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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **SB 1500**

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING VERIFICATION OF SEXUAL OFFENDER REGISTRANTS' ADDRESSES.***

##### **SUMMARY**

Existing law generally requires registered sex offenders to verify their residential address every 90 days by returning a form provided by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP).

Principally, this bill:

1. requires the DESPP commissioner, by January 1, 2026, to create and implement a system allowing registrants to submit this information over the phone instead of by mail, email, or fax;
2. lowers the penalty for a registrant's unintentional failure to return the form (or submit the information over the phone), from a felony to an infraction;
3. extends, from 10 to 20 days, the deadline for registrants to return or submit the form; and
4. allows offenders who did not receive the verification form to request it from DESPP, and gives them 20 days to return or submit it.

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

##### **SEX OFFENDER ADDRESS VERIFICATION**

Under Connecticut's sex offender registration law, certain offenders must register with DESPP for a specified period, generally starting (1) when they are released into the community or (2) for people with

convictions from other jurisdictions, when they move to the state. (DESPP can suspend the person's registration, and corresponding address verification, while a person is incarcerated, under civil commitment, or living in another state.)

By law, DESPP verifies the reported in-state residential address of registrants by sending non-forwardable verification forms to the listed address every 90 days. The bill extends, from 10 to 20 days after DESPP sends the form, the deadline for registrants to return the forms, and specifies that this date is calculated from when the DESPP mailing was postmarked. The bill also allows registrants who do not receive the DESPP form to request one from the department, and gives them 20 days after it is postmarked to return it.

Current law requires registrants to return the forms by mail, email, or fax. Starting January 1, 2026, the bill creates a new option by allowing them to submit the information over the phone. By that date, it requires the DESPP commissioner to create and implement a system allowing registrants to verify their address in this way. The commissioner must (1) set protocols for the submission and recording of this verification and (2) post on DESPP's website the phone number for address verification and this system's operating schedule.

### ***Penalty for Failure to Return or Submit the Form***

Under current law, failure to return sex offender address verification forms as required is a class D felony, punishable by up to five years in prison, a fine of up to \$5,000, or both. The bill lowers the penalty to an infraction if the failure to return the form (or submit the information over the phone) within the bill's 20-day deadline is unintentional. Infractions are punishable by fines, usually set by Superior Court judges, of between \$35 and \$90, plus a \$20 or \$35 surcharge and an additional fee based on the amount of the fine.

The bill also makes it an infraction if a registrant, after not receiving the DESPP form, requests one but then fails to return or submit it within 20 days.

Under the bill, the intentional failure to submit or return the form continues to be a class D felony. As under existing law, it is also a class D felony if a registrant fails to notify DESPP about an address change within five business days.

Existing law requires DESPP to notify the local police department or appropriate state police troop if a registrant fails to return the address verification form (or under the bill, submit the form over the phone). Current law requires the local or state police, in turn, to apply for an arrest warrant. Corresponding to the penalty changes noted above, the bill instead requires them to apply for an arrest warrant only if there is probable cause to believe that the registrant's failure to return or submit the form was intentional.

#### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 28      Nay 11      (04/10/2025)