specify in which settings the interpreters are qualified to offer services;
- 14 (2) Establish operational standards for organizations and providers
- 15 supplying interpreting services in these settings;
- 16 (3) Expand, in consultation with the bureau director, interpreter
- 17 access to educational, training, internship, apprenticeship, mentorship

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- and credentialing opportunities and promote access to such opportunities to grow the pool of interpreters in the state;
- 20 (4) Receive and review all complaints concerning noncompliance 21 with section 17a-838 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and
- 22 (A) forward complaints the board substantiates concerning violations of
- 23 subsection (j) of section 17a-838 of the general statutes, as amended by
- 24 this act, to the local police department in the community where the
- 25 interpreter permanently resides, if a state resident, and the two national
- 26 registries for interpreters, (B) inform the Commissioner of Aging and
- 27 Disability Services of such complaints, (C) inform the director of the
- 28 Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of
- 29 Hearing of such complaints, and (D) notify the Connecticut Registry of
- 30 Interpreters for the Deaf of such complaints; and
- 31 (5) Make recommendations to the Commissioner of Aging and
- 32 Disability Services on regulations and legislation concerning
- qualifications of interpreters for persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard
- 34 of hearing.
- 35 (b) The director of the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf,
- 36 Deafblind or Hard of Hearing, in consultation with the Commissioner
- of Aging and Disability Services, shall appoint the membership of the
- 38 board, in accordance with the provisions of this subsection. All
- 39 members of the board appointed pursuant to this subsection shall have
- 40 expressed a willingness to serve on the board and not less than six
- 41 appointments to the board shall be reflective of the geographic and
- 42 racial diversity of the state. The board shall consist of the following
- 43 members:
- 44 (1) The president of the Connecticut Association of the Deaf, or the
- 45 president's designee;
- 46 (2) The president of the Connecticut Registry of Interpreters for the
- 47 Deaf, or the president's designee;
- 48 (3) The president of the DeafBlind Association of Connecticut, or the

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49 president's designee;

- (4) Two interpreter professionals, including one member representing deaf interpreter professionals and one member representing hearing interpreter professionals; and
 - (5) Four consumers of interpreting services, one each representing consumers who are hearing, deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing.
 - (c) Interpreter professionals and consumers appointed to the board shall, for not less than three years, (1) have been residents of the state, and (2) have experience providing or using interpreting services, interacting with persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing and familiarity with interpreting issues and professional standards for interpreting. Priority in interpreter professional appointments shall be given to those who, for not less than three years, have been certified or registered interpreters involved in the delivery of interpreting services for deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing persons.
 - (d) The director of the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind, or Hard of Hearing shall stagger the terms of board members appointed pursuant to subdivisions (4) and (5) of subsection (b) of this section. The director shall initially appoint two interpreter professionals and two consumer board members for a term of three years and the other two consumer board members for a term of two years. Following the initial terms, the director shall appoint board members appointed pursuant to subdivisions (4) and (5) of subsection (b) of this section for terms of two years on a staggered basis.
 - (e) Board members shall elect a chairperson and such other officers as the board deems advisable at the first meeting of the board, which shall be held not later than November 1, 2025. The board shall meet at least quarterly on alternate months from the scheduled meetings of the Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing, established under section 17a-836 of the general statutes, as amended by this act.

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- (f) Interpreters and applicants for an interpreter registration card holding different certificates or credentials from recognized national and state interpreter credentialing organizations may apply to the Interpreting Standards Board for an approved acceptable credential equivalent or substitute, or a waiver from complying with state interpreting standards starting on the date that such waiver may be granted for a period of time not to exceed three years, as determined by the board. Upon review of the application for a credential equivalent, the Interpreting Standards Board may recommend such substitute credential or waiver to the bureau director along with a determination as to within which settings the applicant is qualified to work.
- (g) Upon receiving a complaint concerning a violation of state law regarding interpreter services, the Interpreting Standards Board shall review the complaint and, if it deems necessary, schedule a hearing in accordance with chapter 54 of the general statutes. The director of the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing may suspend any state registration of the person accused in the complaint for not more than ninety days while the complaint is being investigated. The board shall provide a written notice to the person or entity accused of violating such law not later than thirty days prior to any hearing, which shall be held in a setting that is open to the public. If the board determines an interpreter has violated the interpreter code of professional conduct of a national or state professional interpreter certifying body, the board shall file a report with such body and the person or entity for whom the interpreter was providing interpreting services at the time of the alleged violation.
- (h) The Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services may adopt regulations, in accordance with chapter 54 of the general statutes, to implement the provisions of this section.
- Sec. 2. Section 17a-838 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):
- 111 (a) For the purposes of this section:

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- 112 (1) "Community setting" means any setting, other than those 113 specifically identified as educational, legal or medical, including, but 114 not limited to, any setting involving everyday life activities such as 115 information sharing, employment, social services, entertainment and 116 civic and community engagements;
- (2) "Bureau" means the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf,
 Deafblind or Hard of Hearing;
- [(2)] (3) "Department" means the Department of Aging and Disability Services;
- [(3)] (4) "Interpreting" means the translating or transliterating of English concepts to a language concept used by a person who is deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing or the translating of a deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing person's language to English concepts through the use of American Sign Language, English-based sign language, cued speech, oral transliterating and information received tactually;
- [(4)] (5) "Deafblind" means combined vision and hearing impairments that challenge a person's ability to communicate, interact with others, access information and move about safely;

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- [(5)] (6) "Educational setting" means any setting where interpretive services are provided concerning education-related matters, including, but not limited to, all schools, school-based programs, services and activities and other educational programs;
- [(6)] (7) "Legal setting" means any criminal or civil action involving a court of competent jurisdiction, any investigation or action conducted by a duly authorized law enforcement agency, employment-related hearings, appointments and situations requiring the presence of an attorney;
- [(7)] (8) "Medical setting" means gatherings or gathering places where physical health, mental health, or both are addressed, including, but not limited to, hospitals, clinics, assisted living and rehabilitation facilities,

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mental health treatment sessions, psychological evaluations, substance abuse treatment sessions, crisis intervention and appointments or other treatment requiring the presence of a doctor, nurse, medical staff or other health care professional; and

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[(8)] (9) "Transliterating" means converting or rendering English concepts to a language concept used by a person who is deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing or the translating of a deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing person's language concept to English concepts.

(b) Except as provided in subsections (g) and (h) of this section, all persons providing interpreting services shall register, annually, with the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing within the Department of Aging and Disability Services. Such registration shall be on a form prescribed or furnished by the [Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services] bureau and shall include the registrant's name, residential or business address, or both, contact information, including, but not limited to, phone number, place of employment as interpreter and interpreter certification or credentials. The [department] bureau shall (1) issue interpreter identification cards for those who register in accordance with this section, and (2) maintain a current listing on [its] the Internet web site of the Department of Aging and Disability Services of such registered interpreters, categorized by interpreter settings for which they are qualified. The [department] bureau, in consultation with the Interpreting Standards Board established pursuant to section 1 of this act, may also require documentation of the registrant's training hours. The [department] bureau shall annually issue interpreter identification cards listing the type of settings in which the registrant is qualified to interpret, and may, in consultation with the Interpreting Standards Board established pursuant to section 1 of this act, issue to a qualified candidate an acceptable credential equivalent or a waiver of not more than three years from the requirements of this section. The department shall establish an Internet web page containing information about services for deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing individuals. The department's Internet web page shall include, but not be limited to, information related to such

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services provided by the department and the Departments of Social Services, Mental Health and Addiction Services and Children and Families.

- (c) Except as provided in subsections (b), (g) and (h) of this section, no person shall provide interpreting services in the state, including in a community setting, unless such person is registered with the <u>Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing within the Department of Aging and Disability Services according to the provisions of this section, <u>and</u> holds recognized national or state interpreter credentials determined by the [department] <u>Interpreting Standards Board</u>, established <u>pursuant to section 1 of this act</u>, to be acceptable for interpreting purposes where appropriate in [Connecticut and has met at least one of the following qualifications:] <u>the state</u>.</u>
- [(1) (A) Has passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf written generalist test or the National Association of the Deaf-National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf certification knowledge examination, (B) holds a level three certification provided by the National Association of the Deaf, and (C) (i) documents the achievement of two continuing education units per year for a maximum of five years of training approved by the Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services, and (ii) on or before the fifth anniversary of having passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf written generalist test or the National Association of the Deaf-National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf certification knowledge examination, has passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf performance examination or the National Association of the Deaf-National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf national interpreter certification examination;
 - (2) (A) Has passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf written generalist test or the National Association of the Deaf-National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf certification knowledge examination, (B) is a graduate of an accredited interpreter training program and documents the achievement of two continuing education units per year for a maximum of five years of training approved by the

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- 209 commissioner, and (C) on or before the fifth anniversary of having
- 210 passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf written
- 211 generalist test or the National Association of the Deaf-National Registry
- 212 of Interpreters for the Deaf certification knowledge examination, has
- 213 passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf performance
- 214 examination or the National Association of the Deaf-National Registry
- 215 of Interpreters for the Deaf national interpreter certification
- 216 examination;
- 217 (3) Holds a level four or higher certification from the National
- 218 Association of the Deaf;
- 219 (4) Holds certification by the National Registry of Interpreters for the
- 220 Deaf;
- 221 (5) For situations requiring an oral interpreter only, holds oral
- certification from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf;
- 223 (6) For situations requiring a cued speech transliterator only, holds
- 224 certification from the National Training, Evaluation and Certification
- 225 Unit and has passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
- 226 written generalist test;
- 227 (7) Holds a reverse skills certificate or is a certified deaf interpreter
- 228 under the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf;
- 229 (8) Holds a National Association of the Deaf-National Registry of
- 230 Interpreters for the Deaf national interpreting certificate; or
- 231 (9) Holds the credential of Approved Deaf Interpreter, Approved
- 232 American Sign Language-English Interpreter, or Approved Sign
- 233 Language Transliterator by the Massachusetts Commission on the Deaf
- 234 and Hard of Hearing.]
- 235 (d) No person shall provide interpreting services in a medical setting
- 236 unless such person is registered with the <u>Bureau of Services for Persons</u>
- 237 Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing within the Department of
- 238 Aging and Disability Services according to the provisions of this section

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239 and holds (1) a comprehensive skills certificate from the National 240 Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (2) a certificate of interpretation or 241 a certificate of transliteration from the National Registry of Interpreters 242 for the Deaf, (3) a level four or higher certification from the National 243 Association of the Deaf, (4) a reverse skills certificate or certification as 244 a deaf interpreter under the National Registry of Interpreters for the 245 Deaf, (5) for situations requiring an oral interpreter only, an oral 246 certification from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (6) 247 for situations requiring a cued speech transliterator only, a certification 248 from the National Training, Evaluation and Certification Unit and has 249 passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf written 250 generalist test, (7) a National Association of the Deaf-National Registry 251 of Interpreters for the Deaf national interpreting certificate, or (8) the 252 credential of Approved Deaf Interpreter by the Massachusetts 253 Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

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(e) No person shall provide interpreting services in a legal setting unless such person is registered with the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing within the Department of Aging and Disability Services according to the provisions of this section and holds (1) a comprehensive skills certificate from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (2) a certificate of interpretation and a certificate of transliteration from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (3) a level five certification from the National Association of the Deaf, (4) a reverse skills certificate or is a certified deaf interpreter under the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (5) for situations requiring an oral interpreter only, an oral certification from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, (6) for situations requiring a cued speech transliterator only, certification from the National Training, Evaluation and Certification Unit and has passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf written generalist test, (7) a National Association of the Deaf-National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf national interpreting certificate, or (8) the credential of Approved Deaf Interpreter by the Massachusetts Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

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- (f) No person who is not registered as a qualified interpreter pursuant to this section shall:
- 275 (1) Engage in the practice of or offer to engage in the practice of interpreting for another person, an agency or an entity;
- 277 (2) Use the title "interpreter", "transliterator" or a similar title in connection with services provided under his or her name;
- 279 (3) Present or identify himself or herself as an interpreter qualified to engage in interpreting in this state;
- 281 (4) Use the title "interpreter", "transliterator" or a similar title in advertisements or communications; or
- 283 (5) Perform the function of or convey the impression that he or she is 284 an interpreter or transliterator.
- (g) The requirements of this section shall apply to persons who (1) receive compensation for the provision of interpreting services, and (2) provide interpreting services as part of their job duties. The requirements of this section shall not apply to nonregistered individuals such as family members and friends who voluntarily provide interpreting services at the request of a deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing person.
 - (h) The following individuals shall be exempt from the registration requirements of this section:

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- 294 (1) An individual interpreting at (A) a worship service conducted by 295 a religious entity, or (B) services for educational purposes conducted by 296 a religious entity or religiously affiliated school;
 - (2) An individual engaged in interpreting during an emergency situation, when obtaining a registered interpreter or registered transliterator could cause a delay that may lead to injury or loss to the individual requiring the interpreting services, provided such emergency assistance does not waive any communication access

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requirements for any entity pursuant to the federal Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as both may be amended from time to time;

- (3) An individual engaged in interpreting as part of a supervised internship or practicum in an interpreting program at an accredited college or university or an interpreting mentorship program approved by the department if (A) such interpreting is not in a legal, medical or educational setting, or (B) the individual is accompanied by an interpreter registered pursuant to this section; [or]
- 311 (4) An interpreter who is certified by a recognized national 312 professional certifying body such as the National Registry of 313 Interpreters for the Deaf or the National Association of the Deaf or a 314 recognized state professional certifying body from outside the state and 315 provides interpreting services in the state for a period of time not 316 exceeding fourteen days during a calendar year; or
 - (5) An interpreter who has received an acceptable credential equivalent or a waiver from the requirements of this section from the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing in accordance with subsection (b) of this section.
 - (i) Deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing persons may exercise their right to request or use a different registered interpreter than the interpreter provided to interpret for such persons in any interpreting setting in accordance with a nationally recognized interpreter code of professional conduct.
 - (j) Any person who is not registered in accordance with this section who represents himself or herself as an interpreter registered with the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing within the Department of Aging and Disability Services, or who engages in wilful or fraudulent misrepresentation of his or her credentials in an attempt to register with the [department] bureau, shall be guilty of a class C misdemeanor. Failure to renew such registration in a timely manner shall not in and of itself constitute a violation for the

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- purposes of this subsection. For purposes of this subsection, "timely manner" means registration renewal not more than thirty days after such registration has expired.
- Sec. 3. Subsection (c) of section 17a-835a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October* 1, 2025):
- 340 (c) The director shall report to the commissioner. The director's duties 341 shall include, but need not be limited to:

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- (1) Assisting in overseeing department employees who provide counseling, interpreting and other assistance to persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing, except for federally funded vocational rehabilitation employees;
- (2) Annually updating and publishing on the department's Internet web site and the Internet web page of the bureau established pursuant to subdivision (6) of this subsection a resource guide for persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing;
- (3) [Assisting in the registration] <u>Registration</u> of state-registered interpreters, including maintaining and publishing on the Internet web page of the bureau and the department's Internet web site a list of such interpreters categorized by the settings in which they are qualified to interpret, in accordance with section 17a-838, as amended by this act;
- (4) Assisting each state agency, as defined in section 1-79, in appointing an employee of each such agency to serve as a point of contact for concerns related to persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing, pursuant to section 4-61pp, and coordinating efforts to resolve such concerns with such employees serving as a point of contact;
- (5) Coordinating efforts of the Department of Aging and Disability Services to provide information and referral services to deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing persons on resources available to such persons;
- 363 (6) Establishing a separate Internet web page on the department's

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- Internet web site for the bureau and including on such web page (A) the 365 meeting schedule, agendas, minutes and other resources of the 366 Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of 367 Hearing established pursuant to section 17a-836, as amended by this act,
- 368 (B) an instructional video with audio and captions on the home page on
- 369 how persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing can navigate
- 370 the web page, resources and tools, and (C) other material pursuant to
- 371 this section;

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- 372 (7) Coordinating responses to consumer concerns, requests for 373 assistance and referrals to resources, including from state agencies;
- 374 (8) Coordinating education and training initiatives, including, but not 375 limited to, working with (A) local and state public safety and public 376 health officials and first responders on best practices for serving and 377 communicating with deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing persons, and (B) 378 sign language interpreters, oral interpreters and interpreters who are 379 trained to interpret for deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing persons to 380 maintain or enhance the skills of such interpreters in a variety of 381 settings;
 - (9) Collaborating with interpreting services providers and training organizations to increase opportunities for mentorships, internships, apprenticeships and specialized training in interpreting services for deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing persons;
- 386 (10) Partnering with civic and community organizations serving deaf, 387 deafblind or hard of hearing persons on workshops and information 388 sessions regarding new laws, regulations or developments regarding 389 services, programs or health care needs of such persons;
- 390 (11) Raising public awareness of programs and services available to 391 deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing persons;
- 392 (12) Assisting the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority in 393 implementing telecommunication relay service programs for deaf, 394 deafblind or hard of hearing persons. In awarding any contract for such

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- 395 relay service programs, the authority shall consult with the
- 396 Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services and the director of the
- 397 bureau;
- 398 (13) Working with the Governor and Connecticut television stations
- on ways to make television broadcasts more accessible to persons who
- are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing; and
- 401 (14) In consultation with the Advisory Board for Persons Who are
- 402 Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing established pursuant to section 17a-
- 403 836, as amended by this act, identifying the needs of deaf, deafblind or
- 404 hard of hearing persons and addressing policy changes that may be
- 405 necessary to better serve such persons.
- Sec. 4. Section 17a-836 of the general statutes is repealed and the
- 407 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):
- The Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of
- 409 Hearing is hereby created to advocate, strengthen and advise the
- 410 Governor and the General Assembly concerning state policies affecting
- 411 persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing and their
- 412 relationship to the public, industry, health care and educational
- 413 opportunity. The board shall:
- 414 (1) Monitor services for persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard of
- 415 hearing;
- 416 (2) Establish an annual leadership roundtable meeting with the Board
- 417 of Regents for Higher Education, the Commissioners of Aging and
- 418 Disability Services, Public Health, Social Services, Mental Health and
- 419 Addiction Services, Education, Developmental Services, Children and
- 420 Families, Early Childhood, Economic and Community Development,
- 421 Emergency Services and Public Protection, Correction, Housing and
- 422 Higher Education and the Labor Commissioner, or their designees, to
- discuss best practices to serve persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard
- of hearing, identify gaps in such services and make recommendations
- 425 to rectify such gaps;

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(3) Refer persons with complaints concerning the qualification and registration of interpreters for persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing to the entity designated pursuant to section 46a-10b;

(4) Make recommendations for (A) technical assistance and resources for state agencies in order to serve persons who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing; (B) public policy and legislative changes needed to address gaps in services; and (C) the qualifications and registration of interpreters pursuant to section 17a-838, as amended by this act. The advisory board shall submit a report on such recommendations and the activities of the Bureau of Services for Persons Who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing, [in the previous calendar year,] in accordance with section 11-4a, not later than [January] September 1, 2025, and annually thereafter, to the Governor and the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations, aging, commerce, education, higher education, housing, human services, the judiciary, labor, public health and public safety.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 2	October 1, 2025	17a-838
Sec. 3	October 1, 2025	17a-835a(c)
Sec. 4	July 1, 2025	17a-836

Statement of Legislative Commissioners: Sections 1(a), 1(b) and 1(d) were redrafted for clarity; in Section 1(a)(4)(D) and Section 1(b)(2), "of" was changed to "for" for accuracy; in Section 1(d), "executive director" was changed to "director" for accuracy; in Section 1(e), "such" was added before "other officers", "they deem fit" was changed to "the board deems advisable" and "established under section 17a-836 of the general statutes, as amended by this act" was inserted, for clarity; in Section 1(f), "not to exceed three years" was inserted for internal consistency; in Section 1(g), "being" was inserted before "investigated" and "open session" was changed to "a setting that is open to the public", for clarity; and throughout Sections 1 and 2, "at the Department of Aging and

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Disability Services was changed to "within the Department of Aging and Disability Services", for consistency.

HS Joint Favorable Subst.

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