OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5003 (as amended by House "A")*

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

§ 8 — TEACHER TERMINATIONS

Sets a standard of review for when a tenured 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 tenured teacher termination decisions

§ 9 — RETENTION OF SERVICE CONTRACT WORKERS

Requires entities that take over certain service contracts at covered locations, contract out services, or receive property in a sale or transfer to retain the terminated contractor's employees for at least 90 days

§ 10 — FALLEN HERO FUND

Allows surviving family members of correction officers and investigators killed in the line of duty to receive benefits from the Fallen Hero Fund

§ 11 — PARTNERSHIP PLAN COVERAGE FOR SURVIVORS OF VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Requires non-state public employers to provide partnership plan coverage to survivors of certain unpaid volunteer firefighters

§ 12 — STATE EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN COVERAGE FOR SURVIVORS OF VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS, STATE MARSHALS, CORRECTION OFFICERS, AND INVESTIGATORS

Generally allows the surviving spouse and dependent children of a state marshal, correction officer, investigator, or unpaid volunteer firefighter who died performing their duties to participate in the state employee health insurance plan

§ 13 — PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER PAYROLL DEDUCTION OF UNION DUES

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

§ 14 — CRISIS INITIATIVE EXPANSION

Expands the CRISIS Initiative throughout Connecticut

§ 15 — 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

§ 16 — DIRECT CARE SERVICES EMPLOYEE ACCESS TO VIRTUAL MONITORING EVIDENCE

Generally allows employees in programs administered by DDS and DSS to access evidence from virtual monitoring if it will be used in a disciplinary action against them and they meet certain conditions

§ 17 — PCA FISCAL INTERMEDIARY REPORTS

Requires DSS to file quarterly reports on 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

§§ 18-24 — 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

§ 25 — RESC AND CTECS REPORT ON WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAMS

Requires each RESC and the CTECS executive director to annually report on their high school work-based learning programs

§ 26 — 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

§ 27 — 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

§ 28 — TRAINING ON ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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

§ 29 — SDE STUDY OF CO-INSTRUCTION TEACHING MODELS

Creates a working group to study the effectiveness and benefits of co-instruction teaching models used by public schools

§§ 30 & 31 — FEDERAL ADA INFORMATION

Requires DOL to post information about the federal ADA and how it relates to reasonable accommodations in the workplace; requires employers to give their employees written notice about this information

§ 32 — BREASTFEEDING AND EXPRESSING MILK IN THE WORKPLACE

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

§ 33 — HOSPITAL STAFFING COMMITTEES AND NURSE STAFFING PLANS

Requires the DPH commissioner to create a report on the number of times hospitals varied from the nurse staffing plans that the law requires them to develop

§ 34 — CERTIFIED NURSING ASSISTANT TRAINING PROGRAM GRANT

Requires DPH, within available appropriations, to administer a grant program for CNA training programs in the Hartford area and rural communities in the state

§ 35 — DOL INFORMATIONAL WEBPAGE & STUDY ON TECHNOLOGY USE FOR MILITARY EMPLOYMENT

Requires the DOL commissioner to improve and update the veteran employment information on DOL's website; requires the DVA commissioner to send a periodic email newsletter with relevant resources and materials on the DOL informational webpage; requires the DOL commissioner to study certain models that use technology to connect current and former armed forces members with prospective employers

§ 36 — MILITARY DEPARTMENT EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR THE NATIONAL GUARD & ANNUAL JOB FAIR

Requires the adjutant general to promote and periodically improve the Military Department's employment assistance program for current and former National Guard members; requires the Military Department to conduct an annual job fair and publicize it on the department's website and in emails

§ 37 — 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

§ 38 — PAYCHECK TRANSPARENCY

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

§ 39 — GRANT PROGRAM FOR JUNIOR FIREFIGHTER PROGRAMS

Creates a grant program for junior firefighter programs run by volunteer fire departments

§ 40 — MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYERS

Exempts minor league baseball players from state minimum wage and overtime laws

§§ 41-43 — UCONN SPECIAL POLICE FORCES AND FIRE DEPARTMENT

Requires UConn's president to establish a recruitment and retention program for the UConn special police forces and fire department and submit annual reports on it; expands the objective job-based criteria she must use to establish classifications for UConn's special police forces

§§ 44-47 — DOUBLE UTILITY POLES

Generally creates a process for public utility pole users and owners to transfer their wires and equipment from existing poles to replacement poles and then remove double utility poles

§ 48 — INFORMATION ON VETERANS' BENEFITS AND SERVICES

Requires the labor commissioner and the chief manufacturing officer to post information about veterans' benefits and services on the Department of Labor and the Office of Manufacturing websites

§ 49 — FIRE INSTRUCTORS

Requires the DAS commissioner to create a job classification for part-time fire service instructors in DESPP's Division of Fire Services Administration

§ 50 — HEALTH INSURANCE FOR RETIRED POLICE AND FIREFIGHTERS

Requires the state comptroller to study health insurance coverage for retired police officers and firefighters in the state

§ 51 — "REASONABLE ASSURANCE" OF RETURNING TO WORK FOR PARAEDUCATORS

Requires school districts, before the end of regular school sessions, to notify DOL about which of their paraeducators have reasonable assurance of returning to work when school sessions resume

§ 52 — SCHOOL PARAEDUCATOR ADVISORY COUNCIL

Adjusts paraeducator representation on the School Paraeducator Advisory Council

§ 53 — STATE POLICE ASSIGNED TO HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Requires members of the State Police to be paid at a rate established under an agreement between the DOT commissioner and the DESPP commissioner when they are assigned to a DOT highway construction project

§ 54 — PREVAILING WAGE

Requires employers on prevailing wage projects to keep daily attendance records of the workers on a covered project and submit them weekly to the agency overseeing the project; requires the labor commissioner, when determining the prevailing wages required on a public works project, to determine the portion that covers payments, contributions, and member benefits at the journeyman rate

§§ 55 & 56 — CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTOR LIABILITY FOR UNPAID WAGES

Makes certain construction contractors jointly and severally liable for any unpaid wages owed to a subcontractor's employees

§§ 57-61 — HIGH-QUALITY INTERNSHIPS

Requires the UConn Board of Trustees and BOR to jointly identify the qualities and best practices of a high-quality internship program and create a syllabus for employers' online training using them; sets various related reporting requirements

§ 62 — MUNICIPAL TAX ABATEMENT FOR SURVIVING DOMESTIC PARTNERS OF FIRST RESPONDERS

Expands an optional municipal property tax abatement for the spouses of first responders who died in the line of duty to also cover domestic partners

§ 63 — WORKING GROUP ON TAX INCENTIVES AND CREDITS FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Establishes a working group to review and make recommendations for tax incentives and credits for volunteer firefighters

§ 64 — LOBSTER SALES

Allows (1) food service establishments to sell consumers lobsters greater or less than LMA 6 minimum and maximum length requirements under certain conditions and (2) licensed seafood dealers to sell food service establishments these lobsters

§§ 65-72 — FIRST RESPONDER TUITION AND MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Requires CT State and CSCU to waive tuition for eligible police officers, firefighters, and EMS personnel (first responders); requires CHFA to develop and administer a mortgage assistance program for these first responders; requires POST, the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, and DPH to establish eligibility requirements for these programs

§§ 69-71 — FEE WAIVERS FOR NATIONAL GUARD MEMBERS

Expands the current tuition waiver for active National Guard members enrolled at CT State, CSCU, or UConn to include all mandatory fees

§ 73 — PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TASK FORCE

Establishes a task force to study recruitment and retention issues for public safety personnel

§ 74 — POLICE OFFICER AND FIREFIGHTER CAREER PIPELINE PROGRAM

Requires the chief workforce officer to develop a plan to establish a police officer and firefighter career pipeline program

§ 75 — REPEALER

Repeals a law that generally requires school boards to indemnify teachers, board members, or other school employees if they are assaulted while performing their duties and suffers a financial loss or expense

BACKGROUND

SUMMARY

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

EFFECTIVE DATE: Various; see below.

*House Amendment "A" makes numerous changes to the underlying bill. Broadly, it removes provisions on (1) healthcare worker parking violations, (2) payroll deductions of union dues for state and municipal employees, (3) school construction grants, (4) reasonable accommodations for conditions related to menopause, and (5) inclement weather business closures. It adds provisions on (1) the Fallen Hero Fund, (2) federal Americans with Disabilities Act information, (3) minor league baseball players, (4) the UConn special police forces and fire department, (5) double utility poles, (6) posting information about veterans' benefits and services, (7) fire instructors, (8) health insurance

coverage for retired police officers and firefighters, (9) "reasonable assurance" of returning to work for paraeducators, (10) the School Paraeducator Advisory Council, (11) State Police assigned to highway construction projects, (12) the prevailing wage, (13) construction contractor liability for unpaid wages, (14) high-quality internship programs, (15) municipal tax abatement for surviving domestic partners of first responders, (16) the working group on tax incentives and credits for volunteer firefighters, and (17) lobster sales.

§§ 1 & 75 — ENHANCED WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND TEACHERS ASSAULTED AT WORK

Allows certain teachers, health care providers, and related employees to receive enhanced workers' compensation benefits if they are unable to work due to being assaulted at work

The bill allows certain teachers, health care providers, and related employees to receive enhanced workers' compensation benefits if they are unable to work (totally or partially) as a result of a physical or negligent assault upon them while performing their duties within the scope of their employment. For teachers and other education employees, the bill substitutes this for an existing similar benefit (which the bill repeals) that is outside of workers' compensation.

More specifically, the bill requires these teachers, health care providers, and employees to receive a workers' compensation benefit that equals 100% of their average weekly earnings as of the date of the injury (calculated using the same process that applies to other workers' compensation claimants), with no cap on the benefit amount, plus their expenses reasonably incurred for medical or other services needed due to the assault, and any lost wages due to an absence for a court appearance connected to the assault.

Under existing law, an injured employee's workers' compensation benefit generally equals 75% of their after-tax average weekly earnings, subject to a cap set at the average weekly earnings of all workers in the state (CGS §§ 31-307(a) & 31-309). It covers related medical expenses, but not other out-of-pocket expenses or lost wages for court appearances.

Under the bill, a teacher, 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 addition, the absence cannot be charged against the provider's or employee's sick leave, vacation time, or personal leave.

Under current 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 that were not covered by insurance, workers' compensation, or another outside source. The bill correspondingly repeals this law (§ 75).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Covered Health Care Providers and Employees

Under the bill, the enhanced workers' compensation benefits are available to a health care provider or other employee of a health care facility or institution. A "health care provider" is someone directly or indirectly employed by, or volunteering for, a health care facility or institution, and 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, outpatient clinic, outpatient surgical facility, community health center, urgent care facility, medical office owned or operated exclusively by certain licensed medical doctors or homeopaths, dental office, or infirmary operated by an education institution for its students, faculty, and employees. However, it does not include any state-operated facility

or institution except for the UConn Health Center.

Covered Teachers and Educational Employees

The bill's enhanced workers' compensation benefits are also available to any (1) member of a board of education, the State Board of Education (SBE), the Board of Regents of Higher Education (BOR), or the UConn Board of Trustees, and (2) teacher or other employee employed by those boards.

The bill further specifies that a "teacher" or "other employee" also includes (1) any student completing a student teaching experience under the direction of a teacher employed by (a) a local or regional board of education, (b) SBE, or (c) BOR and (2) any member of the faculty or staff of, or any student employed by, the 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) what level of negligence triggers the bill's provisions (for example, criminal negligence as used in the state's third degree assault statute) or (2) if intent is necessary.

§ 2 — 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; removes a court's ability to award punitive damages against employers in wage disclosure violation cases

The 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 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 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 asks about the wages of other employees or discloses or discusses their own or other employees' wages);

3. 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 directly to a supervisor, office, or work site in the state; and

4. 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. Under current law, an employer who violates the wage disclosure law may be found liable in a lawsuit for compensatory damages, attorney's fees and costs, punitive damages, and other court-awarded legal and equitable relief. The bill removes a court's ability to impose punitive damages in these cases.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Disclosure to Applicants and Employees

Currently, an employer must provide wage information (1) when an applicant requests it or (2) 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 (1) when the applicant requests it or (2) 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 (File 249), 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.

§ 3 — PATIENT VIOLENCE REPORTING WORKING GROUP

Establishes a working group to study implementing a system (1) for certain health care providers to report incidents 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 establishes a working group to study the feasibility of and considerations needed to implement a system (1) for health care providers to report incidents 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 incidents. Under the bill, the guidance applies to health care providers with an electronic health record system capable of connecting to and participating in Connie.

Under the bill, the Public Health Committee's chairpersons must each appoint three members to the working group, and the committee's ranking members must each appoint two members. The Public Health Committee's chairpersons must appoint the working group's chairpersons from among its members. The working group must report its findings to the Public Health Committee by January 1, 2027.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Background — Related Bill

HB 5169 (File 38), favorably reported by the Public Health Committee, requires (1) the Department of Public Health (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 (File 315), 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 and Human Services committees 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 — 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 (File 354), reported favorably by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, is substantially similar to this provision.

§ 7 — 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 (File 352), reported favorably by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, is identical to this provision.

§ 8 — TEACHER TERMINATIONS

Sets a standard of review for when a tenured 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 tenured teacher termination decisions

The bill makes changes to the process for terminating public school teachers. It sets a standard of review for when a 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 tenured 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 tenured 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 for tenured teachers, and the arbitration standards used under the bill do not explicitly allow costs to be awarded to either party.

Background — Related Bill

sSB 351 (File 353), reported favorably by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, is substantially similar to this provision.

§ 9 — RETENTION OF SERVICE CONTRACT WORKERS

Requires entities that take over certain service contracts at covered locations, contract out services, or receive property in a sale or transfer to retain the terminated contractor's employees for at least 90 days

The bill requires entities that (1) take over certain service contracts at covered locations, (2) contract out certain services, or (3) receive property in a sale or transfer to retain employees from a prior contractor for at least 90 days if the employees worked during the previous 90 days. After 90 days, the successor employer must provide employees with performance evaluations. It requires that the successor employer extend an offer of continued employment either under terms and conditions the successor employer creates or by law if their performance is satisfactory during this period.

The bill requires advance notice to (1) a contractor whose contract will be terminated or not renewed, (2) employees, and (3) the union representing employees.

The bill permits employees who are displaced or terminated in violation of the bill to file a complaint with the labor commissioner or sue in Superior Court. The commissioner or court can award an employee back pay, benefits, reinstatement to the employee's former position at his or her most recent salary and benefit level, compensatory damages, attorney's fees, and costs. It permits the labor commissioner to request the attorney general to bring suit in Superior Court for damages and any injunctive or equitable relief on behalf of an aggrieved employee.

The bill's provisions are similar to those under existing law for Bradley International Airport food and beverage workers (CGS § 31-57g).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2027

Scope of the Bill

The bill gives these job protections to covered employees at covered locations. Under the bill, an employee is a person working at least 16 hours per week and performing certain services at a covered location for at least 60 days, 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; and

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

Under the bill, an employee 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 facilities;
4. public or nonpublic schools;
5. cultural centers or complexes, such as museums, convention centers, arenas, or performance halls;
6. shopping malls or bank branches;
7. industrial sites;
8. pharmaceutical labs;
9. airports;
10. train stations;
11. warehouses, distribution centers, or other facilities that store or distribute general merchandise, refrigerated goods, or other products; and
12. private higher education institutions.

Awarding Authority

Under the bill, an awarding authority is a person who (1) awards or enters into a contract at a covered location or (2) sells or transfers control of a property where employees were employed during the 90-day period before the sale or transfer. The bill specifies that the Connecticut Airport Authority and the state and federal government are not

awarding authorities.

Contractor and Terminated Contractor

The bill defines a "contractor" as (1) a person who enters into a service contract with the awarding authority and (2) any subcontractors to a service contract at any tier that employ two or more people.

Under the bill, a terminated contractor is a contractor whose service contract expires without renewal or is terminated and includes the awarding authority when (1) work previously completed by their employees is subject to a successor service contract, or (2) the awarding authority sells or transfers a property if employees were employed there within the 90 days prior to the sale or transfer.

Employer and Successor Employer

The bill applies to any person that employs at least two people, except for the state and federal government and the Connecticut Airport Authority.

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

Awarding Authority's Responsibilities

The bill requires an awarding authority to give advance notice to a contractor whose contract will be terminated or not renewed, the employees, and the union representing them within 15 days of the termination or nonrenewal of the service contract, the contracting out of services previously performed by the authority, or the sale or transfer of the property (if employees were employed there within the 90 days prior to the sale or transfer).

Under the bill, the authority must give the contractor, employees, and union the name, address, and telephone number of the successor

employer or employers, if known. The bill requires giving this notice to employees in writing and posting it in a conspicuous place.

Terminated Contractor's Responsibilities

Within three days of receiving the notice described above, the bill requires a terminated contractor to give a successor employer the name, hiring date, and job classification of each employee at the site covered by the service contract or contract to sell or transfer the property. On the date the contract terminates, contracted out services begin, or the property is sold or transferred, the terminated contractor must update this information for the successor employer.

If the notice described above does not identify the successor employer, the (1) terminated contractor must give the initial list of employees to the awarding authority within three days of receiving notice and (2) awarding authority must give the information to the successor employer when it is selected.

Successor Employer's Responsibilities

The bill requires a successor employer to hand deliver a written employment offer to the employees. It must be written in a language the employee understands. Under the bill, a written offer 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 prior to the termination of the service contract or 15 days before providing services following the sale or transfer of a covered location.

The bill specifies the notice's content. Among other things, the employer must inform the employee of the pay rate, hours (per shift and per week), and benefits it is offering. The notice must describe the employee's rights under the bill and the employer's name, address, and telephone number. It must state that the employee has 10 days to respond. Under the bill, the notice also must inform employees that they are allowed to sue the successor contractor or file a complaint with the labor commissioner.

Under the bill, an employee who was employed during the prior 90 days cannot be fired during a 90-day period without just cause. The bill requires contractors, during these 90 days, to keep a preferential hiring list of employees eligible for retention whom it did not initially retain. (It is not clear which employees would be affected by this provision.) The contractor must hire additional employees, if needed, from this list.

Under the bill, the contractor may determine at any time that it needs fewer employees than the terminated contractor had or at the purchased or acquired property 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 does not require a successor employer to retain employees whose attendance and performance records, while working for the terminated contractor, would lead a reasonably prudent employer to terminate the employee.

Under the bill, a successor employer who purchased or acquired property must only retain employees (who worked on the property in the 90 days before the sale or transfer) if the services to be performed at that site are substantially the same as the services previously provided by the terminated contractor's employees.

Remedies for a Displaced Employee

Under the bill, an employee or group of employees displaced or terminated in violation of the bill's provisions, or their collective bargaining representative, can file a complaint with the labor commissioner or file a lawsuit against the awarding authority, terminated contractor, or successor employer. It prohibits employees, groups of employees, or the union from filing a complaint with the commissioner if they have already sued in the Superior Court based on the same facts and circumstances (unless the suit has been withdrawn or dismissed without prejudice). The bill does not require employees, groups of employees, or the union to use all administrative remedies before they can sue.

If the commissioner or court decides that the awarding authority, terminated contractor, or successor employer violated the bill's provisions, employees can receive back pay, benefits, reinstatement to their former position at their most recent salary and benefit level, compensatory damages, reasonable attorney's fees, and costs.

The bill requires that back pay be based on the higher of calculations based on either the employee's (1) regular pay rate for the employee's last year on the job (a different calculation applies if employed for less than one year), or (2) final regular rate of pay on the last day. It requires that the court or the labor commissioner determine the rate of interest to be applied in the calculation of back pay.

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

The bill permits the labor commissioner to request that the attorney general bring suit in the Superior Court, on behalf of aggrieved employees, for damages and injunctive or equitable relief.

Under the bill, a successor employer who violates the bill's provisions on retention or discharge of workers must pay a penalty of between $500 and $1,000 per employee for each day the violation continues. A violation of the notice provisions by an awarding authority or terminated contractor is subject to a penalty of between $50 and $200 per employee for each day the violation continues.

Background — Related Bill

sSB 358 (File 356), favorably reported by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, contains similar provisions on the retention of service contract workers.

§ 10 — FALLEN HERO FUND

Allows surviving family members of correction officers and investigators killed in the line of duty to receive benefits from the Fallen Hero Fund

The bill allows the surviving family members of correction officers and investigators killed in the line of duty to receive benefits from the Fallen Hero Fund. Under the bill, a "correction officer" is anyone

employed by the Department of Correction, and an "investigator" is anyone employed as an investigator by the Judicial Department's Court Support Services Division, the Division of Criminal Justice, or the Office of the Chief Public Defender.

Under current law, the Fallen Hero Fund, within available appropriations, gives a lump sum death benefit totaling $100,000 to a surviving family member or beneficiary of a first responder killed in the line of duty or who sustained injuries that were the direct or proximate cause of the first responder's death. First responders are police officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and paramedics.

As under current law for first responders' surviving family members, when the comptroller receives notice from a correction officer's or investigator's surviving family member, he must pay the family a $100,000 lump sum death benefit from the fund, within available appropriations. Each surviving family is limited to one lump sum death benefit and payments must be made in the order in which he receives notices until the amount in the fund is depleted.

As under existing law, the benefit payment from the fund (1) is in addition to any other benefits the surviving family members qualify for (see *Background — State Employees Benefits*), (2) is exempt from the state income tax, and (3) must not be reduced or offset due to other benefits that may be awarded (such as workers' compensation).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Background — State Employees Benefits

By law, surviving family members of a state employee who dies acting within the scope of employment may be entitled to equal monthly payments for at least 10 years in the total amount of:

1. $100,000 for a surviving spouse with a dependent child under age 18, plus $50 per month for each child under 18 (until the spouse dies or remarries);

2. $50,000 for a surviving spouse without children under age 18

(until the spouse dies or remarries); and

3. $50,000 for a dependent parent or parents if there is no surviving spouse or child under age 18 (until both parents die) (CGS § 5-144).

Background — Related Bills

sSB 410 (File 308), favorably reported by the Public Safety and Security Committee, expands the Fallen Hero Fund to provide compensation for firefighter cancer deaths.

SB 443 (File 368), reported favorably by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, establishes the "Fallen Officer and Investigator Fund" for the same purpose and to provide the same benefit as this provision.

§ 11 — PARTNERSHIP PLAN COVERAGE FOR SURVIVORS OF VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Requires non-state public employers to provide partnership plan coverage to survivors of certain unpaid volunteer firefighters

The bill extends nonstate public employer "partnership plan" health care coverage to the survivors of certain unpaid volunteer firefighters (as defined in § 12 below).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Partnership Plan Coverage

By law, the comptroller must offer partnership plan coverage to non-state public employers and nonprofit employers.

As required under existing law for first responders, the bill requires a non-state public employer that provided partnership plan coverage 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 when the firefighter died. The coverage must continue for one year after the death and may be renewed annually for up to five years. The non-state public employer must facilitate the coverage continuation and renewal. Under the bill, "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 non-state 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 covered under the firefighter's health care plan when he or she died.

The bill also requires non-state public employers to apply for partnership plan coverage for these survivors whether or not the first responder or unpaid volunteer firefighter was an employee of the non-state public employer at the time of death. It requires the non-state public employer the responder or firefighter provided services to at the time of death to apply for coverage.

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 non-state public employer must facilitate enrollment and coverage initiation and renewal.

By law, non-state public employers cannot require survivors of first responders to pay for coverage under a partnership plan. Instead, the employer must cover the entire amount and be reimbursed from the Fallen Hero Fund for the total cost. The bill extends this requirement to survivors of unpaid volunteer firefighters.

Related Bill

sHB 5403 (File 266), reported favorably by the Public Safety Committee, includes an identical provision on partnership plan coverage (§ 1).

§ 12 — STATE EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN COVERAGE FOR SURVIVORS OF VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS, STATE MARSHALS, CORRECTION OFFICERS, AND INVESTIGATORS

Generally allows the surviving spouse and dependent children of a state marshal, correction officer, investigator, or unpaid volunteer firefighter who died performing their duties to participate in the state employee health insurance plan

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, correction officer, investigator, or unpaid volunteer firefighter to participate in the state employee health insurance plan.

For survivors of correction officers, investigators, or firefighters to qualify, the (1) deceased must have died as the result of injuries received while acting within the scope of his or her employment, and not as the result of illness or natural causes, and (2) surviving spouse and dependent children must not be otherwise eligible for a group health insurance plan.

For survivors of a state marshal to qualify, the state marshal must have died as the result of injuries received while performing a duty for which the state compensates the marshal, and not as the result of illness or natural causes.

For any of the qualifying covered dependents, the coverage ends by the end of the calendar year when the dependent (1) becomes covered under a group health insurance plan through their own employment, or (2) turns age 26, whichever occurs first.

Under the bill, an "unpaid volunteer firefighter" is a uniformed member of a fire department who performs firefighting duties for the department but is not paid for doing them. A "correction officer" and "investigator" are as described above (see § 10).

Under existing law, unchanged by the bill, surviving family members of state employees who died in the line of duty are eligible for the state employee health insurance plan while they are receiving certain benefits related to the death (CGS §§ 5-259(a)(4) & -144).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Background — Related Bills

SB 443 (File 368), favorably reported by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, includes a similar provision for correction officers and investigators.

sHB 5403 (File 266), favorably reported by the Public Safety and Security Committee, includes a substantially similar provision for state marshals.

§ 13 — PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER PAYROLL DEDUCTION OF UNION DUES

Conforms the state's collective bargaining law for public school teachers to federal case law by removing provisions that could require teachers 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 collective bargaining law for public school teachers 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 generally specifies that the teachers' 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

§ 14 — 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

Connection to Recovery through Intervention, Support and Initiating Services (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 (File 300), 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.

§ 15 — 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

§ 16 — DIRECT CARE SERVICES EMPLOYEE ACCESS TO VIRTUAL MONITORING EVIDENCE

Generally allows employees in programs administered by DDS and DSS to access evidence from virtual monitoring if it will be used in a disciplinary action against them and they meet certain conditions

Under the bill, when certain employees in programs administered by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and the Department of Social Services (DSS) are subject to a proposed disciplinary action, DDS and DSS may, to the extent allowed by law, give the employees or an employee organization (union) representing them access to any evidence used in the action that comes from virtual monitoring and any other related evidence, as long as they meet certain conditions. Under the bill, "virtual monitoring" is remote monitoring of a person receiving direct care services by a third party using technology owned and operated by the person in the person's living quarters.

The employees covered by these provisions are those of a (1) nonprofit organization that contracts with a state agency to deliver

direct care services or (2) contractor providing those services. "Direct care services" are services provided in an agency, facility, home, or community-based setting to someone enrolled in a program administered by DDS and DSS. An "employee organization" is any organization that exists for collective bargaining or dealing with employers over grievances, employment terms or conditions, or other mutual aid or protection.

Under the bill, to have access to evidence from virtual monitoring, the employees and their union representatives must (1) sign a confidentiality agreement issued or approved by the department; (2) treat any recordings or images obtained from it as confidential; and (3) not replicate, reproduce, or spread the recordings or images to anyone else, except as needed to represent and defend the employee in the disciplinary action or as required by law.

The bill requires DDS and DSS to ensure that any access granted to virtual monitoring evidence does not violate the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) or any other federal or state law. It also requires the DDS and DSS commissioners, by July 1, 2027, to implement policies and procedures to carry out these provisions while adopting them as regulations. They must publish a notice of intent to adopt the regulations on the DDS and DSS websites and the eRegulations System within 20 days after implementing the policies and procedures, which remain valid until final regulations take effect.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 17 — PCA FISCAL INTERMEDIARY REPORTS

Requires DSS to file quarterly reports on 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

Beginning with the quarter starting April 1, 2024, the bill requires DSS to file quarterly reports with the Human Services and Labor and Public Employees committees 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).

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 other similar files if disclosure would be an invasion of personal privacy. The bill requires reports to include:

1. the payroll processing error rate for PCAs and the number of days until payment after correction;

2. the average number of days it takes the fiscal intermediary to onboard a new employee so that the employee can use the payroll system;

3. the average response time for answering phone calls, including the volume of calls related to incidents described in these reports, or emails from PCAs or consumers about general customer service requests;

4. the number of electronic visit verification tickets received by the fiscal intermediary and the average time it takes to resolve one; and

5. the average number of hours the fiscal intermediary's mobile application was inoperable or offline.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

Background — Related Bills

sSB 498 (File 487), favorably reported by the Human Services Committee, includes similar provisions (§ 1).

sHB 5353 (File 387), favorably reported by the Government Oversight Committee, includes similar provisions.

§§ 18-24 — 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 the Department of Administrative Services (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

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

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) & -224(a)).

Changes to Investigating and Enforcing the State's Crane and Hoisting Equipment Laws

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.

Right of Entry for Investigation and Inspection. Current law allows the DAS commissioner and DAS 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) & -224(a); Conn. Agencies Regs., § 29-223-5a(d)).)

Stop Work Orders. The bill allows the DAS commissioner and DAS 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. 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 (File 368), favorably reported by the Public Safety and Security Committee, has identical provisions.

§ 25 — RESC AND CTECS REPORT ON WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAMS

Requires each RESC and the CTECS executive director to annually report on their high school work-based learning programs

Starting by July 1, 2027, the bill requires 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 annually give the Education and Labor and Public Employees committees a report on the high school work-based learning programs offered in each RESC's region and by CTECS. It must also be posted on SDE's website.

The report 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.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 26 — 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, 2028, 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 2028-29 and 2029-30 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.

§ 27 — 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, and public school students in grades 9 through 12, 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

§ 28 — TRAINING ON ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Requires the (1) chief workforce officer 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 chief workforce officer, by October 1, 2026, and 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. The training must be given to the regional workforce navigators (see § 27) by December 30, 2026.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 29 — SDE STUDY OF CO-INSTRUCTION TEACHING MODELS

Creates a working group to study the effectiveness and benefits of co-instruction teaching models used by public schools

The bill establishes a working group 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 collaboratively with a certified teacher. Under the bill, the Education Committee's chairpersons each appoint two members to the working group, and the committee's ranking members each appoint one member. The working group must submit the study's results to the Education Committee by January 1, 2027.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 30 & 31 — FEDERAL ADA INFORMATION

Requires DOL to post information about the federal ADA and how it relates to reasonable accommodations in the workplace; requires employers to give their employees written notice about this information

The bill requires the DOL commissioner to post information about the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on DOL's website. The information must (1) at least include the ADA's definition of a disability and how it relates to reasonable accommodations in the workplace and (2) be on DOL's website in both English and Spanish and in a form that allows an employer to download it for display at its place of business.

Relatedly, the bill requires employers to give written notice about an employee's right to reasonable accommodations in the workplace for a disability under the ADA to (1) new employees at the start of their employment; (2) existing employees by January 29, 2027; and (3) any employee who notifies the employer about his or her disability within 10 days after the notification. Under the bill, an employer can alternatively comply with the requirement by displaying the poster created by the DOL commissioner in a conspicuous place, accessible to employees, at the employer's place of business.

The bill also allows the DOL commissioner to adopt regulations to establish additional requirements on how employers must provide the notice.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 32 — BREASTFEEDING AND EXPRESSING MILK IN THE WORKPLACE

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

The bill requires employers to provide reasonable break times for an employee to express breastmilk for the employee's nursing child or to breastfeed at the workplace, in addition to the employee's scheduled breaks. 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 (File 351), favorably reported by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, has a similar provision on breastfeeding and expressing milk in the workplace.

§ 33 — HOSPITAL STAFFING COMMITTEES AND NURSE STAFFING PLANS

Requires the DPH commissioner to create a report on the number of times hospitals varied from the nurse staffing plans that the law requires them to develop

The bill requires the DPH commissioner, by January 1, 2027, and in consultation with an organization that represents hospitals in the state, to create a report on the number of variations from the nurse staffing

plans that the law requires hospitals to develop. The report must include the number of times (1) a hospital-wide variation from the nurse staffing plans occurred and (2) there was a unit level variation from the nurse staffing plans by a hospital. The commissioner must submit the report to the Public Health and Labor and Public Employees committees.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 34 — CERTIFIED NURSING ASSISTANT TRAINING PROGRAM GRANT

Requires DPH, within available appropriations, to administer a grant program for CNA training programs in the Hartford area and rural communities in the state

The bill requires DPH, starting in FY 27 and within available appropriations, to establish and administer a grant program to expand certified nursing assistant (CNA) training programs in the greater Hartford area and rural communities in the state. The program must give grants to organizations that educate and train prospective CNAs in these areas. And to the extent possible, it must use federal funds from the Rural Health Transformation Program for the grants to programs in rural communities. 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 give the Public Health Committee a report every two years on the program's implementation and at least include an evaluation of the program's success.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 35 — DOL INFORMATIONAL WEBPAGE & STUDY ON TECHNOLOGY USE FOR MILITARY EMPLOYMENT

Requires the DOL commissioner to improve and update the veteran employment information on DOL's website; requires the DVA commissioner to send a periodic email newsletter with relevant resources and materials on the DOL informational webpage; requires the DOL commissioner to study certain models that use technology to connect current and former armed forces members with prospective employers

Informational 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 targets for hiring veterans 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 and the Military Department's annual job fair (see § 36) 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 Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) commissioner and adjutant general.

DVA Newsletter and Website

The bill requires the DVA commissioner, starting January 1, 2027, to (1) send a periodic 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 periodic email newsletter and (2) send the DVA commissioner the email addresses of those who submitted the form during the preceding month.

Study on Technology Use for Military Employment

By January 1, 2028, the bill requires the DOL commissioner to study models from other northeastern 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

§ 36 — MILITARY DEPARTMENT EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR THE NATIONAL GUARD & ANNUAL JOB FAIR

Requires the adjutant general to promote and periodically improve the Military Department's employment assistance program for current and former National Guard members; requires the Military Department to conduct an annual job fair and publicize it on the department's website and in emails

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 for current and former National Guard members who are considering available educational and occupational opportunities. The adjutant general may (1) tailor the promotion and improvements to better supplement any federally funded transition assistance program and (2) appoint personnel as needed to support, administer, and coordinate state transition assistance and related programs.

Military Department Annual Job Fair

The bill requires the adjutant general, in consultation with the DOL and DVA commissioners, to conduct an annual job fair to (1) promote employment of current and former National Guard members and (2) invite Connecticut employers to attend and provide information about prospective employment opportunities.

The adjutant general must publicize the job fair on the Military Department's website and include information in any periodic email correspondence the department sends to interested recipients.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 37 — 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

Background — Related Bill

sHB 5409 (File 149), reported favorably by the Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee, has similar provisions to §§ 35-37 of this bill.

§ 38 — 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 100 employees (including the state and municipalities) to create a guide for their employees on the pay codes the employer uses for overtime and its most commonly used pay differentials, such as shift differentials, on-call pay, hazard pay, call-back pay, holiday or weekend pay, or geographic pay differentials. The bill requires each guide, if applicable, to include at least 10 pay codes and be posted on the employer's website in English, Spanish, and the most common other languages spoken by their employees. The guide must also 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. They may also comply by giving a written copy of the guide to an employee upon hire in English and the employee's primary language.

The bill deems an employer in compliance with these paycheck transparency provisions if it uses a third-party payroll services company that provides the pay code guide as required by the bill. It also specifies that it does not require an employer to (1) establish and maintain an Internet web site if it does not currently have one or (2) establish new pay codes in order to satisfy the provisions of this section.

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.

§ 39 — GRANT PROGRAM FOR JUNIOR FIREFIGHTER PROGRAMS

Creates a grant program for junior firefighter programs run by volunteer fire departments

The bill requires the state fire administrator to create and administer a program to give grants-in-aid to junior firefighter programs administered 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, volunteer fire departments must apply for the grants for junior firefighter programs in a form and way set by the state fire administrator.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 40 — MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYERS

Exempts minor league baseball players from state minimum wage and overtime laws

The bill exempts from the state's minimum wage and overtime laws anyone who has entered into a contract to play minor league baseball under a collective bargaining agreement's terms.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§§ 41-43 — UCONN SPECIAL POLICE FORCES AND FIRE DEPARTMENT

Requires UConn's president to establish a recruitment and retention program for the UConn special police forces and fire department and submit annual reports on it; expands the objective job-based criteria she must use to establish classifications for UConn's special police forces

The bill requires the UConn president, by July 1, 2027, to establish a recruitment and retention program for the UConn special police forces and fire department to address critical staffing shortages and high resignation rates. As part of the program, the president must develop salary schedules for all sworn members of the university's special police forces and all members of the fire department (UConn's first responders), and an education benefit for those members.

It also requires her, beginning by January 1, 2027, to annually submit a report on the recruitment and retention status of UConn's first responders to certain committees and entities.

Lastly, it expands the objective job-based criteria she must use to establish classifications for UConn's special police forces.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Recruitment and Retention Program

Salary Schedules and Education Benefit. Under the bill, the salary schedules must:

1. align compensation rates to eliminate pay disparities between UConn's first responders and members of comparable municipal and state law enforcement and fire service agencies and

2. eliminate significant step overlaps between ranks to ensure supervisors do not earn less than those they supervise.

UConn must give the developed salary schedules to the Office of Labor Relations and the collective bargaining unit representing UConn's first responders. The salary schedules, once received by these parties, (1) must be a mandatory subject of the next salary negotiations between the office and the bargaining unit, including any wage reopeners, and (2) may be used in earlier negotiations if agreed upon by the parties.

Education Benefit. The UConn president must develop an education benefit, which (1) may include tuition reimbursement or university fee waivers, and (2) must include, at a minimum, the required years of service for eligibility and allow the dependents of UConn's first responders to be eligible for the benefit, as she determines.

UConn must provide a written description of the benefit's parameters to the UConn Board of Trustees for approval. Upon approval, the educational benefit must be implemented without modification and regardless of any applicable collective bargaining agreement or the state employee collective bargaining law.

Recruitment and Retention Report

Beginning by January 1, 2027, UConn must annually submit a report

on the recruitment and retention status of UConn's first responders to the Public Safety and Security and Higher Education and Employment Advancement committees, and to the UConn Board of Trustees. The report must, for both the special police and fire department, include at least the following:

1. the total number of authorized positions compared to filled positions, including a breakdown of any vacancies due to unfilled positions, personnel being in academy training or field training, or personnel being on administrative, military, or medical leave;

2. the total number of any resignations, retirements, and terminations in the previous year, and the average seniority of departing personnel for that year;

3. a detailed assessment of the entity's ability to provide mandated coverage at all applicable campuses and facilities; and

4. a fiscal impact analysis of the cost incurred to train and recruit personnel who resign within five years of being hired.

Objective Job-Related Criteria

By law, the UConn president must establish classifications for special police force positions at UConn and its campuses, including the UConn Health Center, using objective job-related criteria. The bill expands these criteria to specifically include the (1) knowledge and skill required to carry out the duties of each position in high-density campus environments, provide student-focused community outreach services, and provide specialized emergency services within the UConn Health Center, and (2) responsibilities of exercising jurisdiction over multiple UConn campuses.

Under current law and the bill, the criteria also include the (1) knowledge and skill required to carry out the duties of each position, (2) mental and physical effort required to carry out those duties, and (3) level of accountability assigned to each position. By law, the UConn president establishes and administers the necessary examinations for

UConn's special police forces.

Background — Related Bill

sHB 5455 (File 328), reported favorably by the Public Safety and Security Committee, is substantially similar to this provision.

§§ 44-47 — DOUBLE UTILITY POLES

Generally creates a process for public utility pole users and owners to transfer their wires and equipment from existing poles to replacement poles and then remove double utility poles

The bill generally creates a process, including notice requirements, deadlines, and penalties, for public utility pole users, custodians, and owners to transfer their wires and equipment from existing poles to replacement poles and then remove double utility poles (where the existing pole and its replacement are alongside or attached to each other) by January 1, 2029. It also allows various exceptions to its requirements and related penalties.

Under the bill, a "public utility pole" is a pole or portion of it that is owned by a telephone company or an electric distribution company (EDC; Eversource or United Illuminating) and used to support wires for distributing electricity, telecommunications services, or street or sidewalk lighting. A "user" is any person or entity that is not the pole's owner but maintains equipment on it (but when a pole has more than one owner, the owner who is not performing the removal or replacement work is also considered a "user"). A user does not include a municipality or political subdivision of the state, or an EDC that owns the pole. A pole's "custodian" is the EDC or telephone company with a duty to maintain a public utility pole.

The bill allows the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) to adopt regulations to implement its provisions.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2027, except the provision requiring PURA to open a docket (§ 50) takes effect October 1, 2026.

Notice Requirement

The bill requires a public utility pole's custodian or its agent to deliver

to each of the pole's users written notice about any removal and replacement work for the pole. The notice must be delivered within 72 hours (1) after the work on the pole starts (if the work is planned) or (2) after the work is completed (if it was unplanned and needed to correct a hazardous condition on an emergency basis). The notice must be delivered electronically through the utility pole attachment database system to each of the pole's users and describe the pole's location, the nature of the work, the expected or actual completion date, as applicable, and the notice's delivery date. Under the bill, the "utility pole attachment database system" is a software system designated by PURA for maintaining a database of attachments to public utility poles in the state.

User Requirement to Transfer Equipment

Subject to certain exceptions (see below), the bill generally requires each notified user to transfer its equipment from the existing pole to the replacement pole within (1) 20 days after receiving the notice if it requires transfers from 50 or fewer poles, or (2) 45 days after receiving the notice if it requires transfers from more than 50 poles. Upon completing the transfer work, the user must electronically notify the pole's custodian through the utility pole attachment database system that the work has been completed.

If a user fails to complete the transfer work within the required deadline, the bill allows the telephone company, or its agent, to complete the transfer work on the user's behalf and bill the user for the work based on the prevailing wage rates set in the state's prevailing wage law. The use must pay the bill within 60 days after receipt.

EDC or Telephone Company Removal and Replacement Work

The bill requires an EDC or telephone company that removes and replaces a public utility pole, including any portion of one, to finish transferring any wires or equipment it owns within 45 days after it receives notice about work from a pole's custodian as required above.

PURA List of Uncompleted Transfers

Starting on July 1, 2027, and then every six months, the bill requires

each utility pole custodian to compile a list of any users who failed to complete work required to transfer its equipment as required above.

Each custodian must submit the list to PURA. Starting October 1, 2027, and then every six months, PURA must post on its website a list of each user who has a total number of uncompleted pole attachment transfers that is 3% or more of the total number of public utility poles on which it has an attachment in the state. Any user identified on the list must give PURA a written explanation of why it failed to comply.

Double Utility Pole Removals

The bill requires each EDC and telephone company, by January 1, 2029, to do any work required to remove its double utility poles in existence on January 1, 2027. Under the bill, a "double utility pole" is a replacement public utility pole built or installed alongside, or attached to, an existing public utility pole, or a portion of one, for transferring the wires from the existing pole to the replacement, when the existing utility pole or any portion of it has not been removed after the installation of the replacement.

Enforcement

The bill generally allows PURA to issue an order imposing a civil penalty of up to $100 for each day that a utility pole user, EDC, or telephone company remains in violation of the bill's requirements, specifically those for:

1. users, EDCs, and telephone companies to transfer their equipment;

2. users to pay the telephone company for transfer work done on the user's behalf; and

3. EDCs and telephone companies to do the work needed to remove their double utility poles.

The bill requires PURA to (1) impose the penalties under its statutory procedure for issuing civil penalties and (2) remit the collected penalties to the social services commissioner to help fund the Connecticut Energy

Assistance Program.

Exceptions

The bill exempts any user who is not on PURA's list of uncompleted transfers from its requirements (1) to transfer equipment from an existing pole to the replacement pole or have the telephone company do it for the user and (2) for each EDC and telephone company, by January 1, 2029, to do any work required to remove its double utility poles (see below).

Additionally, under the bill, it is not a violation, and PURA cannot impose a civil penalty on a utility pole user, if the user was prevented from completing the transfer work solely because:

1. of a municipality's failure to timely remove or transfer any equipment it (or its political subdivision) owns (the bill does not specify a deadline for a municipality to complete this transfer);

2. the telephone company or its agent failed to complete the transfer for the user as allowed by the bill; or

3. the user or custodian gave PURA a good cause explanation for why it failed to complete the transfer of its equipment, including the presence of an unidentified attachment to a pole, a significant weather event that precludes or delays completing the work on time, a declared emergency in the state, or transfer is a complex transfer.

However, the bill specifies that this does not excuse the user from completing the work within a reasonable time, considering the circumstances of the work, as determined by PURA.

Under the bill, a "complex transfer" is work to transfer a public utility pole attachment that would be reasonably likely to cause a service outage or damage to any other such attachments, including work such as splicing a communication attachment or relocating existing wireless attachments. This includes any transfer involving mobile, fixed, and point-to-point wireless communications and attachments owned by

wireless Internet service providers.

The bill creates a similar exception for EDCs and telephone companies that must do any work required to remove its double utility poles, if they can show good cause to PURA for why it failed to complete the transfer (presumably, the removal), such as the presence of an unidentified attachment to a pole, a significant weather event that precludes or delays completing the work on time, a declared emergency in the state, or transfer is a complex transfer.

For either of the good cause exceptions above, if PURA determines that a user has given a good cause explanation that results in no penalty being imposed, the bill requires it to state the basis for the determination in writing.

PURA Docket

The bill requires PURA, by December 1, 2026, to open a docket to develop a recommended damage liability clause that must be adopted by any public utility pole custodian in any contract or other agreement with the pole's user. The clause must (1) address scenarios in which a user damages another user's attachment or equipment while transferring its attachments or equipment from one pole to another and (2) create a mechanism for (a) reimbursing for damage under $100,000, and (b) submitting damages of $100,000 or more to PURA for resolution.

Background — Related Bill

sSB 421 (File 471), reported favorably by the Energy and Technology Committee, has similar provisions as this bill.

§ 48 — INFORMATION ON VETERANS' BENEFITS AND SERVICES

Requires the labor commissioner and the chief manufacturing officer to post information about veterans' benefits and services on the Department of Labor and the Office of Manufacturing websites

The bill requires, within available appropriations, the labor commissioner and the chief manufacturing officer to consult with the veterans affairs commissioner and post information about veterans' benefits and services on both the Department of Labor and the Office of Manufacturing websites. The information must be available for

download by employers to display in their workplaces.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Background — Related Bill

HB 5277 (File 42), reported favorably by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, is identical to this provision.

§ 49 — FIRE INSTRUCTORS

Requires the DAS commissioner to create a job classification for part-time fire service instructors in DESPP's Division of Fire Services Administration

The bill requires the DAS commissioner, in consultation with the DESPP commissioner and the State Fire Administrator, to create a job classification for part-time fire service instructors within DESPP's Division of Fire Services Administration.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Background — Related Bill

HB 5404 (File 267), reported favorably by the Public Safety and Security Committee, is identical to this provision.

§ 50 — HEALTH INSURANCE FOR RETIRED POLICE AND FIREFIGHTERS

Requires the state comptroller to study health insurance coverage for retired police officers and firefighters in the state

The bill requires the state comptroller to study health insurance coverage for retired police officers and firefighters in the state, including an assessment of any gaps in, absence of, or diminished coverage for those who are no longer employed as police officers or firefighters due to normal retirement or early retirement as a result of any illness or injury. The comptroller must submit a report on the study's finding to the Labor and Public Employees Committee by January 1, 2027.

Under the bill, a "police officer" is sworn member of an organized local police department or the State Police, an appointed constable who performs criminal law enforcement duties, a special appointed policeman, or any member of a law enforcement unit who performs police duties. A "firefighter" includes any (1) uniformed member of a

paid municipal or state, or volunteer, fire department and (2) local fire marshal, deputy fire marshal, fire investigator, fire inspector, and certain other classes of inspectors and investigators.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Background — Related Bill

HB 5382 (File 100), reported favorably by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, is identical to this provision.

§ 51 — "REASONABLE ASSURANCE" OF RETURNING TO WORK FOR PARAEDUCATORS

Requires school districts, before the end of regular school sessions, to notify DOL about which of their paraeducators have reasonable assurance of returning to work when school sessions resume

Under state and federal law, employees who work at an educational institution are ineligible to receive unemployment benefits for a school break (for example, between two successive academic years, between two regular terms, or during a customary vacation or holiday recess) if they have a "reasonable assurance" to work for any educational institution once courses resume (in the next academic year or term or period after the vacation or recess).

The bill requires school districts, at least 10 days before the last day of regular school sessions, to give DOL lists of their paraeducators who have and do not have reasonable assurance of returning to work for them once courses resume. More specifically, the requirement applies to each local or regional board of education, regional educational service center, governing authority for a state charter school, or an endowed or incorporated academy approved by the State Board of Education (collectively referred to as "school districts").

The bill allows the labor commissioner to consider the information on these lists when making reasonable assurance determinations, but specifies that unless it is accompanied by additional evidence, it cannot be conclusive evidence of reasonable assurance in any case.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

Reasonable Assurance

Under the bill, "reasonable assurance" exists if two conditions are met. First, there must be a written, oral, or implied employment offer for the following school year that:

1. was made by an authorized school district employee;

2. is for (a) services in the same capacity the person performed in the previous school year and (b) at least 90% of the wages or salary paid to the person, in total, by every educational institution he or she worked for during the previous school year; and

3. does not depend on factors within the school district's control, such as course programming, available funding allocation, program modifications, or facility availability.

Second, it must be highly probable that the paraeducator will work in the same capacity once courses resume, based on the totality of the circumstances, including funding availability, past enrollment levels, the paraeducator's seniority level, and the nature of the offer's contingencies.

Paraeducator Lists

The bill requires school districts to submit two employee lists to DOL, in a way the commissioner sets, at least 10 days before last day of regular school sessions. The first must list employees, including their names and Social Security numbers, who worked as a paraeducator for the school and do not have reasonable assurance of working in the same capacity once courses resume.

The second list must contain employees who worked as paraeducators and have reasonable assurance of working in the same capacity once courses resume. It must also describe how each paraeducator was given reasonable assurance, including (1) whether the offer was written, oral, or implied; (2) the nature of any offer contingencies; and (3) the information about the offer communicated to the paraeducator.

§ 52 — SCHOOL PARAEDUCATOR ADVISORY COUNCIL

Adjusts paraeducator representation on the School Paraeducator Advisory Council

The bill adjusts paraeducator representation on the School Paraeducator Advisory Council. Current law requires the council to have one paraeducator from each state-wide bargaining representative organization that represents paraeducators with instructional responsibilities. The bill instead requires it to have five paraeducators from those state-wide bargaining representative organizations (without allotting any to a particular organization) and requires that they be nominated by the Connecticut AFL-CIO.

By law, unchanged by the bill, the council also has (1) a representative from each of the exclusive bargaining units for certified employees, (2) the most recent recipient of the Connecticut Paraeducator of the Year Award, (3) two representatives from the regional educational service centers, and (4) a school administrator. In general, the council advises the education commissioner on the needs for paraeducator professional development and the training, appropriate staffing strategies for paraeducators, and other relevant paraeducator issues.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 53 — STATE POLICE ASSIGNED TO HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Requires members of the State Police to be paid at a rate established under an agreement between the DOT commissioner and the DESPP commissioner when they are assigned to a DOT highway construction project

Starting the day it passes, the bill requires members of the State Police who are assigned to a Department of Transportation (DOT)-administered highway construction project to be paid at a rate established under an agreement executed between the DOT commissioner and the DESPP commissioner. The bill's requirement supersedes existing law that otherwise requires State Police members' salaries to be fixed by the DAS commissioner.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Background — Related Bill

SB 411 (File 309), reported favorably by the Public Safety Committee and as amended by Senate "A," requires the DESPP and DOT commissioners to enter into an agreement over these State Police salary rates.

§ 54 — PREVAILING WAGE

Requires employers on prevailing wage projects to keep daily attendance records of the workers on a covered project and submit them weekly to the agency overseeing the project; requires the labor commissioner, when determining the prevailing wages required on a public works project, to determine the portion that covers payments, contributions, and member benefits at the journeyman rate

The bill makes changes to the record keeping requirements for employers covered by state prevailing wage laws (including similar laws that apply to certain projects funded by DECD, renewable energy projects, and work on state highways (see *Background — Prevailing Wage Laws*)). Generally, it requires these employers to keep daily attendance records of the workers on a covered project and submit them weekly to the agency overseeing the project. Under the bill, a failure to file these records is a Class C misdemeanor, subject to a fine of up to $500, up to three months' imprisonment, or both.

Generally, the state's prevailing wage law requires contractors and subcontractors on certain public works projects to pay their construction workers wages and benefits equal to those that are customary or prevailing for the same work, in the same occupation, in the same town. The bill further specifies that when the labor commissioner determines the prevailing wages required on a public works project, the portion that covers payments, contributions, and member benefits (such as health insurance and retirement benefits) must be determined at the journeyman rate. Current law does not specify a particular rate to be used in this determination.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Daily Attendance Records

The bill requires employers covered by state prevailing wage laws to keep a daily record of each construction worker at a covered work site.

This record must include (1) the project's name and location; (2) the current date; and (3) each worker's (a) name (printed or signed), (b) trade license number (when applicable), and (c) arrival and departure times at the site. The bill requires the employer to submit these records weekly to the contracting agency, DECD, or the clean energy project's developer, as applicable.

Under the bill, and regardless of the state Freedom of Information Act's (FOIA) provisions on public records access, these daily records are public records. And anyone may inspect and copy a daily log or sign-in sheet under FOIA's provisions on copying and scanning public records.

Background — Prevailing Wage Laws

The state's prevailing wage law generally requires contractors and subcontractors on certain public works projects to pay their construction workers wages and benefits equal to those that are customary or prevailing for the same work, in the same occupation, in the same town. The requirement applies to new construction projects costing at least $1 million and renovation projects costing at least $100,000.

Similar prevailing wage requirements also apply to certain (1) projects that receive at least $1 million in DECD financial assistance, (2) clean energy projects, and (3) work on state highways.

Background — Related Bills

SB 268 (File 76), reported favorably by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, allows the state comptroller to withhold payment to a contractor or subcontractor for whom the labor commissioner has issued a stop work order for a violation of the prevailing wage law.

sSB 356, reported favorably by the Labor and Public Employees Committee (File 211) and Judiciary Committee (File 696), includes a similar requirement for keeping daily attendance records on prevailing wage projects.

sSB 471 (File 575), reported favorably by the Government Administration and Elections Committee, includes an identical

provision related to journeyman rates and also requires certain public works contracts to have a specified percentage of their work done by apprentices.

§§ 55 & 56 — CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTOR LIABILITY FOR UNPAID WAGES

Makes certain construction contractors jointly and severally liable for any unpaid wages owed to a subcontractor's employees

For certain construction contracts executed on or after January 1, 2027, the bill makes a construction contractor jointly and severally liable for any unpaid wages owed to a subcontractor's employee working within the contract's scope.

Under the bill, if the subcontractor fails to pay such an employee, either the employee or a labor organization may sue the subcontractor, the contractor, or both. If the contractor is a party in the suit, the employee must give the contractor at least 30 days' advance notice about the subcontractor's alleged violation before suing. The notice must describe the alleged violation's general nature. However, the employee does not have to give this notice if he or she has previously given the contactor notice about the same violation or a prior violation by the same subcontractor. The bill specifies that the notice does not limit the contractor's liability or prevent subsequent amendments to the suit to include more of the subcontractor's employees.

The bill also specifies that it does not prohibit a construction contract between a contractor and subcontractor from including a provision establishing a remedy for any liability created by a subcontractor's nonpayment of wages, as long as it does not (1) diminish an employee's right to bring a lawsuit for unpaid wages or (2) waive or release any liability assigned to the contractor under the bill.

The bill further specifies that this can include a contract provision that allows the liability to be paid from the amount withheld for retainage under the contract. Under the bill, "retainage" is a sum withheld from progress payments to the contractor or subcontractor, otherwise payable to a contractor or subcontractor by an owner conditioned on substantial or final completion of all work under the terms of a written

or verbal construction contract. It does not include any sum withheld due to the contractor's or subcontractor's failure to comply with construction plans and specifications.

Additionally, the bill makes any provision to waive or release liability assigned to the contractor unenforceable in a contract entered into or renewed on or after October 1, 2026.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2027

Contracts, Contractors, and Subcontractors

Under the bill, a "construction contract" is a contract entered into on or after January 1, 2027, for construction, renovation, or rehabilitation in the state, including any improvements to real property associated with it. It includes those contracts between an owner and a contractor, a contractor and a subcontractor, or between subcontractors. It does not include:

1. public works or other contracts by the state, another state, or the federal government or

2. home improvement contracts to build, renovate, or rehabilitate (a) an owner-occupied residence or property where it is located or (b) one- or two-family dwelling units or properties unless there are more than 15 of them at one project site.

Under the bill, "contractors" are business entities, including construction managers, general or prime contractors, joint ventures, or combinations of them, that have a direct contractual relationship with an owner (the owner of record or lessee of real property where the construction, renovation, or rehabilitation will be or is being done).

A "subcontractor" is a business entity that does not have a direct contractual relationship with an owner but:

1. is a party to a construction contract with the contractor;

2. is a party to a construction contract with another subcontractor that has a direct contractual relationship with the contactor; or

3. does any work at any tier within the construction contract's scope, regardless of whether it has a direct contractual relationship with a contractor.

Background — Related Bill

HB 5275 (File 91), reported favorably by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, is substantially similar to this provision.

§§ 57-61 — HIGH-QUALITY INTERNSHIPS

Requires the UConn Board of Trustees and BOR to jointly identify the qualities and best practices of a high-quality internship program and create a syllabus for employers' online training using them; sets various related reporting requirements

By October 1, 2026, the bill requires the UConn Board of Trustees and Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) to jointly identify the qualities and best practices of a high-quality internship program, using at least six of the eight National Association of Colleges and Employers career readiness competencies (see *Background – National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Career Readiness Competencies*). The boards must create a syllabus for employers' online training using these qualities and best practices by January 1, 2027, and BOR must use the syllabus to offer asynchronous online training through Charter Oak State College by July 1, 2027.

The bill allows the college to charge a training enrollment fee and requires it to give employers a credential for completing the training. The boards must conspicuously post on their websites information about the qualities and best practices and a link to the online training registration for employers.

The bill also requires the following reports to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee:

1. Annually, beginning by July 1, 2028, BOR must report on the number of employers receiving the credential in the prior fiscal year.

2. By January 1, 2027, each higher education institution in the state must report on the internship opportunities available to their

students through their career services offices, including the types of employers offering internships, quality measures used to ensure students have a valuable experience, and other relevant information.

3. By February 1, 2027, the Department of Administrative Services must survey state agencies (other than public higher education institutions) and report on their internship programs, including whether an agency has (a) paid internships and (b) high-quality internship programs according to the qualities and best practices that must be established by the bill.

4. By January 1, 2028, the Department of Revenue Services (DRS) must consult with the Office of Policy and Management and study the revenue impact of expanding the human capital investment tax credit (see Background — Human Capital Investment Tax Credit) to cover intern compensation paid by (a) employers who earned the online training credential and (b) an S corporation, limited liability company, limited liability partnership, or limited partnership that earned the credential.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026, except the provision on (1) the DRS study is effective October 1, 2026, and (2) offering and reporting on the online training program is effective January 1, 2027.

Background — National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Career Readiness Competencies

NACE is a professional association connecting college career services professionals, early talent recruiting, university relations professionals, and businesses that serve this community. NACE tracks and provides information on employment of college graduates. NACE's eight career readiness competencies are (1) career and self-development, (2) communication, (3) critical thinking, (4) equity and inclusion, (5) leadership, (6) professionalism, (7) teamwork, and (8) technology.

Background — Human Capital Investment Tax Credit

By law, expenses eligible for this credit include (1) job training; (2) work education programs, including those offered by higher education

institutions; (3) donations or capital contributions to higher education institutions related to technology; (4) activities related to developing a child care center for employees' children; (5) donations or capital contributions to a nonprofit for developing a child care center for children in the community; and (6) child care subsidies for employees. By law, the credit equals 25% of the child care related expenses and 10% for other types of expenses.

By law, these credits cannot exceed the amount a corporation owes in corporation business tax, an unused tax credit can be carried forward for the next five years, and a corporation claiming this tax credit cannot claim another credit for the same expense.

Background — Related Bill

sHB 5478 (File 391), reported favorably by the Higher Education and Employment Advancement and Appropriations committees, establishes various programs and creates tax credits to support internships, among other things.

§ 62 — MUNICIPAL TAX ABATEMENT FOR SURVIVING DOMESTIC PARTNERS OF FIRST RESPONDERS

Expands an optional municipal property tax abatement for the spouses of first responders who died in the line of duty to also cover domestic partners

By law, municipalities may establish a property tax abatement program by ordinance for the surviving spouses of first responders (police officers, fire fighters, and emergency medical technicians) who die in the line of duty. This bill extends eligibility for the abatement to surviving domestic partners. Under the bill, a "domestic partner" is someone with whom a first responder maintained a domestic partnership until the first responder's death. A "domestic partnership" is a partnership between two people who (1) are at least age 18; (2) are in a committed, intimate relationship with each other; (3) are not married to anyone; (4) would not be prohibited from marrying each other under the state's laws; (5) reside together in a principal residence; and (6) are each other's sole domestic partner.

The bill allows a municipality that establishes the abatement to require a domestic partner claiming the abatement to attest to the

criteria described above.

Under existing law, unchanged by the bill, the abatement may cover all or some of the property taxes due on the residence that the claimant owns and occupies as his or her primary residence.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Background — Related Bill

HB 5286 (File 60), reported favorably by the Planning and Development Committee, allows the same property tax abatement but allows the ordinance to define who is considered a "domestic partner."

§ 63 — WORKING GROUP ON TAX INCENTIVES AND CREDITS FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Establishes a working group to review and make recommendations for tax incentives and credits for volunteer firefighters

The bill creates a working group to review and make recommendations for legislation on tax incentives and credits for volunteer firefighters in the state. Under the bill, the working group consists of the state fire administrator and DRS commissioner, or their designees, and one appointee appointed by each of the six legislative leaders. The House speaker's appointee must represent an organization representing firefighters in the state, but the other appointees have no specifically required qualifications, and any of the appointees may be state legislators.

The bill requires (1) all initial appointments to the working group to be made within 30 thirty days after the bill becomes effective and (2) any vacancy to be filled by the appointing authority.

The bill makes the House speaker's and Senate president pro tempore's appointees the working group's chairpersons and requires them to schedule and hold the task force's first meeting within 60 days after the bill becomes effective. The Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee's administrative staff must serve in that capacity for the working group.

The working group must submit a report on its findings and

recommendation to the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee by January 1, 2027. It ends on that date or when it submits the report, whichever is later.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 64 — LOBSTER SALES

Allows (1) food service establishments to sell consumers lobsters greater or less than LMA 6 minimum and maximum length requirements under certain conditions and (2) licensed seafood dealers to sell food service establishments these lobsters

The bill allows Connecticut food service establishments to sell lobsters that do not meet the existing lobster size requirements if the lobster meets certain criteria. The bill allows the establishments regulated by the public health code to sell consumers any lobster greater or less than the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's American Lobster Fishery Management Plan Lobster Management Area (LMA) 6 minimum and maximum shell lengths (3.375 inches and 5.25 inches) if the:

1. lobster is not taken from LMA 6 waters (under federal regulations this includes New York and Connecticut state waters) or landed in Connecticut;

2. lobster is within the legal length for the LMA or nation of origin where it is taken; and

3. food service establishment that has the lobster also has a manifest, bill of landing, invoice, purchase order, or other written documentation that identifies the (a) state, LMA, or nation of origin where the lobster was received and (b) number of lobsters received.

Under the bill, the food service establishment must keep the required documentation for six months after it receives the lobster and make it available to any law enforcement officer upon request.

Additionally, the bill allows any Connecticut licensed seafood dealer to sell food service establishments lobsters in compliance with these restrictions. The dealer must provide the purchasing food service

establishment the documentation described above at the time of sale.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 65-72 — FIRST RESPONDER TUITION AND MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Requires CT State and CSCU to waive tuition for eligible police officers, firefighters, and EMS personnel (first responders); requires CHFA to develop and administer a mortgage assistance program for these first responders; requires POST, the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, and DPH to establish eligibility requirements for these programs

The bill requires the Board of Regents for Higher Education to waive CT State and Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) tuition for (1) eligible police officers, firefighters, and emergency medical service (EMS) personnel (first responders) who submit compliance certifications that certify their eligibility (see below) and are enrolled or accepted for admission, and (2) students attending the state fire school who are enrolled in a program offered together with the respective college or university that accredits courses in the program. The bill caps the total number of these waivers at CT State and CSCU at 200 per school year, respectively.

The bill also requires the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) to develop and administer a mortgage assistance program for these eligible first responders who submit a compliance certification and are buying a home as their principal residence in the community where they serve. Under the bill, this mortgage assistance must be provided under CHFA-established guidelines. In doing so, CHFA may (1) use down payment assistance or any other appropriate housing subsidies and (2) allow the mortgagee to realize a reasonable portion of the property's equity gain when it is sold.

EFFECTIVE DATE: (1) July 1, 2026, for the compliance certification provisions; (2) October 1, 2026, for the eligibility requirement provisions; (3) July 1, 2027, for the tuition waiver provisions; and (4) January 1, 2027, for the mortgage assistance program provisions.

Covered First Responders

Under the bill, a "first responder" is (1) a police officer certified by the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST), (2) volunteer

or paid fire service personnel certified by the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control (commission), and (3) emergency medical service personnel licensed or certified by the Department of Public Health (DPH). The bill requires each of these entities to establish the eligibility requirements (see below), by January 1, 2027, for the tuition waivers and mortgage assistance established by the bill.

Compliance Certifications

The bill requires first responders seeking tuition waivers or mortgage assistance to request a compliance certification from their "employer" on a form developed by the state comptroller that certifies the first responder meets applicable eligibility requirements (see below). Under the bill, "employer" for a police officer means the administrative head of a law enforcement unit, for fire service personnel means the chief of a volunteer or paid fire department and for emergency medical service personnel means the chief administrator of a volunteer or municipal emergency medical service organization.

The employer must complete the compliance certification form if the first responder meets the applicable eligibility requirements established by the bill as described below. The employer must send the compliance certification to the first responder, and a copy to the comptroller in a manner prescribed by the comptroller. First responders must submit their compliance certification along with their applications to CT State or CSCU for a tuition waiver, or to CHFA for mortgage assistance, as applicable.

The comptroller must, by September 1, 2026, develop a compliance certification form for employers to use to certify that the first responder meets the eligibility requirements established according to the bill. The comptroller must post the form in a conspicuous location on his website and maintain each compliance certification submitted to the comptroller for as long as the first responder receives either a tuition waiver or mortgage assistance. The comptroller, if requested by the first responder, may share a copy of the compliance certification with (1) the first responder, (2) CT State, (3) CSCU, (4) CHFA, or (5) DRS.

Eligibility Requirements

The bill requires POST, the commission, and DPH to each establish eligibility requirements, by January 1, 2027, for first responders under their jurisdiction that apply for tuition waivers or mortgage assistance.

POST must establish eligibility requirements for police officers that, at a minimum, require that officers be (1) POST-certified and (2) currently employed by a law enforcement unit in Connecticut for between two and five years.

The commission must establish eligibility requirements for firefighters, which include (1) anyone regularly employed and paid by a municipality or nonprofit contractor for performing firefighting duties for a municipality at least 35 hours per week on average, or (2) any volunteer who performs firefighting duties. The eligibility requirements must at least require that the firefighter be (1) certified as fire service personnel by the commission and (2) currently employed by a fire department in the state for between two and five years. The bill specifies that, for the commission's eligibility requirements for tuition waivers, "firefighter" includes firefighters serving a fire department operated by a federally recognized Connecticut Indian tribe.

DPH must establish eligibility requirements for EMS personnel that at least require them to be (1) licensed or certified by the DPH commissioner and (2) currently employed by a municipal or volunteer EMS organization in Connecticut for between two and five years. DPH must consult with the commission in establishing the eligibility requirements for tuition waivers.

Background — Related Bill

sHB 5046, §§ 1-4 (File 313), reported favorably by the Public Safety and Security Committee, has substantially similar provisions.

§§ 69-71 — FEE WAIVERS FOR NATIONAL GUARD MEMBERS

Expands the current tuition waiver for active National Guard members enrolled at CT State, CSCU, or UConn to include all mandatory fees

The bill waives all mandatory fees for eligible National Guard members enrolled at CT State, CSCU, or UConn under the existing

tuition waiver program. By law, to be eligible for the program, a National Guard member must be (1) certified by the adjutant general or his designee as a member in good standing and (2) enrolled or accepted in one of those institutions on a full-time or part-time basis in an undergraduate degree-granting program (or graduate program, for CSCU and UConn). Currently, the program covers eligible National Guard members' tuition and extension fees.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2027

Background — Related Bill

sHB 5046, §§ 1-3 (File 313), reported favorably by the Public Safety and Security Committee, has identical provisions.

§ 73 — PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TASK FORCE

Establishes a task force to study recruitment and retention issues for public safety personnel

The bill establishes a task force to study recruitment and retention issues for public safety personnel. The study must examine the feasibility and fiscal impact of the state providing:

1. tuition waivers, mortgage assistance, and tax credits to correction officers and judicial marshals;

2. tuition waivers to dependent children of police officers, uniformed members of paid or volunteer fire departments, and EMS personnel;

3. tuition waivers for undergraduate and graduate degree programs at UConn to police officers, uniformed members of paid or volunteer fire departments, and EMS personnel; and

4. tuition vouchers for public safety personnel to any accredited higher education institution in Connecticut.

Under the bill, the task force consists of the DESPP and Education commissioners and the chief court administrator, or their designees, and one member appointed by each of the six legislative leaders. The House

speaker's appointee must have expertise in public safety and the Senate president pro tempore's appointee must represent the University of New Haven and have expertise in higher education. The appointees may be state legislators.

All initial appointments must be made within 30 days after the bill passes, and any vacancies must be filled by the appropriate appointing authority.

The speaker and the president pro tempore must select the task force's chairpersons from its members, who must schedule and hold the first meeting of the task force within 60 days after the bill passes.

The Public Safety and Security Committee's administrative staff must serve in that capacity for the task force. The task force must submit its findings and recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2027. The task force ends on that date or when it submits its report, whichever is later.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Background — Related Bill

sHB 5046, reported favorably by the Public Safety and Security Committee, includes a substantially similar provision.

§ 74 — POLICE OFFICER AND FIREFIGHTER CAREER PIPELINE PROGRAM

Requires the chief workforce officer to develop a plan to establish a police officer and firefighter career pipeline program

The bill requires the chief workforce officer to develop a plan to establish a police officer and firefighter career pipeline program that at least includes (1) a strategy to increase the number of state residents pursuing careers as police officers or firefighters and (2) estimated funding needed to support a police officer and firefighter career pipeline program. The chief workforce officer must submit a report on the plan to the Public Safety and Security and Labor and Public Employees committees by January 1, 2027.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 75 — REPEALER

Repeals a law that generally requires school boards to indemnify teachers, board members, or other school employees if they are assaulted while performing their duties and suffers a financial loss or expense

The bill repeals a law that generally requires school boards and state higher education institution to indemnify teachers, board members, or other school employees if they are assaulted while performing their duties and suffer a financial loss or expense.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

BACKGROUND

Legislative History

The House referred the bill (File 400) to the Appropriations Committee, which favorably reported a substitute that removes a provision that would have appropriated $50,000 from the General Fund to the Division of Fire Services for the junior firefighter grant program in FY 27.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Labor and Public Employees Committee

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

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 34 Nay 13 (04/14/2026)