OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5003

AN ACT CONCERNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE STATE.

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§§ 45 & 46 — DOL INFORMATIONAL WEBPAGE

Requires the DOL commissioner, by January 1, 2027, to improve and update the veteran employment information DOL provides on its website; requires the DVA commissioner, starting January 1, 2027, to send a biweekly email newsletter with relevant resources and materials included on the DOL informational webpage to interested recipients and post a link to the webpage

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Requires an employer to include a position's wage or wage range, and a general description of the position's benefits, in public and internal job advertisements

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Creates a grant program for junior firefighter programs run by volunteer fire departments and appropriates $50,000 for the program in FY 27

SUMMARY

This bill makes various changes as described in the section-by-section analysis below.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Various; see below.

§ 1 — FINANCIAL PROTECTIONS FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS ASSAULTED AT WORK

Generally requires health care facilities and state agencies to cover their health care providers' out-of-pocket expenses and lost wages incurred due to being assaulted at work; allows the providers to sue the facilities, institutions, or agencies for damages

Reimbursements for Expenses

The bill requires health care facilities or institutions, and state agencies that employ health care providers, to cover certain out-of-pocket financial losses or expenses their health care providers (and other employees of facilities or institutions) incur due to an assault that occurred while they were (1) performing their duties within the scope of their employment or (2) under the direction of the facility, institution, or agency. The covered expenses, such as medical or other services needed due to the assault, must not have been paid for by the provider's or employee's insurance, workers' compensation, or any source not involving an expenditure by the provider or employee.

Under the bill, a "health care provider" is someone directly or indirectly employed by, or volunteering for, a health care facility or institution who (1) is involved in direct patient care or (2) has direct contact with the patient or the patient's family when (a) collecting or

processing information for patient forms and records or (b) escorting or directing the patient or family on the health care employer's premises. A "health care facility or institution" is a hospital, nursing home, rest home, home health care agency, home health aide agency, emergency medical services organization, assisted living services agency, or outpatient surgical facility, or an infirmary operated by an educational institution.

Lost Wages

Under the bill, a health care provider or employee must continue to be paid their salary or contracted wage if they miss work due to an injury sustained during an assault or for a court appearance connected to the assault. However, workers' compensation benefits may be deducted from these wages during the absence (in effect, the employer must make up the difference between the benefits and the salary or contracted wage). In addition, the (1) absence cannot be charged against the provider's or employee's sick leave, vacation time, personal leave, or other accrued leave, and (2) provider or employee must continue to pay their share of their health insurance premiums during the absence.

Lawsuits

The bill allows any health care provider or employee of a health care facility or institution who suffers an ascertainable loss of money (presumably, from a workplace assault) to bring a Superior Court civil action for damages against the institution or facility that employs them (it appears that this provision conflicts with the state's workers' compensation law; see *Comment* below). The bill requires any award issued by the court in these cases to deduct the amount (1) of workers' compensation benefits the provider or employee received and (2) paid by the provider or employee's health insurance. If the provider or employee prevails in the suit, the bill also allows the court to award reasonable attorney's fees and costs.

The bill requires a health care provider or employee who brings one of these lawsuits to notify the health care facility or institution about the action. The notice must be written and delivered in person or by registered or certified mail.

Under the bill, a health care facility or institution that has paid or must pay wages or expenses for medical or other services under these provisions may bring a Superior Court civil action to recover these costs from the person who committed the assault.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Comment

The lawsuit that the bill allows health care providers or employees to bring against their employers appears to conflict with the state's workers' compensation law. Under that law, an employer who provides workers' compensation coverage for its employees cannot be held liable for an action for damages on account of personal injury sustained by employees arising out of and in the course of their employment. In addition, all rights and claims between such an employer and employees arising out of personal injury or death sustained in the course of employment are abolished other than rights and claims allowed under the workers' compensation law (CGS § 31-284).

§ 2 — TEACHER OR OTHER EMPLOYEE INJURY PAYMENTS

Broadens the definition of assault on educational employees or board members that triggers the existing requirement for the employer to pay for any financial loss (after counting workers' compensation, health insurance, or other sources) the person experiences; expands eligibility for salary replacement when an employee misses work due to the injury or a court appearance related to an assault

By law, if a teacher, board member, or other employee of a school district or certain state institutions or agencies is assaulted while performing their duties and suffers a financial loss or expense, then the employer must generally cover those losses and expenses. These include reasonable medical or other service expenses the injured person incurred, but that were not covered by insurance, workers' compensation, or another outside source. The bill expands these provisions to cover "any physical or negligent assault."

Generally, under the state's criminal statutes, assault requires a physical injury caused by intentional or reckless actions (see below).

The law, unchanged by the bill, generally applies to boards of education, the State Board of Education, the Board of Regents for Higher

Education (BOR), the UConn Board of Trustees (BOT), and each state agency that employs any teacher. These employers must hold harmless from any financial loss any teacher, other employee, or board member, including student teachers and any faculty, staff, or student employed by UConn Health Center or health services.

Assault

Under the state's criminal statutes, unchanged by the bill, third degree assault occurs when a person (1) intends to physically injure someone and injures that person or someone else; (2) recklessly causes serious physical injury to another person; or (3) with criminal negligence, physically injures someone with a deadly weapon, a dangerous instrument, or an electronic defense weapon (CGS § 53a-61). First degree and second degree assault are similar in that the crime involves physical injury due to intentional or reckless actions (although there are factors that heighten the crime in these instances) (CGS §§ 53a-59 & -60).

The bill does not define "physical or negligent assault." Under the bill's use of "physical or negligent" assault, it is unclear (1) if a physical injury must occur; (2) what level of negligence triggers the bill's provisions (for example, criminal negligence as used in the state's third degree assault statute); or (3) if intent is necessary.

Salary Replacement and Time Off

Additionally, under current law, any teacher or employee absent from employment due to an injury from an assault or for a court appearance related to the assault must continue to receive their full salary minus any workers' compensation payments. The bill expands this provision to apply to any assault (it is not clear if it must be a work-related assault) and explicitly expands it to include board members. Regarding the compensation that is protected, the bill includes contracted weekly wages, in addition to salary.

Existing law also prohibits deducting a teacher's or employee's sick, personal, or vacation days for these court appearances. The bill expands this provision to (1) explicitly cover board members and (2) protect other

accrued leave.

It also makes minor, conforming, and technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 3 — PATIENT VIOLENCE REPORTING

Requires DPH to issue guidance on implementing a system (1) for certain health care providers to report incidences of patient violence to the statewide health information exchange and (2) to notify these providers when they have scheduled visits with patients who have a documented history of these incidences

The bill requires the Department of Public Health (DPH), by July 1, 2027, to issue guidance on implementing a system (1) for health care providers to report incidences of violence that a patient directs at a provider to the Statewide Health Information Exchange (known as "Connie") and (2) that alerts providers when they accept a new patient or have a scheduled visit with an existing patient who has a documented history of any of those incidences. Under the bill, the guidance applies to health care providers with an electronic health record system capable of connecting to and participating in Connie.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Background — Related Bill

HB 5169 (File 38), favorably reported by the Public Health Committee, requires (1) DPH to develop a system for providers to report incidences of patient violence or combative behavior to Connie and (2) providers to document these incidences in the system starting January 1, 2027.

§ 4 — EMPLOYMENT PROMISSORY NOTES

Brings all employers under a law that generally prohibits requiring employees to sign an agreement that requires the employee to repay the employer if he or she does not stay at the job for a certain duration

This bill brings all employers under a law that generally prohibits requiring employees to execute an agreement that requires the employee to repay the employer if he or she does not stay at the job for a certain duration, including when the repayment is reimbursement for training. Current law applies this prohibition to employers that have at

least 26 employees. The bill expands the prohibition to cover all employers, regardless of their size, for instruments or agreements executed on or after October 1, 2026.

More specifically, the law prohibits the covered employers from requiring an employee or prospective employee to execute an employment promissory note as a condition of employment. An "employment promissory note" is an instrument or agreement that requires an employee to pay the employer, or its agent or assignee, if the employee leaves employment before a set amount of time. This includes instruments or agreements stating that the payment is reimbursement for employee training. However, the law specifically exempts contract provisions allowing employers to recoup certain expenses, such as any money advanced to the employee.

For employers brought under the law by the bill, as with employers currently covered by the law, an employment promissory note executed as a condition of employment is void, but if the note is part of an employment agreement its invalidity does not affect the agreement's other provisions.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Background — Related Bill

sHB 5244, reported favorably by the Commerce Committee, allows employment promissory notes between an employer and employee for the repayment of any federal H-1B visa fees the employer paid on the employee's behalf.

§ 5 — SUB-MINIMUM WAGE TASK FORCE

Creates a task force to study additional services, funding, and benefits that may support people with disabilities who earn less than the minimum wage

This bill creates a task force to study additional services, funding, and benefits that may support people with disabilities who earn less than the minimum wage, as allowed under a federal "14(c) certificate" (see *Background — Federal 14(c) Certificates*). The task force must (1) examine the potential benefits and existing impediments to the state's use of those additional services and (2) make recommendations on funding

sources and benefits the state can provide.

Under the bill, the task force consists of the following officials or their designees: (1) the Labor and Public Employees and Human Services committees' chairpersons and ranking members and (2) the commissioners of aging and disability services, labor, developmental services, and administrative services.

The task force also has six appointed members, as shown in the table below. At least two appointees must be a parent of someone with disabilities who earns less than the minimum wage under a federal 14(c) certificate. Any of the appointed members may be state legislators. All initial appointments to the task force must be made within 30 days after the bill takes effect, and any vacancy must be filled by the appointing authority.

Table: Appointed Task Force Members

Appointing Authority	***Appointee's Qualifications***
House speaker	Expertise in hiring persons with disabilities
Senate president pro tempore	Member of an organization that advocates for persons with disabilities
House majority leader	None specified
Senate majority leader	
House minority leader	
Senate minority leader	

Under the bill, the Labor and Public Employees Committee's chairpersons, or their designees, serve as the task force's chairpersons, and must schedule and hold its first meeting within 60 days after the bill takes effect. The committee's administrative staff also serves in that capacity for the task force.

The bill requires the task force to submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Labor and Public Employees Committee by January 1, 2028. The task force ends on that date or when it submits the report, whichever is later.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Background — Federal 14(c) Certificates

Section 14(c) of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act allows employers to pay wages below the federal minimum wage to workers who have disabilities for the work being performed, but only after receiving a certificate from the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division.

§ 6 — HEALTH CARE WORKER PARKING VIOLATIONS

Creates an affirmative defense for health care providers in municipal parking violation hearings

The bill creates an affirmative defense in municipal parking violation hearings for any health care provider who was issued the violation during his or her shift, as long as it was not issued (1) while the provider was at a health care facility or institution or (2) for a public safety violation such as blocking a fire hydrant, sidewalk, or handicap ramp. In general, an affirmative defense allows a defendant to introduce evidence, which, if found credible, will negate liability, even if the defendant committed the alleged acts.

Under this provision, a "health care provider" is anyone employed by or acting on behalf of a health care facility or institution. A "health care facility or institution" is a hospital, nursing home, rest home, home health care agency, home health aide agency, emergency medical services organization, assisted living services agency, or outpatient surgical facility, or an educational institution's infirmary.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Background — Related Bill

HB 5238, reported favorably by the Transportation Committee, requires the emergency services and public protection commissioner to establish a working group to study and make recommendations on the parking access challenges home health care service providers face while delivering services in residential settings.

§ 7 — MINIMUM WAGE AT CANNABIS ESTABLISHMENTS

Prohibits the labor commissioner from counting tips as part of the state's minimum wage requirement for employees of cannabis establishments, dispensaries, or producers

The bill explicitly prohibits the labor commissioner from counting tips as part of the state's minimum wage requirement for employees of cannabis establishments, dispensaries, or producers. It also specifies that any cannabis establishment, dispensary, or producer that pays an employee less than the state minimum wage is violating the minimum wage law.

The state's existing "tip credit" law, unchanged by the bill, generally allows employers to pay less than the minimum wage to bartenders and hotel and restaurant staff who customarily and regularly receive tips, as long as their tips make up the difference (CGS § 31-60(b)).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Background — Related Bill

SB 352, reported favorably by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, is identical to this provision.

§ 8 — PORTAL-TO-PORTAL WORKERS' COMPENSATION FOR PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

Extends "portal-to-portal" workers' compensation coverage to public works department employees under certain circumstances, such as when they are responding to a direct order to appear at work when nonessential employees are excused from working

This bill extends "portal-to-portal" workers' compensation coverage to public works department employees in three situations: (1) when they are subject to emergency calls while off duty by the terms of their employment, (2) when they are responding to a direct order to appear at their work assignment when nonessential employees are excused from working, or (3) after working two or more mandatory overtime shifts on consecutive days.

With "portal-to-portal" coverage, an injury that occurs while the employee is traveling directly between his or her home and workplace is deemed to have occurred in the course of the employee's employment, making him or her eligible to receive workers'

compensation benefits for the injury. Under the bill, a "public works department" is a state or municipal department responsible for building, regulating, or maintaining all things in the nature of public works and improvements.

Existing law gives 9-1-1 emergency dispatchers portal-to-portal coverage under the same conditions the bill applies to public works department employees. The law also gives portal-to-portal coverage to (1) Department of Correction employees when they are responding to a direct order to appear at their work assignment when nonessential employees are excused from working or after they have worked two or more mandatory overtime shifts on consecutive days and (2) police officers and firefighters whenever they are traveling directly between home and work.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Background — Related Bill

SB 348, reported favorably by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, is identical to this provision.

§ 9 — TEACHER TERMINATIONS

Sets a standard of review for when a public school teacher is terminated; changes who makes the final decision when a tenured teacher is under consideration for termination and requests a hearing; changes the court's review standards for appeals of teacher termination decisions

The bill makes changes to the process for terminating public school teachers. It sets a standard of review for when a nontenured or tenured public school teacher is terminated for the reasons allowed by existing law (inefficiency, incompetence, insubordination, moral misconduct, disability, elimination of a position to another teacher, or other due and sufficient reasons). Current law does not specify a standard of review for these terminations. The bill requires the standard of review to be the same standard applied in other disciplinary actions under the teacher's collective bargaining agreement. This permits the standard to be determined through the collective bargaining process.

The bill also changes who makes the final decision when a tenured

teacher is under consideration for termination and requests a hearing. Current law generally allows such a teacher to request a hearing before either a board of education (BOE) subcommittee or an impartial hearing officer. The bill eliminates the option for the hearing before a BOE subcommittee. Under current law, the subcommittee or hearing officer must submit its findings and a recommendation to the BOE, which then makes a final decision on the termination. The bill instead requires the hearing officer to make the final disposition, and makes it binding on the parties.

Current law allows teachers aggrieved by a BOE's termination decision to appeal to the Superior Court, and requires the court to review the proceedings under the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act's (UAPA) standards for reviewing appeals of agency decisions. The bill instead allows teachers or BOEs aggrieved by a hearing officer's decision to apply to the court to confirm, vacate, or modify the decision under the laws for court consideration of arbitration awards. It also makes various minor and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

Court Review Standards for Appeals

Current law generally requires a court considering an appeal of a teacher's termination under the UAPA standards to affirm the decision unless it finds that substantial rights of the teacher have been prejudiced because the findings, inferences, conclusions, or decisions (1) violate constitutional or statutory provisions; (2) exceed statutory authority; or (3) were (a) made using an unlawful procedure, (b) affected by another error of law, (c) clearly erroneous, or (d) arbitrary or capricious.

The bill instead requires a court to consider an appeal from either a teacher or the BOE under the statutory standards for appeals of arbitration awards. Under these standards, a court must confirm an award unless it vacates or modifies it (CGS § 52-417). The court generally must vacate an award if (1) it was made through corruption, fraud or undue means; (2) it was evident the arbitrator was partial or corrupt; (3) the arbitrator was guilty of misconduct by refusing to

postpone the hearing or in refusing to hear pertinent and material evidence; or (4) the arbitrator exceeded his or her powers, or so imperfectly executed them that a mutual, final, and definite award was not made (CGS § 52-418).

Under these same standards, a court must modify an award if (1) there was an evident material miscalculation of figures or an evident material mistake in the description of something referred to in the award; (2) the arbitrator awarded for a matter not submitted for arbitration, unless it does not affect the merits of the decision; or (3) the award is imperfect in matter of form not affecting the merits of the controversy (CGS § 52-419).

Current law prohibits a court from awarding costs to a teacher appealing his or her termination unless it finds that the BOE acted with gross negligence, in bad faith, or with malice in its original decision. The bill removes this limitation, and the arbitration standards used under the bill do not explicitly allow costs to be awarded to either party.

Background — Related Bill

sSB 351, reported favorably by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, is substantially similar to this provision.

§ 10 — RETENTION OF SERVICE CONTRACT WORKERS

Requires entities that take over certain contracts at covered locations, contract out services, or receive property in a sale or transfer to retain their predecessors' employees and service workers for at least 90 days

The bill requires entities that (1) take over certain service contracts at covered locations, (2) contract out services, or (3) receive property in a sale or transfer to retain certain service workers from their predecessors for at least 90 days. If a worker's performance is satisfactory during these 90 days, then the successor employer must extend them an offer of continued employment either under terms and conditions the successor employer creates or by law. Existing law already provides similar protections to employees performing food and beverage services at Bradley International Airport (BIA) after a contract termination.

The bill imposes responsibilities on the authority (at BIA or other

covered locations) that initially awards the contract, the original contractor, and successor employers of two or more people. Current law imposes these responsibilities on the authority that initially awards the contract, the original contractor, and successor contractors who have 10 or more employees.

The bill extends existing provisions to the new circumstances covered by the bill, such as those requiring advance notice to (1) a contractor whose contract will be terminated or not renewed, (2) workers, and (3) the union representing the workers.

The bill permits workers who are displaced or terminated in violation of the bill to file a complaint with the labor commissioner (currently BIA workers can sue in court). It requires the labor commissioner to hold a hearing and permits the commissioner to award the employee or service worker back pay, benefits, reinstatement to their former position at their most recent salary and benefit level, and compensatory damages.

The bill also makes conforming and technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Scope of the Bill

The bill expands the application of the law providing certain job protections to BIA food and beverage workers to contracts for services by service workers at covered locations. Under the bill, a service worker is a person performing certain services under a successor service contract, including:

1. care or maintenance services, including a security guard, front-desk worker, janitor, housekeeper, maintenance employee, concierge, door attendant, building superintendent, grounds maintenance worker, stationary fireman, elevator operator, or window cleaner;

2. passenger-related security services, cargo and in-ramp services, in-terminal passenger and baggage handling, and cleaning services at an airport;

3. food preparation or dietary services at a school, private higher education institution, hospital, nursing home facility, or institution operated or managed by an assisted living services agency;

4. health care services provided at a hospital, nursing home facility, or institution operated or managed by an assisted living services agency; and

5. student transportation services.

Under the bill, a service worker is not a person who is (1) a managerial, supervisory, or confidential employee under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act, or (2) engaged to perform services related to a project that requires a permit from a municipality, such as a building, mechanical, plumbing, structural, or electrical project.

The services must be provided at "covered locations," which are:

1. multi-family residential buildings or complexes with 50 or more units;

2. commercial centers or complexes over 75,000 square feet;

3. municipal office buildings or facilities;

4. electric or natural gas company facilities;

5. public or nonpublic schools;

6. cultural centers or complexes, such as museums, convention centers, arenas, or performance halls;

7. shopping malls or bank branches;

8. industrial sites;

9. pharmaceutical labs,

10. airports or train stations;

11. hospitals, nursing homes, or institutions operated or managed by assisted living services agencies;

12. warehouses, distribution centers, or other facilities that store or distribute general merchandise, refrigerated goods, or other products;

13. private higher education institutions;

14. property owned by a carrier (a local or regional school district, educational institution providing elementary or secondary education, someone under contract with them to transport students, or someone primarily transporting people under age 21 for pay) to transport students or for related services; and

15. data centers.

Definitions of Various Medical Facilities

The bill defines a hospital as an establishment for the lodging, care, and treatment of persons suffering from disease or other abnormal physical or mental conditions. It includes inpatient psychiatric services in general hospitals.

Under the bill, a nursing home facility is any chronic and convalescent nursing home (1) with nursing supervision that provides nursing supervision under a medical director 24 hours per day, or rest home with this supervision; or (2) that provides skilled nursing care under medical supervision and direction to carry out non-surgical treatment and dietary procedures for chronic diseases, convalescent stages, acute diseases, or injuries.

The bill defines an assisted living services agency as an agency that provides chronic and stable individuals with nursing services and assistance with activities of daily living. It may have a dementia special care unit or program.

Awarding Authority

Existing law defines an awarding authority as any person that

awards or enters into a contract to perform food and beverage services at BIA. The bill extends this to anyone who awards or enters into a contract to perform services at a covered location starting October 1, 2026. The bill specifies that the state and federal government are not awarding authorities.

Successor Employer

The bill defines a "successor employer" as an (1) employer that has been awarded a successor service contract, (2) employer that has purchased or acquired control of a property where employees or service workers were employed at any time during the past 90 days, or (3) awarding authority that has hired employees or service workers to perform services that are substantially the same as those previously provided under a terminated or non-renewed service contract.

The bill extends the definitions of successor service contracts and terminated contractors to cover the scope of the circumstances added by the bill.

Awarding Authority's Responsibilities

The bill generally extends existing responsibilities of awarding authorities to the new situations covered by the bill. The awarding authority must give advance notice to a contractor whose contract will be terminated or not renewed, the workers, and the union representing them within 15 days of the termination of the service contract, the contracting out of services previously performed by the authority, or the sale or transfer of the property (if workers were employed there within the prior 90 days). Under the bill, and existing law for eligible BIA workers, the authority must give the contractor and union the name, address, and telephone number of the successor employer or contractors, if known. The bill requires this notice in writing and posted in a conspicuous place. Under the bill and existing law for eligible BIA workers, authorities must also give new employers information about the workers.

Responsibilities of Successor Employers

The bill generally extends existing responsibilities of successor

employers to the new situations covered by the bill. A successor employer must hand deliver a written employment offer to the workers. It must be written in a language the worker understands. As under current law, it must be delivered by the later of five days before the termination of the original contract or 15 days before the contractor begins to provide service. The bill also requires this notice five days before the sale or transfer of a covered location where workers were employed during the previous 90 days. Existing law already requires successor contractors to deliver this written offer to each eligible BIA employee within this timeframe.

The bill, and existing law for eligible BIA workers, specify the notice's content. Among other things, the employer must inform the worker of pay rate, hours (per shift and per week), and benefits it is offering. The notice must describe the worker's rights under the bill and the employer's name, address, and telephone number. It must state that the employee or service worker has 10 days to respond. Under the bill, the notice also must inform the employee or service worker that they are allowed to file a complaint with the labor commissioner. Current law requires successor contractors to inform BIA employees, in the notice, that they have the right to sue the successor contractor.

Under the bill, and existing law for eligible BIA workers, a worker cannot be fired during a 90-day period without just cause. The bill gives this protection to workers who were employed during the prior 90 days (for BIA workers it reduces this timeframe from the previous six months). As under existing law for BIA workers, the bill requires contractors, during these 90 days, to keep a preferential hiring list of workers eligible for retention that it did not initially retain. (It is not clear which employees or service workers would be affected by this provision.) The contractor must hire additional employees or service workers, if needed, from this list.

Under the bill and existing law for BIA workers, the contractor may determine at any time that it needs fewer employees or service workers than the terminated contractor had and can lay them off. In doing so, it must retain employees by seniority within each job class, based on an

employee's total length of service at the affected site.

The bill eliminates a provision applicable to BIA workers that a successor contractor is not required to retain employees with attendance and performance records under the prior contract that would lead a reasonably prudent employer to terminate the person.

Remedies for a Displaced Employee or Service Worker

Under the bill, a worker displaced or terminated in violation of the above provisions can file a complaint with the labor commissioner, who must hold a hearing on receipt of the complaint. It requires the labor commissioner to send each party a written copy of her decision after the hearing. If the commissioner decides that the awarding authority, terminated contractor, or successor employer has violated the above provisions, she may award the employee or service worker back pay, benefits, reinstatement to their former position at their most recent salary and benefit level, and compensatory damages.

As under existing law for BIA workers, the bill requires that back pay be based on at least the higher of (1) the worker's regular pay rate for their last year on the job (their last four months on the job if they were employed for less than one year), or (2) their final regular rate of pay on their last day.

Under the bill, an aggrieved party is allowed to appeal the labor commissioner's decision to the Superior Court.

The bill eliminates current law which permits (1) a BIA employee to bring suit in the Superior Court and (2) courts to award back pay, reasonable attorney fees, and costs if the aggrieved employee prevails.

As under current law for eligible BIA workers, these provisions do not limit a worker's right to file suit against the awarding authority, terminated contractor, or successor employer for wrongful termination under common law.

Under the bill, an awarding authority, terminated contractor, or successor employer who violates the above provisions must pay a

penalty of $500 per employee or service worker for each day the violation continues. This replaces current law which requires an awarding authority or contractor in violation of these provisions related to BIA workers to pay a penalty of $100 per employee for each day the violation continues.

Background — Related Bill

sSB 358, favorably reported by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, contains an identical provision on the retention of service contract workers.

§§ 11 & 12 — HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR SURVIVORS OF CERTAIN FIREFIGHTERS AND STATE MARSHALS

Requires nonstate public employers to provide partnership plan coverage to survivors of certain unpaid volunteer firefighters; allows survivors of certain unpaid volunteer firefighters or state marshals to participate in the state employee health insurance plan

The bill extends (1) nonstate public employer "partnership plan" health care coverage to the survivors of certain unpaid volunteer firefighters and (2) state employee health insurance coverage to the survivors of certain unpaid volunteer firefighters and state marshals.

Partnership Plan Coverage (§ 11)

By law, the comptroller must offer partnership plan coverage to nonstate public employers (for example, municipalities and other political subdivisions of the state) and nonprofit employers.

As required under existing law for first responders, the bill requires a nonstate public employer that provided coverage under a partnership plan to an unpaid volunteer firefighter who is killed in the line of duty to continue to provide the coverage to the survivors who were covered under the plan at the time of the unpaid volunteer firefighter's death. The coverage must continue for one year after the death and may be renewed annually for up to five years. The nonstate public employer must help with the coverage continuation and renewal. "Unpaid volunteer firefighters" are uniformed members of a fire department who perform firefighting duties for the department but are not paid.

Under the bill, as required under existing law for first responders, a

nonstate public employer that did not provide coverage under a partnership plan to an unpaid volunteer firefighter who is killed in the line of duty must apply for partnership plan coverage for, and at the request of, the survivors who were receiving health care benefit coverage through a plan offered to the unpaid volunteer firefighter at the time of death.

By law, the comptroller must accept the application on the terms and conditions applicable to the partnership plan for enrolling and covering the survivors for one year. The enrollment and coverage may be renewed annually for up to five years. The nonstate public employer must help with enrollment and coverage initiation and renewal.

By law, the state comptroller must use the Fallen Hero Fund to reimburse nonstate public employers for payments made for partnership plan coverage for survivors of first responders (emergency medical technicians, paramedics, police officers, or paid firefighters) (CGS § 3-123eee(c)(2)). Under the bill, the comptroller must similarly use the Fallen Hero Fund to reimburse nonstate public employers for payments made for partnership plan coverage for survivors of unpaid volunteer firefighters.

State Employee Health Insurance Plan (§ 12)

The bill requires the state comptroller, with approval from the attorney general and the insurance commissioner, to allow the surviving spouse and dependent children of a state marshal or unpaid volunteer firefighter to participate in the state employee health insurance plan. To be eligible, the (1) unpaid volunteer firefighter must die as the result of injuries received while acting in the scope of the unpaid volunteer firefighter's employment and not because of illness or natural causes, (2) state marshal must die as the result of injuries received while performing state-compensated duties and not because of illness or natural causes, and (3) surviving spouse and dependent children cannot otherwise be eligible for a group hospitalization and medical and surgical insurance plan.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Background — Related Bills

sHB 5403, favorably reported by the Public Safety and Security Committee, among other things, similarly requires health care coverage to be extended to the survivors of unpaid volunteer firefighters and state marshals. The bill (1) requires nonstate public employers to either continue providing partnership plan coverage to survivors of the unpaid volunteer firefighter or, if they were not providing coverage, apply for coverage through a partnership plan, and (2) requires the comptroller to allow the surviving spouse and any dependent children of state marshals to participate in the state employee health insurance plan.

sSB 410, favorably reported by the Public Safety and Security Committee, expands the Fallen Hero Fund to provide compensation for firefighter cancer deaths. It also requires nonstate public employers to provide partnership plan benefits to survivors of first responders that die due to certain cancers. These employers must be reimbursed from the firefighters cancer relief account instead of the Fallen Hero Fund.

§§ 13-15 — PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PAYROLL DEDUCTION OF UNION DUES

Conforms the state's public sector collective bargaining laws to federal case law by removing provisions that could require public employees who were covered by a CBA, but not dues paying members of the union, to pay other fees instead of union dues

This bill conforms the state's public sector collective bargaining laws to federal case law, which generally prohibits public sector collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) from requiring public employees who were covered by a CBA, but not dues paying members of the union, to pay other fees instead of union dues (*Janus* v. *American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Council 31*, 585 U.S. 878 (2018)).

Current state law allows state employees and municipal employees to negotiate CBA provisions that "call for" a payroll deduction of an employee's union dues and initiation fees. The bill instead specifies that these provisions can allow them to choose to have the dues and fees paid through payroll deductions.

For public school teachers, current state law generally specifies that

the collective bargaining law does not preclude their CBAs from requiring that union dues and service fees (fees paid by teachers who do not join the union) be collected by payroll deduction. The bill instead specifies that the parties may negotiate CBA provisions that allow the teachers to choose to have their dues and initiation (rather than service) fees paid through payroll deductions.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§§ 16-19 — FIRST RESPONDER TUITION REIMBURSEMENT AND MORTGAGE PROGRAM

Requires UConn, CT State, and CSUS to waive tuition for certain first responders and requires CHFA to develop and administer a mortgage assistance program for first responders

The bill directs the BOR and the UConn BOT, as applicable, to waive undergraduate tuition at Connecticut State Community College (CT State), the Connecticut State University System (CSUS), and UConn for:

1. any police officer who has been employed as a police officer in Connecticut for at least five years;

2. any uniformed member of a paid or volunteer fire department, including fire departments operated by a federally recognized Connecticut Indian tribe, who, as documented by the chief of the department, has served as a firefighter in Connecticut for at least five years; and

3. any emergency medical services personnel (an individual certified to practice as an emergency medical responder, emergency medical technician, advanced emergency medical technician, emergency medical services instructor, or an individual licensed as a paramedic) who has been employed as such in Connecticut for at least five years.

For UConn and CSUS, graduate degree program tuition is additionally waived.

The bill also requires CT State and CSUS to waive tuition for students attending a state or regional fire school who are enrolled in a program

offered together with an institution that accredits courses in the program. For CSUS, only tuition fees for undergraduate and graduate programs are waived.

Additionally, the bill requires the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) to develop and administer mortgage assistance programs for certain Connecticut first responders, which under the bill includes police officers (see *Background — Definition of Police Officer*), uniform members of a paid or volunteer fire department, and emergency medical services personnel (see above). In doing so, CHFA (1) must use down payment assistance or any other appropriate housing subsidies and (2) may allow the mortgagee to realize a reasonable portion of the property's equity gain when it is sold.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026, except the mortgage assistance program provision is effective October 1, 2026.

Background — Definition of Police Officer

By law, police officers are sworn members of an organized local police department or of the Division of State Police within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), appointed constables who perform criminal law enforcement duties, special appointed policemen, or any member of a law enforcement unit who performs police duties.

Background — Related Bill

sHB 5046, reported favorably by the Public Safety and Security Committee, among other things, has substantially similar provisions.

§ 20 — PLAN TO PROMOTE THE LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFESSION

By January 1, 2027, requires DESPP, in consultation with certain entities, to develop, coordinate, and implement a plan to promote the law enforcement profession

The bill requires the DESPP commissioner, by January 1, 2027, to develop, coordinate, and implement a plan to promote the law enforcement profession using a variety of media, including social media. In doing so, he must consult with the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association, in-state higher education institutions, and any other

entities he deems appropriate.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 21 — PLAN TO PROMOTE THE FIREFIGHTER PROFESSION

By January 1, 2027, requires the Office of the State Fire Marshal, in consultation with certain entities, to develop, coordinate, and implement a plan to promote the firefighter profession

The bill requires the Department of Administrative Services' (DAS) Office of the State Fire Marshal, by January 1, 2027, to develop, coordinate, and implement a plan to promote the firefighter profession using a variety of media, including social media. In doing so, the office must consult with the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association, in-state higher education institutions, and any other entities the DAS commissioner deems appropriate.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026.

§ 22 — CRISIS INITIATIVE EXPANSION

Expands the CRISIS Initiative throughout Connecticut

The bill requires the State Police, in conjunction with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), to expand the CRISIS Initiative pilot program throughout the state by January 1, 2027. This expanded program must at least include the pilot program's components that require state police officer training, coordination between state police officers and mental health professionals, and referrals to mental health services facilities.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Background — CRISIS Initiative Pilot Program

The CRISIS Initiative pilot program has generally established procedures among specific State Police and DMHAS personnel for referring and handling incidents involving individuals with addiction disorders or mental health conditions as well as other crisis incidents. The program began in 2017 with DMHAS assigning a full-time licensed clinician social worker to State Police Troop E, which generally covers southeast Connecticut and is based out of Montville. The 2021 budget

implementer expanded the program to Troop D, which generally covers northeast Connecticut and is based out of Killingly (PA 21-2, June Special Session, § 75).

Background — Related Bill

SB 374, favorably reported by the Public Safety and Security Committee, also requires the expansion of the CRISIS Initiative throughout the state, but without specifying the required components.

§ 23 — DEFERRED RETIREMENT OPTION PLAN FOR NON-CMERS MUNICIPALITIES

Allows municipalities that do not participate in CMERS to create a deferred retirement option plan for their employees

Starting October 1, 2026, the bill allows any municipality that does not participate in the Connecticut Municipal Employees Retirement System (CMERS) to create a deferred retirement option plan (DROP) for its employees. The plan must allow employees who are eligible for a service retirement to participate in it. In general, a DROP is an arrangement under which an employee continues working even though they are eligible to retire and receive pension benefits. But instead of having the continued compensation and additional years of service counted toward the pension benefit, the employer deposits funds into a separate DROP account during each year of the continued employment, which earns interest or investment earnings, and is paid to the employee upon retirement instead of the increased pension amount.

Under the bill, a DROP must include a fixed period for member participation, up to five years, and a specified interest rate credit for member accounts. All of its other provisions must be determined by the municipality, as long as the actuary that consults on the municipality's retirement plan certifies that the DROP's structure has no anticipated impact that would increase municipal contribution rates (presumably, to the regular retirement plan). The bill also requires the municipality, within four years after creating the DROP, to (1) have the plan evaluated by the consulting actuary and (2) review and assess the evaluation to determine the plan's cost to its fund. After receiving the evaluation, the municipality may discontinue the plan.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 24 — HOMECARE EMPLOYEE ACCESS TO VIRTUAL MONITORING EVIDENCE

Generally allows homecare employees in state-administered homecare programs to access evidence from virtual monitoring technology if it will be used in a disciplinary action against them

The bill requires that when certain homecare employees in state-administered homecare programs are subject to a proposed disciplinary action, they or their union representatives have access to any evidence that comes from virtual monitoring technology, as long as certain conditions are met. Under the bill, "virtual monitoring technology" is remote monitoring of a person receiving direct care services in a home or community-based setting by a third-party using technology owned and operated by the person in the person's living quarters.

The employees covered by the bill's provisions are those of (1) nonprofit organizations that contract with the departments of Social Services (DSS) or Developmental Services (DDS) to deliver direct care services or (2) a contractor providing those services. "Direct care services" are services provided in a home or community-based setting to someone enrolled in a program administered by DSS or DDS.

Under the bill, employees or their union representatives who have access to evidence from virtual monitoring technology must (1) treat any recordings or images obtained from it as confidential and not share them with anyone else unless required by law and (2) return any copy of recordings or images used in the disciplinary action to DSS, DDS, or the person who provided the copy once it is no longer needed to defend the employee in the action.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 25 — PCA FISCAL INTERMEDIARY REPORTS

Requires DSS to quarterly post information related to the fiscal intermediary that provides payroll and other services for DSS's self-directed home care programs, including information on PCA timesheets and certain contract violations

The bill requires DSS to post on its website quarterly reports related to the fiscal intermediary that contracts with the department to provide

payroll, taxes, and administrative services for self-directed home care programs. These are Medicaid-funded programs that allow a consumer to hire a personal care attendant (PCA). Under the bill, DSS must also submit these reports to the Human Services and Labor and Public Employees committees.

The quarterly reports must include certain information to the extent it is not exempt from disclosure under the state's Freedom of Information Act, which exempts, among other things, personnel files and similar files if disclosure would be an invasion of personal privacy (CGS § 1-210). The bill requires reports to include:

1. the fiscal intermediary's most recent completed audited financial statements;

2. all budget, customer service telephone call center, and service level agreement reports;

3. the number of general customer service requests and average response time;

4. the number of telephone calls, voice mail messages, and email and text messages received from consumers and PCAs, how the fiscal intermediary responded to these messages, and how many were responded to in a contractually required period;

5. the number and amount of penalties levied, on a monthly and weekly basis, against the fiscal intermediary for contract violations for customer service request response times and PCA and consumer inquiry response times; and

6. all PCA timesheet reports.

Under the bill, PCA timesheet reports include:

1. the number of weekly consumer approved timesheets submitted, and how many were submitted on time, resubmitted after correction, or paid on time;

2. the timesheet or payroll processing error rate; and

3. the number and amount of penalties levied, on a monthly and weekly basis, against the fiscal intermediary for violating contract provisions on timesheets.

Under the bill, this requirement begins with information from the quarter that began April 1, 2024. (The bill does not otherwise set a date by when DSS must begin posting the reports.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

Background — Related Bills

sSB 498, favorably reported by the Human Services Committee, includes substantially similar provisions (§ 1).

sHB 5353, favorably reported by the Government Oversight Committee, includes substantially similar provisions.

§§ 26-32 — CRANES AND HOISTING EQUIPMENT

Expands the size of the Examining Board for Crane Operators, eliminates licensure and registration exemptions for people engaged in arboriculture, and changes the investigative and enforcement authority of the board and DAS

The bill makes several changes to the state's laws on cranes and hoisting equipment, including how they are regulated by DAS and the Examining Board for Crane Operators. Generally, it:

1. expands the size of the board by two members, from five to seven;

2. eliminates licensure and registration exemptions for people engaged in arboriculture (cultivating trees and shrubs); and

3. changes the department's and board's investigative and enforcement authority, such as by allowing stop work orders to be issued, increasing the maximum civil penalty for violations, and expanding who the penalty can be applied against to include equipment owners' lessees and contractors.

The bill also makes conforming and technical changes, including

specifying that notices and hearings must be done according to the UAPA.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Examining Board for Crane Operators Membership Expansion (§ 27)

Under current law, the Examining Board for Crane Operators in DAS has five members, of which one must be a DAS employee, one must be a crane operator with at least 10 years of experience, one must represent crane owners' interests, and two must be public members. The bill expands the board's size by two members by adding a second crane operator who has the requisite experience and a second crane owners' representative. By law and under the bill, all board members are appointed by the governor and must be Connecticut residents.

Licensure and Registration Requirements for Arboriculturists (§§ 28 & 29)

Current law exempts several classes of people from the state's crane and hoisting equipment licensure and registration requirements. The bill eliminates these exemptions for people engaged in arboriculture. Consequently, they will need to obtain the respective licenses or certificates of registration issued by the Examining Board for Crane Operators in order to (1) operate or permit the operation of a crane they own or (2) engage in, practice, or offer to perform the work of a hoisting equipment operator, hoisting equipment operator apprentice, crane operator, or crane operator apprentice (CGS §§ 29-223a(a) & 29-224(a)).

Changes to Investigating and Enforcing the State's Crane and Hoisting Equipment Laws (§§ 26 & 30-32)

The bill makes several changes to the investigative and enforcement authority of DAS and the Examining Board for Crane Operators, including to explicitly encompass lessees. Under the bill, a "lessee" is any individual or other legal entity that rents or leases a crane or hoisting equipment (§ 26).

Right of Entry for Investigation and Inspection (§ 30). Current law allows the DAS commissioner and its employees, while performing

their duties and at all reasonable hours, to enter any premises where a crane or hoisting equipment is located to enforce the laws applicable to them. The bill limits this right of entry to premises where they have reason to believe a crane or hoisting equipment is located. It also specifies that they may require:

1. crane and hoisting equipment operators to produce their licenses for verification;

2. crane owners to produce their crane's certificate of registration for verification; and

3. crane and hoisting equipment operators, owners, and lessees to produce any document establishing an agreement they have with an individual or other legal entity to perform crane or hoisting work on the premises.

(Existing law already requires (1) crane and hoisting equipment operators to carry their licenses when operating their respective equipment and (2) cranes' certificates of registration to be affixed to them in their principal operating location (CGS §§ 29-223a(a) & 29-224(a); Conn. Agencies Regs., § 29-223-5a(d)).)

Stop Work Orders (§§ 31 & 32). The bill allows the DAS commissioner and its employees to issue a stop work order against a crane or hoisting equipment owner, operator, or lessee, or their contractors performing crane or hoisting work, if either determines the owner, operator, lessee, or contractor has committed one or more of the following violations: (1) demonstrating incompetence or negligence; (2) permitting the operation of the owner's, operator's, or lessee's crane in an unsafe manner; or (3) failing to comply with the state's crane and hoisting equipment licensure and registration requirements.

Under the bill, a stop work order:

1. must require that the owner's, operator's, or lessee's crane, hoisting equipment, or related lifting operations stop at the place or premises where the violation was determined to have

occurred;

2. must not require unrelated construction activities at the place or premises to stop unless they present an immediate danger to an individual or property;

3. is effective when served upon the owner, operator, or lessee and contractor by posting notice of the stop work order in a conspicuous location at the place or premises; and

4. remains in effect until the commissioner determines that the owner, operator, lessee, or contractor has resolved the violation and issues an order releasing the stop work order.

The bill allows anyone served with a stop work order to request an administrative hearing to contest it. The request must be made in writing to the commissioner within 10 days after being served, and the hearing must be conducted according to the UAPA.

Additionally, the bill requires the commissioner to (1) adopt regulations to carry out the bill's stop work order provisions and (2) notify the Examining Board for Crane Operators of each stop work order issued and any violation of an issued order. If the board, after notice and hearing, finds that a crane or hoisting equipment owner or operator, lessee, or contractor violated a stop work order, the bill requires it to impose a fine of $5,000 per day for each day the order was violated.

Suspensions, Revocations, and Penalties (§ 32). The bill modifies one of the circumstances when the Examining Board for Crane Operators may suspend or revoke a crane or hoisting equipment operator's license or an apprentice's certificate. Current law allows the board to do so after notice and hearing and a finding that the holder has been guilty of negligence in performing his or her work. The bill instead only requires a finding that the holder has demonstrated negligence in his or her work performance.

Additionally, the bill increases the existing maximum civil penalty against crane and hoisting equipment owners and operators for

violating the state's crane and hoisting equipment laws from a fine of up to $3,000 per violation to a fine of up to $5,000 per violation per day. It also expands who this penalty may be applied against to include lessees and contractors. The bill specifies that penalties may only be imposed after notice and hearing and a finding that the owner, operator, or lessee violated the crane and hoisting equipment laws.

The bill also allows the board to impose a civil penalty of up to $1,000 per violation per day on any crane or hoisting equipment owner, operator, or lessee after notice and hearing and upon a finding that the owner, operator, or lessee has operated, or allowed the operation of, his or her crane or hoisting equipment without a valid license or certificate of registration.

At any time after issuing a notice alleging a violation, the bill allows the board to accept an agreement instead of holding a hearing. It makes agreement negotiations confidential and exempt from disclosure under the state's Freedom of Information Act but makes the agreement itself a public record under the act.

Lastly, the bill allows the DAS commissioner to apply to Hartford Superior Court for the enforcement of any civil penalty imposed against any person who is not licensed as a crane or hoisting equipment operator or who has not obtained a registration of any crane for an order (1) directing payment in full of any unpaid balance of the civil penalty or (2) temporarily and permanently restraining and enjoining the person from performing or allowing the performance of the work of a crane or hoisting equipment operator. The application for an order, and for any other appropriate decree or process, must be brought, and the proceedings conducted, by the attorney general.

Background — Related Bill

sHB 5405, favorably reported by the Public Safety and Security Committee, has identical provisions.

§ 33 — SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION GRANT BONUS FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION SPACES OR VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURAL CENTERS

Creates a 10-percentage point reimbursement rate bonus in a school construction grant if a new or expanded building project includes a technical education space or vocational agricultural center

The bill creates a 10-percentage point reimbursement rate bonus in a school construction grant if a new or expanded building project includes a technical education space or vocational agricultural center. However, (1) a recipient's overall reimbursement rate cannot exceed 100%, (2) the bonus is for the part of the building primarily used for the technical education space or vocational agricultural center, and (3) the recipient must maintain the space or center for at least 10 years.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 34 — RESC AND CTECS SURVEY OF WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAMS

Requires each RESC and the CTECS executive director to survey their high school work-based learning programs to identify the need for new or enhanced programs

The bill requires, by July 1, 2027, each regional educational service center (RESC) and the Technical Education and Career System's (CTECS) executive director, in consultation with the state Department of Education (SDE), to survey the high school work-based learning programs offered in each RESC's region and by CTECS to identify the need for new or enhanced programs. The survey must at least include (1) an inventory of work-based learning programs offered by local or regional boards of education and CTECS, (2) the number of students enrolled in these programs, and (3) the total cost to each school district and CTECS for each program. Under the bill, each RESC must develop and maintain its own survey procedure, and may conduct subsequent surveys as needed.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 35 — PRIVATE SECTOR EDUCATOR EXTERNSHIPS

Requires the creation of a pilot program for educator externships with private sector employers to align classroom instruction with current industry standards and workforce needs

The bill requires the education commissioner, by January 1, 2027, and in consultation with the Office of Workforce Strategy, to establish a two-year pilot program for educator externships for certified educators. The program must allow the educators to participate in experiential learning with private sector employers so they can align classroom instruction with current industry standards and workforce needs.

In developing the program, the commissioner must:

1. set criteria for (a) identifying and screening participating employers and (b) matching educators with externships based on subject matter relevance,

2. develop a curriculum that ensures that the learned skills are incorporated into the educator's future lesson plans, and

3. set eligibility for (a) stipends for educators completing an externship and (b) grants for participating employers.

The bill allows the commissioner to contract with nongovernmental entities, including nonprofit organizations, to implement the program.

For the 2027-28 and 2028-29 school years, the bill requires the commissioner to prioritize program placement for educators who (1) are employed in a town designated as an alliance district or (2) teach a topic related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics, manufacturing, or health care.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Background — Alliance Districts

By law, the education commissioner has designated 36 alliance districts for five years, beginning with FY 23. The current designation applies to (1) the 33 school districts with the lowest accountability index scores and (2) three previously designated districts that were no longer

among the 33 with the lowest scores. The index is based on several student-centered measures, including statewide assessment results and high school graduation rates, among others.

§ 36 — REGIONAL WORKFORCE NAVIGATOR

Requires each of the state's regional workforce development boards to include a regional workforce navigator to help connect people in adult education programs with workforce opportunities

The bill requires each of the state's regional workforce development boards to include a regional workforce navigator appointed by the chief elected officials of the municipalities in each board's region (as the law also requires for the other board members). Under the bill, the navigator must coordinate with the boards, the Governor's Workforce Council, and the Department of Labor (DOL) to connect people in adult education programs with workforce opportunities such as internships, apprenticeships, job shadowing opportunities, and credentials offered in the state.

Under the bill, a "credential" is generally a documented award issued by an authorized body, such as a (1) diploma from a higher education institution or private career school; (2) certification awarded through an examination process designed to show the acquisition of certain knowledge, skill, and ability to do a specific job; (3) government-issued license that allows someone to practice a specific occupation; or (4) documented completion of an apprenticeship or job training program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 37 — DOL TRAINING ON ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Requires the (1) labor commissioner to develop a training on adult education programs in the state and (2) regional workforce navigators to have this training annually

The bill requires the DOL commissioner, in consultation with educational institutions, the regional workforce development boards, and the Governor's Workforce Council, to develop training on adult education programs in the state, including funding streams for the programs and performance measures to ensure informed collaboration. Under the bill, the training must be given annually to the regional workforce navigators (see § 36).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 38 — SDE STUDY OF CO-INSTRUCTION TEACHING MODELS

Requires SDE to study the effectiveness and benefits of co-instruction teaching models that allow non-certified people to teach alongside a certified teacher

The bill requires SDE to study the effectiveness and benefits of co-instruction teaching models used by public schools, including models that allow people who do not have a professional teaching certification to teach alongside a certified teacher. The department must submit the study's results to the Education Committee by January 1, 2027.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 39 & 40 — REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION FOR CONDITIONS RELATED TO MENOPAUSE

Requires an employer to provide a reasonable accommodation for an employee with a menopause-related condition unless it would be an undue hardship for the employer to do so; requires CHRO to develop a related model workplace policy and education materials

The bill generally requires an employer to provide a reasonable accommodation for an employee with a menopause-related condition by making it a discriminatory practice not to unless it would be an undue hardship. By doing this, it allows an aggrieved person to file a complaint with the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) (CGS § 46a-82). The law already requires reasonable accommodations related to pregnancy.

By law, an "employer" includes the state, the state's political subdivisions, and any person or employer with one or more employees (CGS § 46a-51).

The bill also requires (1) employers to notify employees of their rights under the bill and (2) CHRO to work with organizations advocating for people with menopause or related medical conditions to develop a model workplace policy on reasonable accommodations for menopause or related conditions and related education materials. CHRO must post the model policy and education materials on the commission's website.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Discriminatory Practice

Under the bill, it is a discriminatory practice for an employer to:

1. fail or refuse to make a reasonable accommodation for a current or prospective employee for a condition related to menopause, unless the employer can demonstrate that it would be an undue hardship (see *Background — Undue Hardship*);

2. deny employment opportunities to a current or prospective employee if the denial is related to their request for a reasonable accommodation for a condition related to menopause; and

3. force a current or prospective employee with a condition related to menopause to accept a reasonable accommodation if they (a) do not have a known limitation related to their condition or (b) do not need a reasonable accommodation to complete duties essential to their job.

Employee Notification

The bill requires employers to give employees written notice of their right to be free from discrimination for menopause and related conditions, including the right to reasonable accommodations for known limitations from these conditions. Existing law requires employers to give similar notice to employees about pregnancy, childbirth, and related conditions.

Under the bill, notice must be given to (1) new employees when they start work; (2) existing employees (presumably, within 120 days of the bill's effective date); and (3) any employee who notifies their employer of their menopause-related condition (within 10 days of their notification).

Background — Reasonable Accommodation

By law, "reasonable accommodations" include:

1. being allowed to sit while working,

2. more frequent or longer breaks,

3. periodic rest,

4. help with manual labor,

5. job restructuring,

6. light duty assignments,

7. modified work schedules,

8. temporary transfers to less strenuous or less hazardous work,

9. time off to recover from childbirth, or

10. break time and appropriate facilities for expressing breast milk.

Background — Undue Hardship

Under existing law, an "undue hardship" is an action requiring significant difficulty or expense when considering the accommodation's nature and cost, the employer's overall financial resources, the employer's size and facilities, and the effect on the employer's operations.

Background — Related Bill

SB 353, favorably reported by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, has identical provisions on reasonable accommodations in the workplace for employees with conditions related to menopause.

§ 41 — BREASTFEEDING AND EXPRESSING MILK IN THE WORKPLACE

Requires employers to provide a reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for the employee's nursing child or to breastfeed in the workplace as needed

This bill requires employers to provide a reasonable break time for an employee to express breastmilk for the employee's nursing child or to breastfeed at the workplace each time the employee needs to do so. Current law allows an employee to express breastmilk or breastfeed during her meal or break period.

Existing law, unchanged by the bill, requires an employer to make

reasonable efforts to provide a room or location near the work area, except a toilet stall, that (1) is private, (2) has or is near a refrigerator or other employee-provided portable cold storage device, and (3) has access to an electrical outlet. This generally aligns with federal law that requires a reasonable break time and a private space other than a bathroom to express breast milk for up to one year after a child's birth (29 U.S.C. § 218d).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Background — Related Bill

SB 345, favorably reported by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, has an identical provision on breastfeeding and expressing milk in the workplace.

§ 42 — INCLEMENT WEATHER BUSINESS CLOSURES

Requires employers with at least 50 employees to make their best efforts to allow their employees to work remotely, if applicable, when their business is closed due to inclement weather; prohibits employers from requiring employees to use their accrued paid time off when working remotely in these instances

The bill requires employers with at least 50 employees in the state to make their best efforts to allow their employees to work remotely, if applicable, when their place of business is closed due to inclement weather. It also prohibits these employers from requiring employees who can work remotely to use their sick leave, vacation time, personal leave, or other accrued leave when they are working remotely. (It is unclear whether these provisions apply to public sector employers, such as the state and municipalities, and how they would be enforced.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 43 — HOSPITAL STAFFING COMMITTEES AND NURSE STAFFING PLANS

Requires hospital staffing committees to include at least two assistive personnel; expands the required content in biannual nurse staffing plan reports; requires hospitals to annually report nurse staffing plans to DPH and the department to post them online; requires DPH to issue orders for violations of mandatory limits on nurse overtime and for failing to implement nurse staffing plans approved by a majority of committee members; increases civil penalties for noncompliance with nurse staffing requirements

Hospital Staffing Committees

By law, hospitals must establish a hospital staffing committee to help prepare their annual nurse staffing plans. Committees must include a broad representation across hospital services and at least 50% of their membership must be direct care registered nurses (RNs) who work at the hospital.

The bill requires these committees' membership to also include at least two assistive personnel (non-licensed personnel who do specific delegated patient care activities).

Under the bill, when assistive personnel are members of a collective bargaining unit, a representative of that unit must select the assistive personnel who will participate on the committee, unless this would be barred by the National Labor Relations Act or the State Employee Relations Act.

If the assistive personnel are not members of a collective bargaining unit, the bill requires them to be selected through a process set by the hospital's direct care RNs.

The bill also deletes an obsolete provision that required hospital staffing committees in existence prior to 2023 to get feedback from direct care RNs on the committee member selection process.

Hospital Nurse Staffing Plans

Existing law requires each hospital to report biannually (by each January 15 and July 15) to DPH whether it has complied in the past six months with at least 80% of its nurse staffing assignments in its nurse staffing plan. The bill requires the report to also include the date of each instance the hospital varied from the plan's staffing assignments and the

unit where the variation occurred.

Additionally, the bill requires hospitals to annually report to DPH, starting by October 1, 2026, their nurse staffing plans, which the department must then post on the DPH website. Existing law already requires hospitals to annually report to DPH by each January 1 and July 1 on their prospective nurse staffing plans and certify that they are sufficient to provide adequate and appropriate patient care.

Noncompliance With Nurse Staffing Requirements

The bill requires the DPH commissioner to issue an order if a hospital fails to (1) comply with existing law's mandatory limits on nurse overtime in hospitals or (2) implement a nurse staffing plan approved by a majority of the hospital staffing committee's members.

Existing law already requires the commissioner to issue an order if a hospital fails to (1) establish or maintain a hospital staffing committee, (2) submit a biannual compliance report to DPH, (3) post the staffing plan, or (4) comply with at least 80% of the nurse staffing assignments in its nurse staffing plan.

As under current law, the DPH order must (1) require the hospital to submit and implement a corrective action plan unless DPH disapproves the plan within 20 business days after the hospital submits it and (2) impose civil penalties. The bill increases, from $3,500 to $5,500, the civil penalty for the first violation and, from $5,000 to $7,500, the penalty for subsequent violations.

Under the bill, the following actions are considered separate violations:

1. each day a hospital fails to establish or maintain a hospital staffing committee;

2. each day a hospital fails to submit to DPH its annual nurse staffing report and biannual nurse staffing compliance reports;

3. each day a hospital fails to post the nurse staffing plan;

4. each day a hospital fails to comply with at least 80% of the nurse staffing assignments in its nurse staffing plan; and

5. each violation of existing law's mandatory limits on nurse overtime in hospitals.

The bill also requires the commissioner to post any orders she issues on the DPH website.

As under current law, a hospital has five business days after receiving the order to request a hearing to contest it.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 44 — CERTIFIED NURSING ASSISTANT TRAINING PROGRAM GRANT

Requires DPH, within available appropriations, to administer a grant program for CNA training programs

The bill requires the Department of Public Health (DPH), starting in FY 27 and within available appropriations, to annually administer a statewide certified nursing assistant (CNA) training program to give grants to organizations that educate and train prospective CNAs in the state. Under the bill, an organization may submit grant applications in a form and way set by the DPH commissioner.

The bill requires DPH, starting by December 31, 2028, to prepare a report every two years on the program's implementation and at least include an evaluation of the program's success. (The bill does not specify what DPH must do with the report after preparing it.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 45 & 46 — DOL INFORMATIONAL WEBPAGE

Requires the DOL commissioner, by January 1, 2027, to improve and update the veteran employment information DOL provides on its website; requires the DVA commissioner, starting January 1, 2027, to send a biweekly email newsletter with relevant resources and materials included on the DOL informational webpage to interested recipients and post a link to the webpage

The bill requires the DOL commissioner, by January 1, 2027, to improve and update the veteran employment information DOL posts

on the Internet. First, the bill requires her to annually update the department's informational webpage serving as a central repository of information, resources, and materials with any findings from the study on technology use for military employment the bill requires (see below). The webpage must include links to external sources on:

1. job training,

2. career counseling,

3. workforce development organizations,

4. employers who are veteran- and military-friendly or who set and commit to meeting veteran hiring targets and current and former armed forces members, and

5. other relevant topics for those transitioning from the military to a professional civilian occupation.

Additionally, she must (1) post in a conspicuous location on the informational webpage details of relevant Military Department employment assistance programming (see § 46) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) job fair (see § 48) and (2) try to optimize the webpage's visibility in Internet search engine results.

The bill also requires the DOL commissioner, starting January 1, 2027, to annually solicit known and reputable providers of information, resources, and materials described above. She must do this in consultation with the DVA commissioner and adjutant general.

DVA Newsletter and Website

The bill requires the DVA commissioner, starting January 1, 2027, to (1) send a biweekly email newsletter with relevant resources and materials included on the DOL informational webpage to interested recipients and (2) post a link to the webpage in a conspicuous location on the DVA's website.

Under the bill, the DOL commissioner must (1) have a form on the informational webpage that an interested person can submit to request

the biweekly email newsletter and (2) send the DVA commissioner the email addresses of those who submitted the form during the preceding month.

Training Site Signage

Beginning January 1, 2027, the bill requires the adjutant general to post, in conspicuous locations throughout each inactive duty training weekend site, signs with a quick response (QR) code that current reserve members or the National Guard can use to access the informational webpage.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 45 — DOL STUDY ON TECHNOLOGY USE FOR MILITARY EMPLOYMENT

Requires the DOL commissioner to study models from other regional states that use technology, including AI, to connect current and former armed forces members with prospective employers based on the members' military occupational specialties and educational and professional backgrounds

By January 1, 2028, the bill requires the DOL commissioner to study models from other regional states that use technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), to connect current and former armed forces members with prospective employers based on the members' military occupational specialties and educational and professional backgrounds. The commissioner must use the study's findings to update the informational webpage.

Under the bill, the commissioner must submit a report on her findings and recommendations to the Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee by February 1, 2028.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 46 — MILITARY DEPARTMENT EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Requires the adjutant general, within existing resources, to promote and periodically improve the Military Department's employment assistance program

The bill requires the adjutant general, in consultation with the DOL commissioner and within existing resources, to promote and

periodically improve the Military Department's employment assistance program. The adjutant general and the DOL commissioner must tailor the promotion and improvements to better supplement the federal transition assistance program administered by the U.S. Department of Defense.

Currently, the program offers advice and information to current and former armed forces members, including any reserve component and the National Guard, who are considering available educational and occupational opportunities.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§§ 47 & 48 — "STAND DOWN" EVENT

Requires the DVA commissioner to annually hold a one-day "Stand Down" event throughout the state that offers services, supplies, or assistance to any veteran

The bill requires the DVA commissioner to annually hold a one-day "Stand Down" event throughout the state that offers services, supplies, or assistance to any veteran. (In practice, DVA is already conducting these events.)

Beginning January 1, 2028, the commissioner must include, as part of these events, a job fair to promote employment of current and former armed forces members, including reserve and National Guard members.

The DVA commissioner may coordinate with the DOL commissioner to invite representatives of Connecticut employers to attend the fair and present information about prospective employment opportunities. The DVA commissioner must also publicize the job fair on the department's website and in the biweekly newsletter required above.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 49 — LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS ON MILITARY EMPLOYMENT

Requires the DECD commissioner to develop legislative recommendations for promoting in-state employment of current and former armed forces members

By August 1, 2026, the bill requires the Department of Economic and

Community Development (DECD) commissioner, in consultation with the DOL and DVA commissioners and any other official, organization, or entity he deems appropriate, to develop legislative recommendations to promote in-state employment of current and former armed forces members, including reserve and National Guard members. In doing so, the DECD commissioner may examine the effectiveness of various incentives, including tax credits, wage subsidies, and training.

The DECD commissioner must report these recommendations to the Commerce, Labor and Public Employees, and Veterans' and Military Affairs committees by January 15, 2027.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 50 — PAYCHECK TRANSPARENCY

Requires certain employers to create a guide for employees on pay codes for overtime and pay differentials

The bill requires employers with at least 50 employees (including the state and municipalities) to create a guide for their employees on the pay codes the employer uses for overtime and pay differentials. The bill requires employers to post the guide on their website in English, Spanish, and the most common other languages spoken by their employees. The guide must (1) explain the codes used for overtime and any pay differentials (for example, shift differentials, on-call pay, hazard pay, call-back pay, holiday or weekend pay, or geographic pay differentials) and (2) include contact information for the designated office or person who will handle employee disputes about calculations of hours and pay differentials.

Under the bill, employers must update the guide each time a new pay code is added for overtime or a pay differential. They must also (1) include a link to the guide on each record of hours given to an employee and (2) give new employees a link to the guide upon hire.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Background — Related Bill

sHB 5386 (File 199), favorably reported by the Labor and Public

Employees Committee, has a similar provision requiring creation and posting of pay code guides.

§ 51 — DISCLOSURE OF WAGE RANGES AND BENEFITS IN PUBLIC AND INTERNAL JOB ADVERTISEMENTS.

Requires an employer to include a position's wage or wage range, and a general description of the position's benefits, in public and internal job advertisements

This bill expands the wage disclosure law to require an employer to include a position's wage or wage range, and a general description of the position's benefits, in its public and internal job advertisements. The bill specifies that it does not require an advertisement if the employer uses an alternative hiring or recruiting method.

The bill defines benefits as (1) health insurance; (2) retirement; (3) fringe; (4) paid leave; and (5) any other compensation, other than wages, offered with a position. Under the bill, an employer is required to set a wage range for a position in good faith, instead of setting the range the employer anticipates relying on. In setting the range, current law allows the employer to refer to a number of items. The bill alters one of the items by allowing an employer to refer to an actual wage range for employees in equivalent positions, rather than "comparable" positions as under current law.

The bill also:

1. requires employers to give job applicants and employees this benefit information when they are currently required to give them wage information (with one change on the timing of providing information, see below);

2. prohibits employers from retaliating or discriminating against a job applicant or employee for exercising their rights under the wage disclosure law, including by refusing to hire or interview an applicant or refusing to promote or terminating an employee (the law already prohibits adverse job actions against an employee who inquires about the wages of other employees or discloses or discusses their own or other employees' wages);

3. requires a court to award statutory damages between $500 and $5,000, if they are greater than the compensatory damages the court would otherwise award, for violations of the wage disclosure law;

4. eliminates a provision in the current wage disclosure law stating that the law cannot be construed to require an employer or employee to disclose the wages paid to an employee;

5. specifies that the wage disclosure law applies to positions with duties in the state or when the duties are performed out-of-state but the employee reports to a supervisor, office, or work site in the state; and

6. makes conforming changes.

The state's current wage disclosure law generally (1) requires employers, including the state and municipalities, to give job applicants and employees the wage range for their positions upon request and (2) prohibits employers from taking certain steps to limit their employees' ability to share information about their wages.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Disclosure to Applicants and Employees

Currently, an employer must provide wage information (a) when an applicant requests it or (b) before making an offer to an applicant, whichever comes first. The bill requires disclosure of benefits as well, and changes when an applicant must receive information to the earlier of (a) when the applicant requests it or (b) before there is a discussion or an offer of compensation, if the information has not already been disclosed in the position's public or internal job ad.

Similarly, current law requires employers to provide wage information (1) upon hiring an employee, (2) when an employee changes positions, and (3) when an employee first requests it. The bill requires employers to also give a description of benefits when providing wage information under this provision.

Background — Related Bill

HB 5387, favorably reported by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, has a similar provision on wage range and benefits disclosure on public and internal job advertisements.

§§ 52 & 53 — GRANT PROGRAM FOR JUNIOR FIREFIGHTER PROGRAMS

Creates a grant program for junior firefighter programs run by volunteer fire departments and appropriates $50,000 for the program in FY 27

The bill requires the state fire administrator to create and administer a program to give grants-in-aid to junior firefighter programs run by volunteer fire departments. It requires the administrator to conspicuously post a description of the program, including its eligibility criteria and application process, on DESPP's Division of Fire Services website. Under the bill, a junior firefighter program must apply for the grants in a form and way set by the state fire administrator.

For FY 27, the bill appropriates $50,000 from the General Fund to the Division of Fire Services for the grant program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except that the appropriation takes effect July 1, 2026.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Labor and Public Employees Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 9 Nay 4 (03/17/2026)