
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 7202

AN ACT CONCERNING LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), in consultation with the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST), to establish a social work and law enforcement project and a police training center. It appropriates \$2.2 million from the General Fund for these purposes.

Additionally, the bill allows those who provide police training on handling incidents involving individuals with autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairment, or nonverbal learning disorder to charge for the training. It also expands the training curriculum for police officers interacting with people with mental or physical disabilities to, among other things, specifically include the disorders listed above.

Finally, the bill requires POST to conduct a study on the training programs police officers are required to complete under state law.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025, except the autism spectrum, cognitive impairment, or nonverbal learning disorder training provisions are effective January 1, 2026, and the POST training study is effective upon passage.

§§ 1 & 6 — SOCIAL WORK AND LAW ENFORCEMENT PROJECT

The bill requires DESPP, in consultation with POST, to establish a project to be known as the social work and law enforcement project to advance the ethical and effective integration of social work services into law enforcement units (see BACKGROUND). It does so by preparing social workers, social work students, and law enforcement professionals to collaborate in the field of police social work.

The project must be located at Southern Connecticut State University

(SCSU) and the objectives are to:

1. educate and train the social work and law enforcement workforce to collaborate by using a model that integrates police and social work;
2. increase community wellness through training, research, education, and policy advocacy concerning integrating police and social work;
3. strengthen the engagement among social workers, law enforcement officers, and community members; and
4. promote dialogue concerning diversity, disparities, and systemic racism in criminal and juvenile justice settings.

By January 1, 2026, the DESPP commissioner must enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with SCSU to establish the project. The MOU must include a requirement that any funding for the project for a purpose other than providing training or education to a police officer requires the DESPP commissioner's written authorization.

The bill appropriates \$1.1 million to DESPP from the General Fund for FY 26 to establish the project.

§§ 2 & 7 — POLICE TRAINING CENTER

The bill requires DESPP, in consultation with POST, to establish the police training center to train and educate police officers (see BACKGROUND) in crime scene processing, the collection and analysis of forensic evidence, and criminal investigations. The center must be located at Central Connecticut State University (CCSU).

By January 1, 2026, the DESPP commissioner must enter into an MOU with CCSU to establish the training center. The MOU must include a requirement that any funding for the center for a purpose other than providing training or education to a police officer requires the DESPP commissioner's written authorization.

The bill appropriates \$1.1 million to DESPP from the General Fund

for FY 26 to establish the police training center.

§§ 3 & 4 — AUTISM SPECTRUM, COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT, OR NONVERBAL LEARNING DISORDER TRAINING

Charging for Training (§ 3)

Existing law requires basic and review training programs for state and local police to include techniques for handling incidents, such as wandering, that involve juveniles and adults with autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairment, or nonverbal learning disorder.

The bill allows the higher education institutions, health care professionals, or advocacy organizations concerned with juveniles or adults who have these disorders or a collaboration of these institutions, professionals, or organizations, to charge for these trainings.

Training Curriculum (§ 4)

The bill expands the training curriculum for police officers interacting with people with mental or physical disabilities. It does so by (1) specifying the types of individuals and advocates with whom POST must consult and (2) expanding the training to include interactions with individuals with mental illness.

The bill (1) requires POST, by July 1, 2026, to consult with individuals with autism spectrum disorders, cognitive impairments, or nonverbal learning disorders and (2) specifies that the advocates consulted with must include higher education institutions, health care professionals, or advocacy organizations that are concerned with these disabilities.

Under the bill, the training curriculum must include:

1. the nature of mental illness and mental or physical disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairment, and nonverbal learning disorder;
2. how to identify individuals with mental illness or mental or physical disabilities; and
3. strategies and techniques for handling incidents that involve

these individuals, including crisis intervention strategies and de-escalation techniques.

The bill requires each police basic or review training program on or after October 1, 2026, to include this training curriculum. (This provision is effective January 1, 2026, but the new requirements are not effective until October 1, 2026. So, under the bill there is no requirement for this training between these two times.)

§ 5 — TRAINING PROGRAM STUDY

The bill requires POST to conduct a study on the training programs police officers are required to complete under state law. The study must include an examination of the (1) mandatory basic training programs; (2) mandatory review training programs; and (3) how to improve, update, and streamline these programs.

By January 1, 2026, POST must submit a report on the study results and any legislative recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee.

BACKGROUND

Police Officer and Law Enforcement Unit

By law, “police officers” are sworn members of an organized local police department or the State Police; appointed constables who perform criminal law enforcement duties; special police officers appointed under law (such as public assistance fraud investigators); or any members of a law enforcement unit who perform police duties (CGS § 7-294a(9)).

A “law enforcement unit” is any state or municipal agency or department (or tribal agency or department created and governed under an MOU) whose primary functions include enforcing criminal or traffic laws; preserving public order; protecting life and property; or preventing, detecting, or investigating crime (CGS § 7-294a(8)).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 29 Nay 0 (03/18/2025)