
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 5

AN ACT CONCERNING ONLINE SAFETY.

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BACKGROUND

SUMMARY

This bill adds various requirements and establishes and repurposes certain programs related to artificial intelligence (AI). Among other things, the bill requires various entities to make AI-related disclosures, sets requirements for AI companions, provides certain employment-related protections, sets requirements for synthetic content, and establishes study-related groups or reporting requirements, as described in the section-by-section analysis below.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026, except when otherwise noted below.

§ 1 — AI SUBSCRIPTION DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENT

Prohibits subscription-based providers of AI technology from entering or renewing a subscription unless they give consumers a written notice disclosing the subscription's key terms and conditions

The bill prohibits in-state providers of paid subscriptions for AI technology from entering or renewing a subscription with an in-state consumer, unless the provider gives the consumer a written notice with the subscription's key terms and conditions. "AI technology" means any computer system, application, or other product that uses or incorporates one or more forms of AI, which is any machine-based system that, for any explicit or implicit objective, infers from the inputs it receives how to generate outputs (including content, decisions, predictions, or recommendations) that can influence physical or virtual environments.

The Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) commissioner sets the form of the notice, and it must include at least:

1. for initial subscriptions, any quantitative or qualitative limitations the provider may impose under the subscription terms, including any limitations due to the consumer's conduct; and
2. for renewals, any such limitations that (a) will be imposed for the first time during the renewal term or (b) were imposed for the prior term but have been modified for the renewal term.

The bill (1) requires the DCP commissioner to adopt regulations to implement these provisions and (2) makes their violation a Connecticut Unfair Trade Practices Act violation (CUTPA, see BACKGROUND).

§ 2 — FRONTIER DEVELOPER EMPLOYEE WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS

Prohibits frontier developers (those that train large-scale AI models using a large quantity of computing power) from disciplining or penalizing a whistleblower employee or certain other employees for reporting certain catastrophic risks (for example, a material contribution to the death of 50 or more people); requires large frontier developers (those that had annual gross revenues of more than \$500 million last year) to establish and maintain a reasonable internal process for anonymous reporting of certain catastrophic risks

Whistleblower Protection

The bill prohibits frontier developers from making, adopting, enforcing, or entering into any rule, regulation, policy, or contract that allows:

1. the developer to discharge, discipline, or penalize an employee who has engaged in any activity covered by Connecticut's whistleblower laws (reporting illegal conduct or suspected illegal conduct to the proper authorities or participating in its investigation); or
2. any person (individual or entity) with authority over a covered employee, or an employee with investigatory or similar authority, to discharge, discipline, or penalize a covered employee for reporting an issue when the report was due to a reasonable belief that the developer did something that poses a specific and substantial danger to public health or safety due to a catastrophic risk.

Definitions

Under the bill, a "frontier developer" is any person doing business in Connecticut who intends to train, begins the training of, or trains a frontier model and uses, or intends to use, a quantity of computing power over a specified level, including computing power used for original training and for changes to a preceding foundation model (any engineered or machine-based system that (1) varies in its autonomy level; (2) for any objective, can infer from inputs how to generate outputs that can influence any physical or virtual environment; (3) is trained on a broad data set; (4) is designed for generality of output; and (5) can adapt to a wide range of distinctive tasks).

Generally, a "covered employee" is any frontier developer employee responsible for assessing, managing, or addressing certain serious risks, such as (1) harm due to the materialization of any catastrophic risk, (2) loss of control over a foundation model that results in any death or bodily injury, or (3) a foundation model using deceptive techniques against its developer under specified conditions.

"Catastrophic risk" means any foreseeable and material risk that a foundation model's development, storage, use, or deployment by a frontier developer will materially contribute to the death of, or serious injury to, more than 50 people, or more than \$1 billion in damage to or loss of covered property, from any single incident where the model:

1. provides expert-level assistance in creating or releasing a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapon;
2. engages in any conduct, with no meaningful human oversight, intervention, or supervision, that (a) is a malicious act to collect, disrupt, deny, degrade, or destroy any engineered or machine-based system or any information stored on, or processed by, the system, or (b) would be murder, assault, larceny, or theft, including larceny or theft by extortion, false pretense, or false promise, if done by a human; or
3. evades the frontier developer's or foundational model user's control.

It does not include any foreseeable and material risk posed by (1) any information that a foundation model outputs that is otherwise publicly accessible, in a substantially similar form, from another source, (2) any lawful activity of the federal government, or (3) any combination of a foundation model with other software if the foundation model did not materially increase the risk.

Large Frontier Developers Anonymous Reporting Process

The bill requires each large frontier developer (those that had annual gross revenues of more than \$500 million in the prior year), by January 1, 2027, to establish and maintain a reasonable internal process allowing

covered employees to anonymously report any information that the employee believes, in good faith, indicates that the developer has engaged in any activity posing a specific and substantial danger to the public health or safety due to a catastrophic risk.

Upon receiving the report, a large frontier developer must review the disclosed information and investigate to determine whether it shows that the developer has engaged in any activity posing this danger. If yes, then the developer must immediately take action to eliminate the danger.

As part of the reasonable internal process, the developer must give monthly updates to any covered employee who submits a report:

1. in a way that preserves the employee's anonymity;
2. disclosing the investigation status and any actions the developer took in response to the report; and
3. until the developer provides a final monthly update disclosing that the developer has reviewed the information and determined whether it does or does not demonstrate that the developer engaged in any activity posing this risk (and if it has, the actions it took to eliminate the danger).

Report to Board and Officers. The bill requires the large frontier developer, by May 1, 2027, and every three months after, to prepare and submit a quarterly report to its officers and directors disclosing (1) all information that was anonymously reported to the developer during the most recently completed quarter, and (2) the investigation status and any actions the developer has taken in response to the reported information. But if any report submitted to a developer alleges wrongdoing by an officer or director, the developer must not submit this quarterly report to that person.

Notice Requirement

The bill requires each frontier developer to notify its employees about the rights and responsibilities of frontier developers and their

employees under this provision. A developer may do this by:

1. always displaying the notice in each workplace the developer maintains in the state, giving the notice to each newly hired employee, and annually giving the notice to each employee who works remotely; or
2. annually giving the notice to each employee and ensuring he or she receives it and acknowledges its receipt.

The bill allows the DCP commissioner to (1) adopt regulations to implement these provisions and (2) impose a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 for each violation of these provisions. The commissioner may request the attorney general bring an action in Hartford Superior Court to collect the civil penalty and for any injunctive or equitable relief. The bill prohibits any granted injunctive or equitable relief from being stayed pending appeal.

In any prevailing action brought by the attorney general to enforce these provisions, the state is entitled to recover the costs of investigation, expert witness fees, costs of the action, and reasonable attorneys' fees. The remedies and penalties are cumulative and in addition to any other remedies and penalties available at law or in equity.

§ 3 — AI REGULATORY SANDBOX

Requires the DECD commissioner, in consultation with various commissioners, to develop a plan to create an AI regulatory sandbox program

The bill requires the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) commissioner, in consultation with the banking, administrative services, public health, and insurance commissioners, to develop a plan to establish an AI regulatory sandbox program.

The program must allow an applicant to temporarily test an innovative product or service on a limited basis under reduced licensure, regulatory, and other legal requirements than may otherwise be required under state law. The plan must be developed to establish a competitive business environment in the state for developing and deploying AI technologies relative to other jurisdictions.

The DECD commissioner, by January 1, 2028, must submit recommendations to the governor and the Banking, Commerce, Insurance and Real Estate, and Public Health committees for any legislation needed to implement the plan.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2027

§§ 4-6 — AI COMPANION

Requires an AI companion operator to (1) include a protocol to make reasonable efforts to detect and address any user expression indicating a risk of suicide, self-harm, or imminent violence and (2) give a clear and conspicuous audible or written notice to a user disclosing that the user is communicating with an AI companion; prohibits operators from providing an AI companion to minors if the companion is capable of certain actions (for example, encouraging self-harm, discouraging seeking help, and offering certain mental health services); requires the attorney general to enforce these provisions

Protocols

The bill requires an AI companion operator to include a protocol to take reasonable efforts to detect and address any user expression indicating a risk of suicide, self-harm, or imminent violence, before providing an AI companion to a user or operating one for a user.

Under the bill, an “AI companion” is any AI model that (1) communicates with people in natural language, and (2) simulates human conversation and interaction through text, audio, or video. It does not include any machine-based system that:

1. a business entity uses only (a) for internal purposes or for customer service or employee productivity, or (b) to give users information about commercial services or products the business offers, customer service account information, or other information strictly related to customer service; or
2. is primarily designed to provide (and marketed for) efficiency improvements, research assistance, or technical assistance.

Under the bill, the protocol must require that if the companion detects an expression showing a risk of suicide, self-harm, or imminent violence, it must refer the user to appropriate mental health evaluation and treatment resources, including the 9-8-8 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Notice

The bill requires operators to provide a clear and conspicuous audible or written notice to a user disclosing that the user is communicating with an AI companion and not another person. The operator must give the notice (1) at the beginning of each daily interaction, and (2) at least hourly during any continuous interaction.

Prohibited Companion Capabilities for Use by Minor

The bill prohibits operators from providing an AI companion to a minor, or operating a companion for a minor, if it is reasonably foreseeable that the companion is capable of:

1. encouraging the user to engage in self-harm, suicidal ideation, violence, disordered eating, or the unlawful use of alcohol or drugs;
2. discouraging the user from seeking (a) mental health services from a licensed mental health professional, or (b) assistance from an appropriate adult;
3. encouraging the user to harm others or engage in illegal activity;
4. engaging in romantic, erotic, or sexually explicit interaction with the user;
5. prioritizing validating the user's beliefs, preferences, or desires over factual accuracy or the user's safety;
6. implementing a system of rewards or affirmations for the user based on a variable ratio or variable interval reinforcement schedule to maximize the user's engagement time with the companion;
7. optimizing user engagement in a way that supersedes the bill's prohibitions; or
8. offering mental health services to the user.

The bill's prohibition on offering mental health services does not

apply when:

1. the companion is designed to deliver these services;
2. the developers have robust, independent, and peer-reviewed clinical trial data demonstrating the companion's safety and efficacy in treating specific conditions and populations, and have established clear lines of accountability to address any harms the companion caused;
3. the functions and limitations of, and data privacy policies applicable to, the companion are readily accessible to the user and his or her treating licensed mental health professional;
4. the companion (a) displays to the user, in a clear and conspicuous way at the beginning of each interaction, a statement disclosing that the companion is not a licensed mental health professional, and (b) is not marketed or designated as a substitute for one; and
5. a licensed mental health professional (a) has assessed the user's suitability to interact with the companion, (b) instructed the user to interact with the companion as part of a comprehensive treatment plan, and (c) supervises the user's interaction with the companion and the interaction's impact on the user.

Penalties

The bill requires the attorney general to enforce these AI companion provisions and allows him to institute a civil action in the Superior Court in the state's name against an operator to address violations. The court may assess a civil penalty of up to (1) \$15,000 per day for each violation of the protocol or notice provisions and (2) \$25,000 for each violation of the minor-focused provisions. The court may order any declaratory, injunctive, or other equitable relief it deems appropriate.

For violations of the minor-focused provisions, an aggrieved user, or the user's parent or legal guardian, may start a civil action in Superior Court for actual and punitive damages and declaratory, injunctive, or other equitable relief as the court deems appropriate. The court may

award to the user, or the user's parent or legal guardian, costs, and reasonable attorney's fees. The bill sets the statute of limitations for these actions to three years after the violation.

For the minor-focused provisions, the prohibitions do not apply if the operator reasonably determined beforehand that the user was at least age 18.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2027

§§ 7-14 — AUTOMATED EMPLOYMENT-RELATED DECISIONS

Requires those who use an automated decision process in making an employment-related decision to give certain disclosures and a written notice with certain information, with different requirements for adverse decisions; prohibits an employer from using such an automated process in a way that causes the employer to discriminate against someone based on certain traits (for example, race, religion, or gender identity)

The bill sets various requirements for using automated employment-related decision systems, including requiring those who use these processes as a substantial factor in making employment-related decisions to give a written notice with certain disclosures, with additional requirements for adverse decisions.

Disclosure (§ 9)

Starting on October 1, 2027, the bill generally requires businesses who use automated employment-related decision processes intended to interact with employees or applicants for employment in the state ("deployers") to disclose to employees or applicants that they are interacting with the automated process.

The disclosure must be in plain language and describe the general nature of each such process the deployer has used to interact with the employee or applicant. A disclosure is not required when a reasonable person would find it obvious that he or she is interacting with an automated employment-related decision process.

Under the bill, an "automated employment-related decision process" means a computational process that generates any output (including any constraint, rank, score, recommendation, or classification) that affects an employment-related decision outcome, that is not a de

minimis (trivial) factor. It includes a computational process that uses a computer-based assessment or test to do the following related to an employee or applicant for employment:

1. make a predictive assessment;
2. measure the skills, dexterity, reaction time, or any other ability or characteristic;
3. measure the personality traits, aptitude, attitude, or cultural fit; or
4. screen, evaluate, categorize, or make a recommendation.

It also includes a computational process that (1) directs job advertisements or other recruiting materials to targeted groups; (2) screens resumes for particular terms or patterns; (3) analyzes a facial expression, word choice, or voice captured during an online interview; or (4) analyzes data from third parties about an employee or applicant.

A process does not include (1) software or technology that does not make an employment-related decision (such as word processing, data storage, or anti-virus software) or (2) any system or service used in an incidental way to make an employment-related decision.

An “employment-related decision” is any decision, made based on any person’s personal data, to recruit, hire, promote, discipline, or discharge the person, to renew their employment, to select them for any training or apprenticeship, or related to their tenure or terms, privileges, or conditions of employment.

It does not include decisions (1) that result in any minor change in the person’s job tasks, work responsibilities, hours, or work assignments, or (2) on workplace health and safety, scheduling and planning, or productivity monitoring.

Deployer Written Notice (§§ 10 & 11)

The bill generally requires a deployer who, on or after October 1, 2027, uses an automated employment-related decision process to

generate any output to make, or as a substantial factor in making, an employment-related decision to give certain notices, with additional requirements if it is an adverse decision. The notice must be made before the decision.

If the decision is not adverse, the written notice must disclose:

1. that the deployer used an automated employment-related decision process;
2. the purpose of the process and the nature of the employment-related decision;
3. information on the person's right under the Connecticut Data Privacy Act (CTDPA) to opt-out of the processing of personal data; and
4. the deployer's contact information.

Adverse Decision. Under the bill, for adverse decisions, the notice must include a high-level statement disclosing the principal reasons for the decision, including how much and how the automated process output contributed to the decision, and the type and source of data processed in generating the output.

Deployers must give the statement:

1. directly to the employee or applicant;
2. in plain language;
3. in all languages the deployer, in the ordinary course of business, uses for contracts, disclaimers, sales announcements, and other information to people in the state; and
4. in a format that is accessible to people with disabilities.

If the generated output was based on any personal data that the employee or applicant did not provide, the bill gives them an opportunity to examine the data and make corrections.

Developer Assumption of Deployer’s Duties (§ 8)

Under the bill, a developer of these processes that are used in the state on or after October 1, 2027, must generally give the deployer all the information the deployer needs to perform its duties under the bill.

The bill allows a developer to contract with a deployer to assume the deployer’s duties to make the required disclosures and written notices (see above). The contract must be binding and clearly state which duties the developer has assumed.

Trade Secret or Protected Information (§ 12)

The bill specifies that these employment provisions do not require any person to disclose any information that is a trade secret or otherwise protected from disclosure under state or federal law. If a person withholds any information for this reason, he or she must send a notice to the employee or applicant disclosing (1) that the person is withholding the information and (2) the reason why.

Violations (§ 13)

Under the bill, any violation of the automated employment-related decision system provisions described above are deemed a CUTPA violation solely enforced by the attorney general (and not by a private right of action or class action).

The attorney general may, before initiating any action, issue a notice of violation to the person who committed the violation, if he determines it is possible to cure it. If the person fails to cure the violation within 60 days of receiving the notice, the attorney general must then bring an action.

Discriminatory Practices (§ 14)

The bill prohibits employers or their agents from using an automated employment-related decision process in a way that has the effect of causing the employer to refuse to hire or employ someone or to fire or discriminate against him or her based on certain traits or statuses (for example, race, age, religion, gender identity, or disability).

The bill requires the court or Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO), when determining whether a discriminatory practice occurred, to consider any evidence, or lack of evidence, of anti-bias testing or similar proactive efforts to avoid the discriminatory practice, including the quality, efficacy, recency, and scope of the testing or efforts, their results, and the response to them.

Under the bill, it is also a discriminatory practice for an employer or its agent to fail to give any person advance written notice at least disclosing that an automated employment-related decision process will be used to make, help make, or in the course of making a decision on hiring, employing, firing, compensating, or setting employment terms, conditions, or privileges for the person.

The notice must disclose the trade name of the automated process and the types and sources of personal information about the person that the automated process will process or analyze.

By making these discriminatory practices under the CHRO laws, the bill allows CHRO or people aggrieved by these violations to file a complaint with CHRO alleging discrimination.

§ 15 — SYNTHETIC DIGITAL CONTENT

Generally imposes requirements on AI developers of models that can generate synthetic digital content

The bill generally requires, beginning October 1, 2027, developers of an AI system or general-purpose AI model that is capable of generating synthetic digital content to take certain steps to mark them as such. “Synthetic digital content” is any digital content produced or manipulated by AI, including any audio, image, text, or video.

Developers must ensure that the AI system’s or model’s outputs are marked and detectable as synthetic digital content (1) before consumers who did not create the outputs first interact with, or are exposed to, the outputs, and (2) in a way that (a) is detectable by consumers, and (b) complies with any applicable accessibility requirements.

Under the bill, as far as technically feasible and consistent with any

nationally or internationally recognized technical standards, developers must ensure that their technical solutions are effective, interoperable, robust, and reliable, considering the (1) specificities and limitations of different types of synthetic digital content, (2) implementation costs, and (3) generally acknowledged state of the art.

These provisions do not apply to:

1. any synthetic digital content that is (a) exclusively text, (b) published to inform the public on any matter of public interest, or (c) unlikely to mislead a reasonable person reading it; or
2. the extent that any system or model (a) performs an assistive function for standard editing, (b) does not substantially alter the input data the developer provides or what it means, or (c) is used to detect, prevent, investigate, or prosecute any crime where authorized by law.

Under the bill, if the synthetic digital content is in an audio, image, or video format and is part of an artistic, satirical, or fictional work, the required disclosure is limited to a disclosure that does not hinder the display or enjoyment of the work.

§§ 16 & 17 — STATE EMPLOYEE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT AND AI USE

Prohibits AI technology from being used by or on behalf of the state as an employer during the term of a collective bargaining agreement, to modify or impair, among other things, the agreement in any way (such as reducing wages and fringe benefits or assuming the employee's duties and functions)

The bill prohibits the state (for example, the executive and judicial branches) from using or having AI technology used on their behalf in specified ways during the term of a collective bargaining agreement between the state and a state employee union. The bill specifies that AI technology must not be used to modify or impair the:

1. agreement in any way, including by modifying or impairing the rights, benefits, and privileges given to the bargaining unit's employee members by (a) reducing employee wages, fringe benefits, or non-overtime hours, or (b) assuming employee duties

and functions;

2. designated employee organization's role as the bargaining unit's exclusive representative for the purposes of the agreement; or
3. relationship between the employer and the designated employee organization with respect to the agreement.

§ 18 — CONNECTICUT ACADEMY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING (CASE) LIAISON

Allows four legislative leaders to request CASE members to serve as a liaison between the academy and state government; requires liaisons to serve certain purposes, such as evaluating the adoption of AI systems by businesses

The bill allows any of the four legislative leaders (the House speaker, the Senate president pro tempore, and the House and Senate minority leaders) to request that the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering (CASE) executive director designate a fellow CASE selects to serve as the leader's liaison with the academy, the attorney general's office, and DECD. The liaison's purpose is to:

1. evaluate (a) the adoption of AI systems by businesses; (b) the challenges posed to, and needs of, businesses in adopting these systems and understanding laws and regulations on them; and (c) how businesses that use AI systems hire employees with needed skills;
2. create a plan for the state to provide high-performance computing services to businesses and researchers in Connecticut;
3. evaluate the benefits of creating a state-wide research collaborative among health care providers to enable the development of advanced analytics, ethical and trustworthy AI systems, and hands-on workforce education while protecting patient privacy;
4. evaluate and make recommendations on (a) establishing testbeds to support safeguards and systems to prevent misusing AI systems; (b) risk assessments for AI misuse; (c) evaluation strategies for AI systems; and (d) developing, testing, and

- evaluating resources to support state oversight of AI systems;
5. develop a plan to design or identify an algorithmic computer model for simulating and assessing various public policy decisions or proposed decisions and their actual or potential effects; and
 6. develop a plan to establish a technology transfer program (a) for supporting commercialization of new ideas and research among Connecticut public and private higher education institutions and (b) by working with relevant public and private organizations, including DECD, UConn, and a statewide consortium of Connecticut public and private entities, including higher education institutions, designed to advance the development, application, and impact of AI across the state, to assess whether UConn can support technology commercialization at other higher education institutions in the state.

The bill prohibits any CASE-designated fellow from being deemed a state employee or receiving any compensation from the state for performing these duties.

The bill requires these CASE fellows to submit a report on their work to the Commerce and General Law committees by January 1, 2027.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 19 & 21-24 — CONNECTICUT AI ACADEMY

Requires BOR to establish a “Connecticut AI Academy” to curate and offer online courses on AI and its responsible use; requires DOL, SOTS, DOH, and the early childhood commissioner to give certain information about the academy to specific people and businesses

AI Academy (§ 19)

The bill requires the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) to establish a “Connecticut AI Academy” to offer online courses on AI. It must do this by December 31, 2026, on behalf of Charter Oak State College and in consultation with the Department of Labor (DOL), the State Board of Education, workforce investment boards, employers, and in-state higher education institutions. The academy must:

1. curate and offer online courses on AI and its responsible use;
2. promote digital literacy;
3. prepare students for careers in fields involving AI;
4. offer courses and resources directed at people between ages 13 and 20;
5. offer courses and resources that prepare small businesses and nonprofit organizations to use AI to improve marketing and management efficiency;
6. develop courses on AI that DOL and workforce investment boards may incorporate into workforce training programs;
7. develop and offer courses for primary and secondary school teachers and administrators (a) on the appropriate use of AI in classrooms, (b) instructing the teachers on how to use AI, and (c) informing teachers how to instruct students to use AI;
8. enable people providing free or discounted public Internet access to distribute information and provide mentorship on (a) AI, (b) the academy, and (c) how the public can get free or discounted devices capable of accessing the Internet and using AI; and
9. develop a course to develop durable skills based on the Business-Higher Education Forum's guidance on essential skills for the AI economy.

BOR must, in consultation with Charter Oak State College, develop certificates and badges to be awarded to people who successfully complete courses the academy offers.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

Unemployment (§ 21)

The bill requires DOL, as the DOL commissioner directs, to give anyone making a claim for unemployment compensation a notice about

the courses and services the Connecticut AI Academy offers.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2027

Secretary of the State (§ 22)

The bill requires the secretary of the state (SOTS), within available appropriations and in collaboration with Charter Oak State College, to use communication methods SOTS uses with small businesses to spread information on the Connecticut AI Academy’s courses that prepare small businesses to use AI to improve marketing and management efficiency.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2027

Department of Housing (§ 23)

The bill requires the Department of Housing (DOH), within available appropriations, to work with housing authorities and other relevant housing providers to ensure that residents are aware of the Connecticut AI Academy courses and services.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2027

Connecticut Home Visiting System (§ 24)

By law, the early childhood commissioner must establish the structure for a statewide home visiting system that shows the benefits of preventive services by significantly reducing the abuse and neglect of infants and young children and includes home outreach with families identified as high-risk. Under the bill, the commissioner must ensure that all home visiting programs give parents information about the Connecticut AI Academy.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2027

§ 20 — AI WORKING GROUP

Establishes a working group within the Legislative Department to engage stakeholders and experts to make recommendations on certain AI-related issues; requires the group to report by February 1, 2027

The bill establishes a working group to engage stakeholders and experts to make recommendations on:

1. the best practices to avoid the negative impacts, and to maximize the positive impacts, on services and state employees in connection with implementing new digital technologies, including AI;
2. collecting reports, recommendations, and plans from state agencies on AI implementation, and assessing these against the best practices; and
3. any other matters the working group deems relevant for avoiding the negative impacts and maximizing the positive impacts.

The working group must also:

1. make recommendations on ways to create resources to help small businesses adopt AI to improve their efficiency and operations;
2. make recommendations and develop proposals to create a technology court for adjudicating AI, data privacy, and other technology-related issues;
3. propose legislation to (a) regulate the use of general-purpose AI models and (b) require social media platforms to provide a signal when they are displaying synthetic digital content;
4. propose other legislation on AI after reviewing other states' enacted and proposed AI laws and regulations;
5. develop an outreach plan to bridge the digital divide and provide workforce training to people without high-speed Internet access;
6. evaluate and make recommendations on (a) establishing testbeds to support safeguards and systems to prevent AI misuse; (b) assessing risk for AI misuse; (c) evaluating AI strategies; and (d) developing, testing, and evaluating resources to support state oversight of AI;
7. review the protections for trade secrets and other proprietary

information under existing state law and make recommendations on these protections;

8. make recommendations for the establishment and membership of a permanent AI advisory council; and
9. make other recommendations on AI as the working group deems appropriate.

For the working group, a “general-purpose AI model” is a model used by an AI system that displays significant generality, is capable of competently performing a wide range of distinct tasks, and can be integrated into a variety of downstream applications or systems, but is not an AI model used for developing, prototyping, and researching activities before the model is released to the market.

Voting Members

Under the bill, the working group must be within the Legislative Department. Its membership is generally similar to the AI Working Group established in PA 23-16. The table below shows the working group’s voting members. All voting members must have professional experience or academic qualifications in AI, automated systems, government policy, or another related field.

Table: Working Group Voting Member Appointments and Qualifications

<i>Appointing Authority</i>	<i>Member Qualifications</i>
House speaker	Representative of industries developing AI
Senate president pro tempore	Representative of industries using AI
House majority leader	Academic with a concentration in the study of technology and technology policy
Senate majority leader	Academic with a concentration in the study of government and public policy
House minority leader	Representative of an industry association for industries developing AI
Senate minority leader	Representative of an industry association for industries using AI
General Law Committee chairpersons (one appointment each)	Not specified
General Law Committee ranking members (one appointment each)	Representatives of the AI industry or related industry

<i>Appointing Authority</i>	<i>Member Qualifications</i>
Labor Committee chairpersons (one appointment each)	Representatives of a labor organization
Labor Committee ranking members (one appointment each)	Representatives of small businesses
Governor (two appointments)	Two CASE members

The bill requires appointing authorities to make initial appointments by July 31, 2026, and fill any vacancies. Any working group action must be taken by a majority vote of all voting members present, and no action may be taken unless at least 50% of voting members are present.

Non-Voting Ex-Officio Members

The working group also includes the General Law and Labor and Public Employees committees' chairpersons as nonvoting ex-officio members, and the following nonvoting ex-officio members, or their designees:

1. attorney general;
2. state comptroller;
3. state treasurer;
4. Department of Administrative Services (DAS) commissioner;
5. chief data officer;
6. Freedom of Information Commission executive director;
7. Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity executive director;
8. chief court administrator; and
9. CASE executive director.

Chairpersons and Meetings

The bill makes the General Law Committee chairpersons and the CASE executive director the working group's chairpersons. They must

schedule and hold the group's first meeting by August 31, 2026.

The bill requires the General Law Committee's administrative staff to serve as the working group's administrative staff.

Report

The bill requires the working group to submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the General Law Committee by February 1, 2027. The working group ends on that date or when it submits the report, whichever is later.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 25 — CONNECTICUT TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY BOARD

Establishes a Connecticut Technology Advisory Board within the Legislative Department to develop and adopt a state technology strategy to promote education, workforce development, economic development, and consumer protection, among other things

Board Membership and Administration

The bill establishes, within available appropriations, a 12-member Connecticut Technology Advisory Board within the Legislative Department. The House speaker, Senate president pro tempore, and House and Senate minority leaders each must appoint two voting members to the board who are not state legislators. These appointees must have professional experience or academic qualifications in the AI or technology fields or a related field.

All initial appointments must be made by October 1, 2026. Each appointed member's term must coincide with the appointing authority's term and the appointing authority must fill any vacancy. Any vacancy occurring other than by term expiration must be filled for the rest of the unexpired term, and board members may serve more than one term.

Additionally, the following individuals serve as non-voting members and the board's chairpersons: the (1) DECD commissioner, CASE executive director, and Charter Oak State College president, or their designees, and (2) someone the Senate majority leader appoints who represents a statewide consortium of Connecticut public and private

entities, including higher education institutions, designed to advance the development, application, and impact of AI across the state. The chairpersons must schedule and hold the first meeting by November 1, 2026. The board must meet at least twice annually, but may meet other times as the chairpersons or a majority of the voting board members deem necessary.

The General Law and Government Administration and Elections committees' administrative staffs must serve as the board's administrative staff.

Board Powers and Duties

Under the bill, the board has the following powers and duties:

1. to develop and adopt a state technology strategy (a) to promote education, workforce development, economic development, and consumer protection, and (b) that accounts for the rapid pace of technological development, including in the AI field;
2. to update that strategy at least once every two years;
3. to issue reports and recommendations;
4. upon the majority vote of voting board members, to request any state agency data officer or state agency head to (a) appear before the board to answer questions or (b) provide assistance and data as needed for the board to carry out its duties;
5. to make recommendations to the legislative, executive, or judicial departments in line with the state technology strategy; and
6. to establish bylaws to govern the board's procedures.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 26 — COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT

Expands the purposes of the "computer science education account" to allow SDE to make expenditures to support workforce development initiatives

The bill expands the purposes of the "computer science education

account” and renames it the “computer science education and workforce development account.” It allows the State Department of Education (SDE) to use the account funds, in coordination with the Office of Workforce Strategy and BOR, to support workforce development initiatives in line with the state technology strategy the Connecticut Technology Advisory Board develops and adopts.

As under current law, the account is a separate, nonlapsing account, and SDE can also use it in various ways to support computer science education.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§§ 27 & 28 — TECHNOLOGY TALENT AND INNOVATION FUND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Repurposes the “Technology Talent Advisory Committee” to develop programs to expand the state’s technology talent pipeline in the fields of AI and quantum computing

The bill repurposes the “Technology Talent Advisory Committee,” which is within DECD, and renames it the “Technology Talent and Innovation Fund Advisory Committee.”

Under current law, the committee must (1) calculate certain statistics on the number of state residents in technology-related fields and (2) develop pilot programs for recruiting software developers and training state residents in software development and other topics. It also may develop other related programs (such as marketing campaigns).

The bill eliminates these provisions and instead allows the committee to partner with higher education institutions and other nonprofit organizations to develop programs to expand the state’s technology talent pipeline, including in the fields of AI and quantum computing.

By July 1, 2027, the bill requires the committee to partner with Connecticut public and private higher education institutions and other training providers to develop programs in the AI field, including in areas such as prompt engineering (the process of guiding a generative AI system to generate a desired output), AI marketing for small businesses, and AI for small business operations. Under the bill,

generative AI is any form of AI, including a foundation model, that can produce synthetic digital content.

As under existing law, the DECD commissioner determines the committee's size and appoints the members, which must at least include representatives of UConn, BOR, independent institutions of higher education, the Office of Workforce Strategy, and private industry. The committee (1) designates its chairperson from among the members and (2) must meet at least quarterly and at other times the chairperson deems necessary.

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 29 — LAYOFF NOTICES

Requires each employer that serves notice before plant closings and mass layoffs to disclose whether the layoffs are related to the employer's use of AI or another technological change

Under the bill, each employer that serves written notice on the state labor department under the federal law requiring notice before plant closings and mass layoffs (29 U.S.C. § 2102(a)) must disclose to the department whether the layoffs are related to the employer's use of AI or another technological change.

§ 30 — TEACHER CERTIFICATION PREPARATION PROGRAM

Specifically allows teacher certification preparation programs to include instruction on responsible use of emerging technologies

Existing law requires teacher certification preparation programs to include computer science instruction as part of the curriculum. The bill specifies this may include instruction in topics such as the responsible use of emerging technologies.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 31 — PROGRAM TO BOLSTER AI COOPERATION

Requires DECD, within existing appropriations, to develop and implement a program to bolster AI cooperation within the state

The bill requires DECD, by January 1, 2027, and within existing appropriations, to develop and implement a program to bolster AI

cooperation within the state. DECD must do so after consulting with an alliance representing the majority of Connecticut's public and private higher education institutions about research coordination, workforce development, and partnerships on AI. The program must:

1. at least annually, convene a research symposium to present and highlight AI research in the state;
2. at least quarterly, convene a meeting of academic, industry, and public institutions to identify the state's workforce, skill, and programmatic needs related to AI;
3. include a talent-matching program that (a) matches students with industry-led projects in the AI field, including projects focused on state and municipal AI use, and (b) implements an AI talent pipeline;
4. at least annually, (a) hold a competition that is open to the public (including students) that requires participants to use AI to help solve challenges state agencies identify, and (b) within 60 days after the competition, prepare a report disclosing potential solutions to, and best practices to address, the challenges and submit the report to the DECD commissioner and the General Law Committee;
5. foster connections between technology transfer programs at Connecticut public and private higher education institutions;
6. create a plan to give researchers and students shared access to high-performance computing; and
7. collaborate with various industry partners to offer (a) coursework for workers on AI-related concepts, including coursework to improve workers' AI-related skills, and (b) programs to educate Connecticut residents on AI-related concepts, with a special focus on small and medium-sized businesses.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 32 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Requires the DECD commissioner, for strategic plans developed on or after July 1, 2026, to consult CASE and consider and include plans to foster innovation in areas such as advanced manufacturing, AI, and quantum computing

Existing law requires the DECD commissioner to prepare an economic development strategic plan for the state every four years after consulting with various state entities and quasi-public organizations. In developing the plan, the commissioner must consult certain entities and stakeholders, consider certain plans, and include certain analyses or reviews of specific topics.

The bill requires the commissioner, for strategic plans developed on or after July 1, 2026, to consult with CASE and consider plans to foster innovation in advanced manufacturing, AI, quantum computing, robotics, and other emerging technologies. It also requires the plan to include a strategic technology plan for similar purposes and have an analysis of how the strategic technology plan will promote economic growth and development in the state.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 33 — AI WORKFORCE RESEARCH HUB

Requires the DOL commissioner, within existing appropriations, to establish an AI Workforce Research Hub to track and research AI's impact on the state's workforce and produce recurring analyses on AI's impact

The bill requires the DOL commissioner, by July 1, 2026, and within existing appropriations, to establish an AI Workforce Research Hub within the department to:

1. track AI's impact on the state's workforce;
2. conduct research to evaluate that impact, including the experiences of those in the state's workforce whose employment has been impacted by AI; and
3. produce recurring analyses, conduct scenario planning for a range of potential AI impact levels, and generate actionable insights to inform policy for training programs to mitigate any adverse impact of AI on employment in the state.

Starting by October 1, 2026, the commissioner must annually prepare a report, detailing the impact, research, analyses, planning, and insights described above and submit it to the Appropriations, General Law, and Labor committees.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 34 & 35 — OFFICE OF WORKFORCE STRATEGY

Requires the chief workforce officer to develop, implement, and promote programs to improve the state workforce's AI-related skills and a plan to create related apprenticeships

By law, the Office of Workforce Strategy is led by the chief workforce officer, who is the principal advisor to the governor on workforce development policy, strategy, and coordination. The chief workforce officer must have knowledge of publicly funded workforce training programs and have the training and experience to carry out certain statutory duties. The bill requires her to develop, implement, and promote programs to improve the skills of the state's workforce in relation to AI and a plan to create apprenticeships for technologists in the AI field.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 36 — AI PROGRAM TO ENHANCE HEALTH OUTCOMES

Requires OHS, in consultation with others and within available appropriations, to create a program to use AI to enhance health outcomes for Connecticut residents

By July 1, 2026, the bill requires the Office of Health Strategy (OHS), in consultation with the Department of Public Health (DPH), DECD, and DAS and within existing appropriations, to create a program to use AI to enhance health outcomes for Connecticut residents. As part of the program, the office must work with the statewide health information exchange to provide private health data, after removing all personally identifying information from it, to researchers to pilot systems incorporating AI.

The bill also requires OHS, at least annually and in collaboration with Connecticut medical schools and an alliance representing the majority of Connecticut's public and private higher education institutions relating to research coordination, workforce development, and

partnerships with industry relating to AI, to (1) hold a competition that is open to the public (including students) and is focused on AI use cases in health care, and (2) within 60 days after it, report the competition results to the OHS, DPH, DECD, and DAS commissioners and the General Law and Public Health committees.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 37 — SAFE HARBOR PROGRAM

Allows AI users to use a safe harbor program that provides them (1) certain legal protections from the CTDPA and CUTPA if they comply with program guidelines and (2) an opportunity to cure; requires applicants to give DCP certain explanations and proposed program guidelines for approval and public comment; requires safe harbor programs to annually submit a report to DCP with certain information on the program, its users, and complaints

The bill allows an AI user (individual or entity using AI in trade or commerce in the state) to submit to DCP, in a way the commissioner sets, an application for approval of a proposed safe harbor program, which may be administered by a third party. Safe harbor programs give users (1) certain legal protections relating to the CTDPA and CUTPA if they comply with program guidelines and (2) an opportunity to cure.

Application Requirements

The submitted application must include:

1. an explanation of the applicant user’s business model, and the technological capabilities and mechanisms that will be used to assess each AI user’s fitness to participate in the proposed safe harbor program;
2. proposed guidelines for the participant AI users in the program;
3. the applicant user’s commentary on the proposed guidelines, if any;
4. to the extent applicable to participant users, (a) a comparison of each proposed guideline provision and the corresponding CTDPA or CUTPA provision, if any, and (b) an explanation of how the proposed guidelines and the assessment mechanisms to be used by the proposed program satisfy the CTDPA or CUTPA

requirements;

5. any information the commissioner requires to determine that (a) the applicant complies with the CTDPA or CUTPA, to the extent applicable to the AI user, and (b) the proposed safe harbor program will include an independent assessment mechanism that is mandatory, effective, and capable of determining whether a participating user complies with the proposed guidelines, and that provides for a comprehensive review at least once a year of all participating users' policies, practices, and representations about information privacy and security; and that the program will take disciplinary action against any participating user that fails to comply with the guidelines;
6. the proposed safe harbor program's website address; and
7. any other information the commissioner requires for the purposes of the program.

Public Comment and Decision Timeframe

The bill requires the DCP commissioner or his designee, within

1. five days after receiving an application, to publish an invitation for public comment on the department's website; and
2. 180 days after receiving the application, to issue a written decision, in a way the commissioner sets, approving or denying the application and to send a copy of the decision to the applicant.

The commissioner may revoke any approval if he determines that the approved guidelines do not, or their implementation does not, meet the bill's requirements.

Amending Approved Program

The bill allows an approved safe harbor program to amend the approved guidelines for participating AI users, if the program submits to DCP the amended guidelines and an explanation of how they differ from the approved ones and the commissioner, or his designee,

approves the amended guidelines under the same procedure as for initial guidelines.

CTDPA and CUTPA Compliance

Regardless of any other state law, an AI user participating in an approved safe harbor program is deemed compliant with the CTDPA and CUTPA if the user complies with the approved program guidelines. The CTDPA establishes a framework for controlling and processing personal data and provides consumers certain rights; CUTPA prohibits businesses from engaging in unfair and deceptive acts or practices.

When considering whether to initiate an investigation or enforcement action against a participating user for a CTDPA or CUTPA violation, the commissioner must consider (1) the user's participation history in the approved safe harbor program; (2) whether the user has taken any action to cure the violation; and (3) whether the violation resulted in any disciplinary action required under the proposed guidelines.

Regardless of the CTDPA or CUTPA, if a participating AI user is alleged to have violated those laws, the user must have at least 10 days to cure the violation. The commissioner is prohibited from taking any enforcement action against the user during this period if the safe harbor program certified that the user complies with the program's approved guidelines.

Safe Harbor Program Requirements

The bill requires each safe harbor program to:

1. post, in a prominent and publicly accessible location on the program's website, a list identifying each participating AI user and update the list at least once every six months to ensure that it remains accurate;
2. promptly respond to any request it receives from the commissioner, or his designee, seeking information on the program; and
3. maintain for at least three years records of each consumer

complaint the program receives about any alleged violation of the approved guidelines by a user, any disciplinary action taken against the user, and the results of each independent assessment, and make these records available to the commissioner, or his designee, in a way the commissioner sets.

Reporting

Starting by October 15, 2027, the bill requires each approved safe harbor program to annually submit a report to DCP, in a way the commissioner sets, that includes the following for the 12-month period ending on September 30:

1. the identity of each AI user that participated or discontinued participation in the program,
2. a description of the program's business model,
3. a description of any additional services the program provided to participating users, including any training,
4. a copy of any consumer complaints the program received concerning guideline violations,
5. a summary of the results of all independent assessments done as part of the independent assessment mechanism,
6. a description of each disciplinary action taken against a participating AI user for violating the guidelines, and
7. a description of the process used to determine whether a participating user was the subject of any disciplinary action.

Starting by October 1, 2029, the bill also requires each approved safe harbor program to report to DCP every three years, in a way the commissioner sets, on the program's technological capabilities and the program's method to assess an AI user's fitness to participate in it.

BACKGROUND

Related Bills

sSB 4, §§ 13 & 14, favorably reported by the General Law Committee, gives consumers the right to be informed whether a profiling decision used personal data from a third party in processing an employment denial and to correct any inaccuracies.

sSB 86, favorably reported by the General Law Committee, has an identical regulatory sandbox provision and a similar provision on AI companion chatbots.

SB 417, favorably reported by the Commerce Committee, requires DECD to develop a plan to establish an AI small business program to, among other things, incentivize small businesses to adopt and deploy AI to achieve improvements in productivity and quality of products and services.

sSB 435, favorably reported by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, sets limitations and requirements for using an automated employment-related decision process. It also makes various changes related to AI, including making the use of AI a subject of collective bargaining for public sector employees.

sHB 5497, favorably reported by the Labor and Public Employees Committee, establishes a task force to study the effects of AI on the trades industry, such as in job displacement and the Technical and Education Career System's AI coursework and curriculum.

CUTPA

By law, CUTPA prohibits businesses from engaging in unfair and deceptive acts or practices. It allows the DCP commissioner, under specified procedures, to issue regulations defining an unfair trade practice, investigate complaints, issue cease and desist orders, order restitution in cases involving less than \$10,000, impose civil penalties of up to \$5,000, enter into consent agreements, ask the attorney general to seek injunctive relief, and accept voluntary statements of compliance. It also allows individuals to sue. Courts may issue restraining orders;

award actual and punitive damages, costs, and reasonable attorney's fees; and impose civil penalties of up to \$5,000 for willful violations and up to \$25,000 for a restraining order violation.

COMMITTEE ACTION

General Law Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 21 Nay 0 (03/16/2026)