



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 328

February Session, 2026

Substitute House Bill No. 5455

House of Representatives, April 1, 2026

The Committee on Public Safety and Security reported through REP. BOYD of the 50th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT
SPECIAL POLICE FORCES AND FIRE DEPARTMENT.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) Not later than July 1, 2027,
2 the president of The University of Connecticut shall establish a
3 recruitment and retention program for The University of Connecticut
4 special police forces and fire department to address critical staffing
5 shortages and high resignation rates. As part of such program, the
6 president of The University of Connecticut shall develop: (1) Salary
7 schedules for all sworn members of the university's special police forces
8 and all members of the fire department, and (2) an education benefit to
9 reward such members' long-term commitment and acquisition of
10 institutional knowledge critical to higher education and hospital
11 environments.

12 (b) (1) The salary schedules described in subdivision (1) of subsection
13 (a) of this section shall: (A) Align the compensation rates of the sworn
14 members of the university's special police forces and the members of the

15 fire department with the compensation rates of members of comparable
16 municipal and state law enforcement and fire service agencies to
17 eliminate any pay disparities between the members of such agencies
18 and the sworn members of the university's special police forces and the
19 members of the fire department, and (B) eliminate any significant step
20 overlaps between ranks to ensure that supervisors do not earn less than
21 the personnel they supervise.

22 (2) The president shall provide the salary schedules developed
23 pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection to the Office of Labor
24 Relations and the collective bargaining unit representing the sworn
25 members of the university's special police forces and the members of the
26 fire department. Such salary schedules: (A) Shall be a mandatory subject
27 of the negotiations between the Office of Labor Relations and such
28 collective bargaining unit (i) relating to salary, including, but not limited
29 to, any wage reopener, and (ii) next occurring after the president has
30 provided such salary schedules to said office and the collective
31 bargaining unit, and (B) may be a subject of any negotiations between
32 the Office of Labor Relations and such collective bargaining unit
33 occurring after the president has provided such salary schedules to said
34 office and the collective bargaining unit, but before the negotiations
35 described in subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, by mutual agreement
36 of said office and such bargaining unit.

37 (c) (1) The president of The University of Connecticut shall develop
38 the parameters of the education benefit described in subdivision (2) of
39 subsection (a) of this section. Such parameters: (A) May include, but
40 need not be limited to, tuition reimbursement or university fee waivers,
41 and (B) shall (i) include, but need not be limited to, the required years
42 of service for eligibility, and (ii) allow dependents of the sworn members
43 of the university's special police forces and the members of the fire
44 department to be eligible for such education benefit, under terms and
45 conditions established by the president.

46 (2) The president shall provide the parameters of the education
47 benefit developed pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection to the

48 Commissioner of Administrative Services. Notwithstanding the
49 provisions of any applicable collective bargaining agreement or chapter
50 68 of the general statutes, upon receipt of such parameters from the
51 president, the commissioner shall implement the education benefit
52 without modification.

53 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Not later than January 1, 2027,
54 and annually thereafter, the president of The University of Connecticut
55 shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a
56 of the general statutes, on the recruitment and retention status of the
57 university's special police forces and fire department to the joint
58 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of
59 matters relating to public safety and security and higher education and
60 employment advancement and to the Board of Trustees of The
61 University of Connecticut. Such report shall include, but need not be
62 limited to, for both the special police forces and the fire department: (1)
63 The total number of authorized positions compared to filled positions,
64 including a breakdown of any vacancies due to unfilled positions,
65 personnel being in academy training or field training or personnel being
66 on administrative, military or medical leave, (2) the total number of any
67 resignations, retirements and terminations that occurred during the
68 preceding year, including the average seniority of departing personnel,
69 (3) a detailed assessment of the forces' or department's ability to provide
70 mandated coverage at all applicable campuses and facilities, and (4) an
71 analysis of the financial impact of any costs incurred to train and recruit
72 personnel who resign within five years of being hired.

73 Sec. 3. Subsection (d) of section 10a-156b of the general statutes is
74 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*
75 *passage*):

76 (d) [The] Notwithstanding the provisions of chapter 68, the president
77 of The University of Connecticut shall establish classifications for the
78 special police forces positions for The University of Connecticut at Storrs
79 and its several campuses, including The University of Connecticut
80 Health Center in Farmington, using objective job-related criteria,

81 including, but not limited to: (1) Knowledge and skill required to carry
 82 out the duties of each position, including the skill required (A) in high-
 83 density campus environments, (B) to provide student-focused
 84 community outreach services, and (C) to provide specialized emergency
 85 services within The University of Connecticut Health Center in
 86 Farmington, (2) mental and physical effort required to carry out the
 87 duties of each position, [and] (3) the level of accountability assigned to
 88 each position, and (4) the responsibilities associated with exercising
 89 jurisdiction at multiple campuses throughout the state. The president
 90 shall establish and administer all necessary examinations for such
 91 special police forces.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	10a-156b(d)

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 1(a), "all sworn members of the university's special police forces and fire department" was changed to "all sworn members of the university's special police forces and all members of the fire department" and in Sections 1(b) and 1(c)(1), "the sworn members of the university's special police forces and fire department" was changed to "the sworn members of the university's special police forces and the members of the fire department" for accuracy.

PS *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 27 \$	FY 28 \$
UConn; UConn Health Ctr.	OF - Potential Cost	None	See Below

Note: OF=Other Funds

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill results in potential costs annually beginning in FY 28 to UConn and the UConn Health Center. It requires UConn to: (1) create a salary schedule for members of the UConn police and fire departments that must subsequently be a mandatory subject of collective bargaining; and (2) establish an unspecified education benefit for members of the UConn police and fire departments and their dependents.

Any cost, and the timing of such cost, associated with the bill's required salary schedule would depend on the provisions of future collective bargaining agreements. UConn employs 71 sworn police officers and 40 firefighters (111 total officers, including UConn Health). The average salary is \$72,338 for a UConn police officer and \$82,522 for a UConn firefighter.

The cost associated with the bill's education benefit would depend on the benefit's provisions, and the number of UConn police officers and firefighters (and their dependents) who receive the benefit. As an illustration, if 5% of the 111 total UConn police and firefighters, or their dependents, were to receive a tuition reimbursement in FY 27, the revenue loss would be approximately \$94,400.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the salary schedule and education benefits developed pursuant to the bill, and future collective bargaining agreements.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 5455*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT
SPECIAL POLICE FORCES AND FIRE DEPARTMENT.*****SUMMARY**

This bill requires the University of Connecticut (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 the benefit's parameters to the Department of Administrative Services commissioner. Upon receipt, the commissioner must implement the educational benefit without modification.

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.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 27 Nay 2 (03/17/2026)