
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 6958

AN ACT MAKING CERTAIN TERMS IN ELECTRONIC BOOK AND DIGITAL AUDIOBOOK LICENSE AGREEMENTS OR CONTRACTS UNENFORCEABLE.

SUMMARY

This bill generally prohibits publicly funded libraries from entering into agreements with publishers of electronic literary materials (i.e. electronic books (eBooks) and digital audiobooks) that prevent, limit, or restrict the library from performing certain customary operational or lending functions specified in the bill. It applies to contracts and licensing agreements (collectively referred to as “agreements” below) entered or renewed on and after July 1, 2026.

The bill applies to the (1) Connecticut State Library and (2) any public library, public elementary or secondary school library, academic or research library, or public archive if it is partially or fully funded (e.g., through grants, loans, insurance, or matching expenditures) by the state or one of its political subdivisions (e.g., municipalities). The bill’s prohibition applies for the duration of the fiscal year in which the library or archive receives the funding and the next fiscal year after that.

Under the bill, “publishers” are (1) businesses that manufacture, promulgate, license, or sell books, journals, magazines, newspapers, or other literary productions (including digital formats and digital audiobooks) or (2) aggregators in the business of licensing access to material collections, including works from multiple publishers, and entering into contracts with libraries to sell or license these materials.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026, and applicable to contracts or license agreements entered into or renewed on or after that date.

AGREEMENT TERMS

Prohibited Terms

The bill generally prohibits the covered libraries from entering or renewing agreements with publishers that prevent, limit, or restrict their ability to perform customary operational or lending functions. More specifically, the bill prohibits the libraries from entering agreements that:

1. prohibit the library from lending any electronic literary material, including through an interlibrary loan;
2. restrict the number of times the library may loan electronic literary material over the course of the agreement if it also restricts the library's loan period for the material;
3. limit the number of licenses the library can buy on the day the material is made available for public purchase;
4. prohibit the library from making nonpublic preservation copies;
5. restrict the library from disclosing an agreement's terms to another Connecticut library;
6. restrict the agreement's duration unless the library also has the option of an agreement on commercially reasonable terms, considering the library's mission, that allows (a) a pay-per-use model or (b) perpetual public use of the electronic literary material;
7. require the library to violate the law that protects its patrons' confidential information;
8. are non-severable from any of its provisions that a judicial forum finds prohibited by the bill; or
9. allow any of the bill's prohibited provisions to be enforced outside of a judicial forum (e.g., through arbitration).

Permissible Terms

The bill also specifies that the libraries' agreements with publishers may do the following:

1. limit the number of borrowers with simultaneous access to any electronic literary material or
2. require the library to reasonably use technological protection measures that prevent a borrower from (a) maintaining access to material beyond the agreement's allowable loan period or (b) sharing access to the material with other borrowers.

BACKGROUND

Related Bill

SB 1234 (File 132), favorably reported by the Government Administration and Elections Committee, is identical to this bill.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Planning and Development Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 20 Nay 0 (03/07/2025)