



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 290

February Session, 2026

Substitute Senate Bill No. 277

Senate, April 1, 2026

The Committee on Public Safety and Security reported through SEN. GASTON of the 23rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES' RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE CODE OFFICIAL CAREER PATHWAY, THE FIRE SAFETY CODE, BURN INJURY REPORTS AND STATE BUILDING CODE PROVISIONS RELATING TO ACCESSIBILITY.

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

1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) The State Fire Marshal shall
2 convene a working group within the Department of Administrative
3 Services to study the code official career pathway. Such study shall
4 include, but need not be limited to, (1) an analysis of any statutory or
5 regulatory changes needed to create a more accessible entry into the
6 code official career pathway in the state, as informed by national
7 professional qualifications and best practices for professional
8 development, and (2) an examination of the current inspection
9 schedules and requirements applicable to local fire marshals.

10 (b) The working group shall consist of the following members: (1) The
11 State Fire Marshal, (2) each member of the Fire Marshal Training
12 Council, and (3) three members of the Joint Council of Connecticut Fire

13 Service Organizations, who shall be appointed by the joint council.

14 (c) The State Fire Marshal shall schedule the first meeting of the
15 working group, which shall be held not later than sixty days after the
16 effective date of this section.

17 (d) Not later than January 1, 2027, the working group shall submit a
18 report on its findings and recommendations, in accordance with the
19 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing
20 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
21 relating to public safety and security and the Commissioner of
22 Administrative Services, including, but not limited to, any
23 recommendations for statutory or regulatory changes needed for a more
24 accessible career pathway for code officials in the state. The working
25 group shall terminate on the date that it submits such report or January
26 1, 2027, whichever is later.

27 Sec. 2. Section 29-292 of the general statutes is amended by adding
28 subsection (d) as follows (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

29 (NEW) (d) The State Fire Marshal may issue official interpretations of
30 the Fire Safety Code, including interpretations of the applicability of any
31 provision of the code, upon the request of any person. The State Fire
32 Marshal shall compile and index each interpretation and shall publish
33 such interpretations at periodic intervals not exceeding four months.

34 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2026*) On or before January 1, 2027,
35 and annually thereafter, the Department of Public Health shall report to
36 the Office of the State Fire Marshal regarding (1) all burn injuries and
37 injuries resulting from fireworks or explosives, (2) any death resulting
38 from burn injuries, smoke inhalation or injuries resulting from
39 fireworks or explosives, and (3) any death to which burn injuries, smoke
40 inhalation or injuries resulting from fireworks or explosives
41 contributed. In providing such report, the department shall utilize death
42 certificate information in accordance with section 7-51a of the general
43 statutes and hospital discharge data provided to the department in
44 accordance with section 19a-2a of the general statutes. The office shall

45 compile the information contained in the report, publish a statistical
46 abstract and annually submit such abstract to each local fire marshal and
47 the General Assembly in accordance with the provisions of section 11-
48 4a of the general statutes.

49 Sec. 4. Subsection (b) of section 9-168d of the general statutes is
50 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
51 *1, 2026*):

52 (b) The registrars of voters in each town, or the legislative body of the
53 town, shall select as polling places only those sites which meet the
54 standards of accessibility required under the State Building Code [, as
55 revised pursuant to section 29-269, if applicable,] or this section. The
56 registrars of voters in each town shall file with the Secretary of the State
57 either: (1) A certification, as prescribed by the Secretary of the State, that
58 states that each polling place selected complies with the provisions set
59 forth in this subsection, or (2) an application for waiver, as described in
60 subsection (c) of this section.

61 Sec. 5. Subsection (i) of section 14-253a of the 2026 supplement to the
62 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
63 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

64 (i) Any public parking garage or terminal, as defined in the State
65 Building Code, constructed under a building permit application filed on
66 or after October 1, 1985, and prior to October 1, 2004, shall have nine feet
67 six inches' vertical clearance at a primary entrance and along the route
68 to at least two parking spaces which conform with the requirements of
69 subsection (h) of this section and which have nine feet six inches' vertical
70 clearance unless an exemption has been granted pursuant to the
71 provisions of subsection (b) of section [29-269] 29-254. Each public
72 parking garage or terminal, as defined in the State Building Code,
73 constructed under a building permit application filed on or after
74 October 1, 2004, shall have eight feet two inches' vertical clearance at a
75 primary entrance and along the route to at least two parking spaces for
76 passenger vans which conform with the requirements of subsection (h)
77 of this section and which have eight feet two inches' vertical clearance

78 unless an exemption has been granted pursuant to the provisions of
79 subsection (b) of section [29-269] 29-254.

80 Sec. 6. Subparagraph (C) of subdivision (6) of subsection (a) of section
81 46a-64c of the 2026 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and
82 the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

83 (C) For purposes of this subdivision, discrimination includes: (i) A
84 refusal to permit, at the expense of a person with a physical or mental
85 disability, reasonable modifications of existing premises occupied or to
86 be occupied by such person if such modifications may be necessary to
87 afford such person full enjoyment of the premises; except that, in the
88 case of a rental, the landlord may, where it is reasonable to do so,
89 condition permission for a modification on the renter agreeing to restore
90 the interior of the premises to the condition that existed before the
91 modification, reasonable wear and tear excepted; (ii) a refusal to make
92 reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices or services,
93 when such accommodations may be necessary to afford such person
94 equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling; (iii) in connection with
95 the design and construction of covered multifamily dwellings for the
96 first occupancy after March 13, 1991, a failure to design and construct
97 those dwellings in such manner that they comply with the requirements
98 of Section 804(f) of the Fair Housing Act or the provisions of the [state
99 building code as adopted pursuant to the provisions of sections 29-269
100 and 29-273] State Building Code relating to accessible or adaptable
101 dwelling units for persons with disabilities, whichever requires greater
102 accommodation. "Covered multifamily dwellings" means buildings
103 consisting of four or more units if such buildings have one or more
104 elevators, and ground floor units in other buildings consisting of four or
105 more units.

106 Sec. 7. Sections 19a-510a, 29-269 and 29-274 of the general statutes are
107 repealed. (*Effective October 1, 2026*)

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

| | | |
|-----------|------------------------|------------------|
| Section 1 | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 2 | <i>October 1, 2026</i> | 29-292(d) |
| Sec. 3 | <i>October 1, 2026</i> | New section |
| Sec. 4 | <i>October 1, 2026</i> | 9-168d(b) |
| Sec. 5 | <i>October 1, 2026</i> | 14-253a(i) |
| Sec. 6 | <i>October 1, 2026</i> | 46a-64c(a)(6)(C) |
| Sec. 7 | <i>October 1, 2026</i> | Repealer section |

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

Section 2 was redrafted to amend section 29-292 of the general statutes instead of section 29-292a of the general statutes, for accuracy, and in Section 6(a)(6)(C), "provisions of the [state building code as adopted pursuant to the provisions of sections 29-269 and 29-273, whichever requires greater accommodation] State Building Code" was changed to "provisions of the [state building code as adopted pursuant to the provisions of sections 29-269 and 29-273] State Building Code relating to accessible or adaptable dwelling units for persons with disabilities, whichever requires greater accommodation" for clarity.

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:** None**Municipal Impact:** None**Explanation**

The bill, which makes various changes related to the code official career pathway, the fire safety code, the state building code, and burn injury reporting, results in no fiscal impact.

The Out Years**State Impact:** None**Municipal Impact:** None

OLR Bill Analysis**sSB 277*****AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES' RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE CODE OFFICIAL CAREER PATHWAY, THE FIRE SAFETY CODE, BURN INJURY REPORTS AND STATE BUILDING CODE PROVISIONS RELATING TO ACCESSIBILITY.*****SUMMARY**

This bill makes various changes that, among other things, affect the state fire marshal, by setting new requirements and expanding her authority. Generally, the bill:

1. requires her to convene a working group within the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to study the code official career pathway (§ 1);
2. authorizes her to issue, upon anyone's request, official interpretations of the Fire Safety Code, including on the applicability of any code provision (§ 2); and
3. requires the Department of Public Health (DPH) to annually report to her on burn-related injuries (§ 3).

Additionally, the bill repeals provisions that currently require (1) certain health officials to report if they treated certain burn victims and (2) the state fire marshal to compile that reporting. It also repeals a building code statute related to accessibility and replaces its provisions governing certain variations of and exemptions from the State Building Code with similar provisions setting a different standard for approval that has no deadline for decision making.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026, except the working group provision is effective upon passage.

CODE OFFICIAL CAREER PATHWAY WORKING GROUP (§ 1)

Under the bill, the working group's members are the state fire marshal, all members of the Fire Marshal Training Council, and three members of the Joint Council of Connecticut Fire Service Organizations appointed by the joint council. The state fire marshal must schedule the working group's first meeting within 60 days after the bill passes.

The working group's study must include an (1) analysis of any statutory or regulatory changes needed to create a more accessible entry into the code official career pathway in Connecticut, as informed by national professional qualifications and best practices for professional development, and (2) examination of the current inspection schedules and requirements applicable to local fire marshals.

By January 1, 2027, the working group must report its findings and recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee and the DAS commissioner, including any recommendations for statutory or regulatory changes needed for a more accessible career pathway for code officials in Connecticut. The working group ends on the date it submits its report or January 1, 2027, whichever is later.

FIRE SAFETY CODE INTERPRETATIONS (§ 2)

The bill's authorization of the state fire marshal to issue official interpretations of the Fire Safety Code upon request is in addition to two similar provisions under existing law that allow the (1) state fire marshal to issue official interpretations of the State Fire Prevention Code and (2) state building inspector to do the same for the State Building Code (CGS §§ 29-291a & 29-252). As is the case with existing law's provisions, the bill requires the state fire marshal to compile and index each Fire Safety Code interpretation and publish them at periodic intervals at least every four months.

DPH REPORTING TO THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL (§ 3)

Starting January 1, 2027, and annually after, the bill requires DPH to report to the state fire marshal's office on (1) all burn injuries and injuries resulting from fireworks or explosives, (2) any death resulting from

those injuries or smoke inhalation, and (3) any death to which those injuries or smoke inhalation contributed.

The bill requires DPH to use death certificate information and hospital discharge data provided to it, compile the information contained in the report, publish a statistical abstract, and annually submit the abstract to each local fire marshal and the legislature.

REPEALERS AND CONFORMING CHANGES (§§ 4-7)

Health Care Providers' Burn Injury-Related Reports

The bill eliminates requirements for attending physicians, health care institution directors (and their designees), and health care providers to report on treatment provided for (1) a second or third degree burn to 5% or more of the body, (2) any burn to the upper respiratory tract, (3) laryngeal edema due to the inhalation of superheated air, (4) each case of a burn injury which is likely to or may result in death, and (5) any injury resulting from the use of fireworks. Under current law, they must report immediately by telephone to the local fire marshal of the jurisdiction where the incident that caused the burn occurred, and within 48 hours in writing to the state fire marshal's office. The bill also eliminates the requirement for the state fire marshal's office to compile the reported information and publish a statistical abstract to be submitted annually to local fire marshals and the legislature (CGS § 19a-510a).

Accessibility and the State Building Code

Separately, the bill repeals another law that, generally:

1. requires that the State Building Code be in substantial compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and federal Fair Housing Act (FHA);
2. sets a secondary process for the state building inspector to consider variations of and exemptions from any provision of the State Building Code relating to accessibility to, and use of, buildings and structures by people with disabilities; and

3. prohibits State Building Code variations and exemptions from requiring the construction of a “visitable feature” in a residential home, such as interior doorways with certain widths, accessible ways to exit such as ramps, or full or half bathrooms on the first floor that are compliant with the ADA (CGS § 29-269).

The bill makes conforming changes to replace references to this repealed statute, substitutes a specific reference to another accessibility-related building code statute (CGS § 29-273) with a more general one to provisions in the State Building Code on accessibility and adaptable dwelling units, and repeals another building code-related statute (CGS § 29-274) that, in combination with the other repeal, is obsolete because it exempts buildings from the other statute’s requirements.

The conforming changes effectively replace the repealed statute’s process for the above types of variations and exemptions with another existing process for all other types. The two processes are similar except the former requires the state building inspector to review and decide on an application within 30 days after receiving it and allows her to approve a variation or exemption if she determines that the standard or specification would not be feasible or would unreasonably complicate the construction, alteration, or repair in question. The latter does not set a deadline for the inspector to make a decision and instead only allows granting variations and exemptions if strict compliance would entail practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship or is otherwise unwarranted, and only so long as the intent of the law is observed, and public welfare and safety is assured.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 29 Nay 0 (03/17/2026)