



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 591

February Session, 2026

Senate Bill No. 484

Senate, April 13, 2026

The Committee on Judiciary reported through SEN. WINFIELD of the 10th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING DISTRACTED DRIVING AND THE SAFE OPERATION OF A MOTOR VEHICLE IN A HIGHWAY WORK ZONE.

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

1 Section 1. Section 14-296aa of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

3 (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the
4 following meanings, unless the context otherwise requires:

5 (1) "Mobile telephone" means a cellular, analog, wireless or digital
6 telephone capable of sending or receiving telephone communications
7 without an access line for service.

8 (2) "Using" or "use" means (A) holding a hand-held mobile telephone
9 to, or in the immediate proximity of, the user's ear, or (B) playing a video
10 on a mobile electronic device that is in full view to the person who is
11 operating the vehicle and properly restrained by such person's seat belt.

12 (3) "Hand-held mobile telephone" means a mobile telephone with

13 which a user engages in a call using at least one hand.

14 (4) "Hands-free accessory" means an attachment, add-on, built-in
15 feature, or addition to a mobile telephone, whether or not permanently
16 installed in a motor vehicle, that, when used, allows the vehicle operator
17 to maintain both hands on the steering wheel.

18 (5) "Hands-free mobile telephone" means a hand-held mobile
19 telephone that has an internal feature or function, or that is equipped
20 with an attachment or addition, whether or not permanently part of
21 such hand-held mobile telephone, by which a user engages in a call
22 without the use of either hand, whether or not the use of either hand is
23 necessary to activate, deactivate or initiate a function of such telephone.

24 (6) "Engage in a call" means talking into or listening on a hand-held
25 mobile telephone, but does not include holding a hand-held mobile
26 telephone to activate, deactivate or initiate a function of such telephone.

27 (7) "Immediate proximity" means the distance that permits the
28 operator of a hand-held mobile telephone to hear telecommunications
29 transmitted over such hand-held mobile telephone, but does not require
30 physical contact with such operator's ear.

31 (8) "Mobile electronic device" means any hand-held or other portable
32 electronic equipment capable of providing data communication
33 between two or more persons, including a text messaging device, a
34 paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer,
35 equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video
36 disk, or equipment on which digital photographs are taken or
37 transmitted, or any combination thereof. [J] "Mobile electronic device"
38 includes a video converter but does not include any audio equipment or
39 any equipment installed in a motor vehicle for the purpose of providing
40 navigation, emergency assistance to the operator of such motor vehicle
41 or video entertainment to the passengers in the rear seats of such motor
42 vehicle.

43 (9) "Operating a motor vehicle" means operating a motor vehicle on

44 any highway, as defined in section 14-1, including being temporarily
45 stationary due to traffic, road conditions or a traffic control sign or
46 signal, but not including being parked on the side or shoulder of any
47 highway where such vehicle is safely able to remain stationary.

48 (10) "Video converter" means any device created to transmit moving
49 images either with or without a wired connection to a device described
50 and limited under subsection (a) of section 14-105 that is in full view to
51 the person who is operating the vehicle and is properly restrained by
52 such person's seat belt.

53 (b) (1) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection and
54 subsections (c) and (d) of this section, no person shall operate a motor
55 vehicle upon a highway, as defined in section 14-1, while using a hand-
56 held mobile telephone to engage in a call or while using a mobile
57 electronic device. An operator of a motor vehicle who types, sends or
58 reads a text message with a hand-held mobile telephone or mobile
59 electronic device while operating a motor vehicle shall be in violation of
60 this section, except that if such operator is driving a commercial motor
61 vehicle, as defined in section 14-1, such operator shall be charged with
62 a violation of subsection (e) of this section.

63 (2) An operator of a motor vehicle who holds a hand-held mobile
64 telephone to, or in the immediate proximity of, his or her ear while
65 operating a motor vehicle is presumed to be engaging in a call within
66 the meaning of this section. The presumption established by this
67 subdivision is rebuttable by evidence tending to show that the operator
68 was not engaged in a call.

69 (3) The provisions of this subsection shall not be construed as
70 authorizing the seizure or forfeiture of a hand-held mobile telephone or
71 a mobile electronic device, unless otherwise provided by law.

72 (4) Subdivision (1) of this subsection shall not apply to: (A) The use
73 of a hand-held mobile telephone for the sole purpose of communicating
74 with any of the following regarding an emergency situation: An
75 emergency response operator; a hospital, physician's office or health

76 clinic; an ambulance company; a fire department; or a police
77 department, or (B) any of the following persons while in the
78 performance of their official duties and within the scope of their
79 employment: A peace officer, as defined in subdivision (9) of section
80 53a-3, a firefighter or an operator of an ambulance or authorized
81 emergency vehicle, as defined in section 14-1, or a member of the armed
82 forces of the United States, as defined in section 27-103, while operating
83 a military vehicle, or (C) the use of a hand-held radio by a person with
84 an amateur radio station license issued by the Federal Communications
85 Commission in emergency situations for emergency purposes only, or
86 (D) the use of a hands-free mobile telephone.

87 (c) No person shall use a hand-held mobile telephone or other
88 electronic device, including those with hands-free accessories, or a
89 mobile electronic device, while operating a school bus that is carrying
90 passengers, except that this subsection shall not apply when such
91 person: (1) Places an emergency call to school officials; (2) uses a hand-
92 held mobile telephone as provided in subparagraph (A) of subdivision
93 (4) of subsection (b) of this section; (3) uses a hand-held mobile
94 telephone or mobile electronic device in a manner similar to a two-way
95 radio to allow real-time communication with a school official, an
96 emergency response operator, a hospital, physician's office or health
97 clinic, an ambulance company, a fire department or a police department;
98 or (4) uses a mobile electronic device with a video display, provided
99 such device (A) is used as a global positioning system or to provide
100 navigation, (B) is securely attached inside the school bus near such
101 person, and (C) has been approved for such use by the Department of
102 Motor Vehicles.

103 (d) No person under eighteen years of age shall use any hand-held
104 mobile telephone, including one with a hands-free accessory, or a
105 mobile electronic device while operating a motor vehicle on a public
106 highway, except as provided in subparagraph (A) of subdivision (4) of
107 subsection (b) of this section.

108 (e) No person shall use a hand-held mobile telephone or other

109 electronic device or type, read or send text or a text message with or
110 from a mobile telephone or mobile electronic device while operating a
111 commercial motor vehicle, as defined in section 14-1, except for the
112 purpose of communicating with any of the following regarding an
113 emergency situation: An emergency response operator; a hospital;
114 physician's office or health clinic; an ambulance company; a fire
115 department or a police department.

116 (f) Except as provided in subsections (b) to (e), inclusive, of this
117 section, no person shall engage in any activity not related to the actual
118 operation of a motor vehicle in a manner that interferes with the safe
119 operation of such vehicle on any highway, as defined in section 14-1.

120 (g) Any law enforcement officer who issues a summons for a
121 violation of this section shall record on such summons the specific
122 nature of any distracted driving behavior observed by such officer.

123 (h) Any person who violates this section shall be fined two hundred
124 dollars for a first violation, three hundred seventy-five dollars for a
125 second violation and six hundred twenty-five dollars for a third or
126 subsequent violation.

127 (i) An operator of a motor vehicle who commits a moving violation,
128 as defined in subsection (a) of section 14-111g, while engaged in any
129 activity prohibited by this section shall be fined in accordance with
130 subsection (h) of this section, in addition to any penalty or fine imposed
131 for the moving violation.

132 (j) The state shall remit to a municipality twenty-five per cent of the
133 fine amount received for a violation of this section with respect to each
134 summons issued by such municipality. Each clerk of the Superior Court
135 or the Chief Court Administrator, or any other official of the Superior
136 Court designated by the Chief Court Administrator, shall, on or before
137 the thirtieth day of January, April, July and October in each year, certify
138 to the Comptroller the amount due for the previous quarter under this
139 subsection to each municipality served by the office of the clerk or
140 official.

141 (k) A record of any violation of this section shall appear on the
142 driving history record or motor vehicle record, as defined in section 14-
143 10, of any person who commits such violation, and the record of such
144 violation shall be available to any motor vehicle insurer in accordance
145 with the provisions of section 14-10.

146 (l) No person shall be subject to prosecution because of the same
147 offense for a violation of this section and subdivision (1) of subsection
148 (a) of section 14-222, as amended by this act.

149 Sec. 2. Section 14-222 of the 2026 supplement to the general statutes
150 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*
151 *October 1, 2026*):

152 (a) (1) No person shall operate any motor vehicle upon any public
153 highway of the state, or any road of any specially chartered municipal
154 association or of any district organized under the provisions of chapter
155 105, a purpose of which is the construction and maintenance of roads
156 and sidewalks, or in any parking area for ten cars or more or upon any
157 private road on which a speed limit has been established in accordance
158 with the provisions of section 14-218a or section 14-307a or upon any
159 school property recklessly, having regard to the width, traffic and use
160 of such highway, road, school property or parking area, the intersection
161 of streets and the weather conditions. The operation of a motor vehicle
162 upon any such highway, road or parking area for ten cars or more at
163 such a rate of speed as to endanger the life of any person other than the
164 operator of such motor vehicle, or the operation, downgrade, upon any
165 highway, of any motor vehicle with a commercial registration with the
166 clutch or gears disengaged, or the operation knowingly of a motor
167 vehicle with defective mechanism, shall constitute a violation of the
168 provisions of this subsection. The operation of a motor vehicle upon any
169 such highway, road or parking area for ten cars or more at a rate of
170 speed greater than eighty-five miles per hour but not greater than one
171 hundred miles per hour shall constitute a violation of the provisions of
172 this subsection. The operation of a motor vehicle in a highway work
173 zone, as defined in section 14-212d, while engaged in any activity

174 prohibited by section 14-296aa, as amended by this act, shall constitute
175 a violation of the provisions of this section.

176 (2) Any person who violates any provision of subdivision (1) of this
177 subsection shall be fined not less than one hundred dollars nor more
178 than three hundred dollars or imprisoned not more than thirty days or
179 be both fined and imprisoned for the first offense and for each
180 subsequent offense shall be fined not more than six hundred dollars or
181 imprisoned not more than one year or be both fined and imprisoned.

182 (b) (1) No person shall operate any motor vehicle upon any public
183 highway of the state, or any road of any specially chartered municipal
184 association or of any district organized under the provisions of chapter
185 105, a purpose of which is the construction and maintenance of roads
186 and sidewalks, or in any parking area for ten cars or more or upon any
187 private road on which a speed limit has been established in accordance
188 with the provisions of section 14-218a or 14-307a or upon any school
189 property at a rate of speed greater than one hundred miles per hour.

190 (2) Any person who violates subdivision (1) of this subsection shall
191 be fined not less than two hundred dollars nor more than six hundred
192 dollars or imprisoned not more than thirty days or be both fined and
193 imprisoned for the first offense and for each subsequent offense shall be
194 fined not more than one thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than
195 one year or be both fined and imprisoned.

196 (3) Any police officer who arrests a person for a violation of
197 subdivision (1) of this subsection, who has previously been convicted of
198 a violation of subdivision (1) of this subsection, shall cause the motor
199 vehicle such person was operating at the time of the current offense to
200 be impounded for a period of forty-eight hours after such arrest. The
201 owner of such motor vehicle may reclaim such motor vehicle after the
202 expiration of such forty-eight-hour period upon payment of all towing
203 and storage costs.

204 (c) No person shall be subject to prosecution because of the same
205 offense for a violation of both (1) subsection (a) or (b) of this section, and

206 (2) subsection (a) of section 14-219.

207 (d) No person shall be subject to prosecution because of the same
208 offense for a violation of subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of this section
209 and section 14-296aa, as amended by this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	14-296aa
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	14-222

JUD *Joint Favorable*

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 \$
Judicial Dept. (Probation)	GF - Potential Cost	Minimal	Minimal
State Resources	GF&TF - Potential Revenue Gain	See Below	See Below

Note: GF=General Fund; GF&TF=General Fund & Transportation Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill updates and expands certain driving-related offenses, resulting in a potential cost to the Judicial Department for probation and a potential revenue gain to the state from fines.¹ On average, the marginal cost for supervision in the community is less than \$600² each year for adults and \$450 each year for juveniles.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the number of offenses and fines collected.

¹ Between FY 22 and FY 25, there were about 70,000 offenses recorded and \$6.4 million in fines collected under CGS §§ 14-222 and 14-296aa.

² Probation marginal cost is based on services provided by private providers and only includes costs that increase with each additional participant. This does not include a cost for additional supervision by a probation officer unless a new offense is anticipated to result in enough additional offenders to require additional probation officers.

OLR Bill Analysis**SB 484*****AN ACT CONCERNING DISTRACTED DRIVING AND THE SAFE OPERATION OF A MOTOR VEHICLE IN A HIGHWAY WORK ZONE.*****SUMMARY**

This bill makes it a per se reckless driving violation to drive in a highway work zone while engaged in any activity prohibited under the state's distracted driving law.

The bill also adds video converters to the list of devices specifically considered "mobile electronic devices" under the distracted driving law. A "video converter" is a device created to transmit moving images, through a wired or wireless connection, to a television screen or similar device that is (1) described and limited under the applicable vehicle equipment law and (2) installed or used in a motor vehicle in full view of the driver when he or she is properly restrained in a seatbelt. The vehicle equipment law prohibits installing or using a television screen or similar device in a vehicle in a position where moving images may be visible to the driver while properly restrained in a seat belt, with exceptions for screens used for assistance while backing up, navigation, or vehicle control and information purposes, among other things. (It is unclear whether these exceptions apply to moving video transmitted to these screens through video converters.)

The law generally prohibits drivers from using a mobile electronic device while driving or typing, sending, or reading a text message with one (as is the case for using a handheld mobile telephone in these ways or to engage in a call). The bill expands the definition of "use" to include playing a video on a mobile electronic device that is in the driver's full view when properly restrained by a seatbelt. The bill also specifies that the distracted driving law's definitions apply unless the context otherwise requires. (Presumably, this allows the word "use" to be

interpreted as its plain meaning in the context of using mobile electronic devices or handheld mobile telephones. Current law defines “use” as holding a handheld mobile telephone to, or in the immediate proximity of, the user’s ear.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

DISTRACTED DRIVING IN A WORK ZONE

Existing law prohibits driving recklessly for the surroundings and conditions (such as road geometry or weather). It specifies certain circumstances that constitute reckless driving per se, including driving more than 85 m.p.h.

The bill expands these per se reckless driving violations to include driving a motor vehicle in a highway work zone while engaging in any activity the state’s existing distracted driving law prohibits.

Under existing law, reckless driving is an unclassified misdemeanor, subject to a fine, up to 30 days (first violation) or up to 364 days (subsequent violations) imprisonment, or both. The fine for reckless driving in a work zone is generally \$200-\$600 for a first violation and up to \$1,200 for subsequent violations. The fine for distracted driving in a work zone is \$400 for a first violation, \$750 for a second violation, and \$1,250 for subsequent violations. These fine amounts are two times the standard amount because both violations are subject to the existing law doubling fines for various driving violations committed in a work zone (CGS § 14-212a).

Under the bill, a person cannot be prosecuted for both a reckless driving violation and distracted driving violation for the same offense. Under existing law, distracted driving violations are processed by the Centralized Infractions Bureau and may be processed by mail or online. Reckless driving is a crime and generally requires the violator to appear in court.

BACKGROUND***Related Bill***

HB 5463 (File 417), favorably reported by the Transportation Committee, (1) explicitly prohibits driving while a moving image is visible to the driver, (2) reorganizes and revises the distracted driving law, and (3) makes distracted driving in a work zone a per se reckless driving offense.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 37 Nay 1 (03/24/2026)