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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **HB 7074**

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING THE UNIFORM STATE-WIDE POLICE PURSUIT POLICY.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill modifies the statutory parameters for the uniform statewide police pursuit policy, including by requiring that the policy allow pursuits when an officer believes a moving vehicle's occupant committed a felony (i.e. an offense for which a person may be sentenced to a term of imprisonment that is more than one year).

Existing law requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) commissioner to adopt a uniform statewide police pursuit policy in conjunction with the chief state's attorney, the Police Officer Standards and Training Council, the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association, and the Connecticut Coalition of Police and Correctional Officers. By regulation, this policy is the minimum standard for all police pursuits in Connecticut, and individual police units may adopt additional requirements as long as they do not conflict with the uniform policy (Conn. Agencies Regs., § 14-283a-1).

Under current law, the policy must specify the conditions under which a police officer may engage and discontinue a pursuit. The policy adopted in 2021, among other things, (1) permits engaging in a pursuit only if an officer has reasonable suspicion to believe that a vehicle occupant committed or is attempting a violent crime or there are exigent circumstances that warrant timely apprehension of the suspect and (2) specifically states that non-violent felonies and misdemeanors do not justify a pursuit without exigent circumstances.

This bill instead requires the uniform statewide police pursuit policy to specify (1) that a police officer may engage in a pursuit when the officer believes a suspect committed a felony and (2) the factors a police

officer may consider when deciding whether to engage or discontinue a pursuit.

Existing law requires the DESPP commissioner, in conjunction with the entities listed above, to adopt regulations once every five years to update the policy. The bill specifies that the policy must next be updated by January 1, 2027.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

### **FACTORS TO CONSIDER**

Under the bill, the policy must specify the factors a police officer may consider when deciding to engage or discontinue pursuit. Factors that may be considered in both instances must include:

1. the protection of the public;
2. the known or suspected offense;
3. the apparent need for immediate apprehension; and
4. risks to police officers, motorists, and the public.

As under existing law, for engaging in pursuits, the factors must also include alternative measures for apprehending occupants in moving vehicles or to impede the vehicle's movement. For discontinuing them, the bill also includes the following factors an officer may consider: vehicular and pedestrian traffic conditions, speeds, volume, and safety; weather conditions; and whether the suspect is unknown or identified and may be apprehended later.

### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 29    Nay 0    (03/18/2025)