
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 7159

AN ACT CREATING YELLOW ENVELOPES TO PROMOTE ACCOMMODATION AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN FIRST RESPONDERS AND PERSONS WITH COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENTS OR PHYSICAL DISABILITIES AND INCREASING AWARENESS OF BLUE AND YELLOW ENVELOPES AMONG FIRST RESPONDERS.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), in consultation with the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity (CWCSEO) and other specified entities, to develop yellow envelopes and related public awareness materials for people with cognitive impairments or physical disabilities (see below). As required under existing law, DMV similarly offers blue envelopes by request to people with autism spectrum disorder, which (1) include information about improving communication between these individuals and police officers and (2) hold their driver's license, registration, and insurance card (CGS § 14-11j). (These envelopes are meant to be handed to officers during a traffic stop.)

The bill requires DMV to provide the yellow envelopes and public awareness materials to its department offices and certain first responders (i.e. law enforcement units, municipal and volunteer fire departments and ambulance services, commercial ambulance and rescue services, emergency medical services (EMS) personnel, and state-operated ambulance and paramedic intercept services). It correspondingly requires these people and entities to give the envelopes and materials, by request and at no cost, to people with a cognitive impairment or physical disability (or their parent, guardian, family member, or driver).

The bill requires CWCSEO to coordinate and identify related education and training programs for first responders. It also requires several existing trainings for various first responders to begin providing

information about the blue and yellow envelopes.

Lastly, it makes a technical change (§ 6).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the training requirements unrelated to CWCSEO are effective January 1, 2026.

YELLOW ENVELOPES AND PUBLIC AWARENESS MATERIALS

The bill requires DMV, by January 1, 2026, to take the following actions in consultation with CWCSEO; one state association each of police chiefs, fire chiefs, and EMS personnel; and at least one organization that advocates for people with cognitive impairments or physical disabilities:

1. design yellow envelopes (a) to hold a driver's license, registration, insurance card, and other materials about a person's cognitive impairment or physical disability and (b) with written information on how police, EMS, or firefighters can accommodate and effectively interact with these individuals; and
2. develop brochures about both yellow and blue envelopes, as well as certain other public awareness materials (e.g., lanyards and stickers) that generally have the same information as must be written on these envelopes.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

CWCSEO Training Coordination

The bill requires CWCSEO to coordinate and identify education and training programs for first responders related to improving their interactions with people with a cognitive impairment, physical disability, or autism spectrum disorder. This includes techniques for handling incidents, promoting accommodations, and enhancing communication. CWCSEO must do so in consultation with (1) at least one organization that advocates for these individuals and offers courses certified by the Police Officer Standards and Training Council and (2) one state association each of police chiefs, fire chiefs, and EMS personnel.

First Responder Trainings

The bill also requires several existing trainings for various first responders to provide information about the blue and yellow envelopes, including:

1. the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection Division of State Police's police basic or field training program, starting by January 1, 2026;
2. the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control's optional fire service training and education program; and
3. certain Department of Public Health-approved training programs available to members of various ambulance, rescue, and paramedic intercept services.

Existing law generally already requires these trainings to provide information on techniques for handling incidents involving people with autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairment, and nonverbal learning disorder.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 35 Nay 0 (03/19/2025)