

Government Administration and Elections Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5342 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND
OTHER MEANS TO GENERATE DECEPTIVE SYNTHETIC MEDIA AND

Title: AFFECT ELECTIONS.

Vote Date: 3/23/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/4/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill intends to respond to the proliferation of “deepfakes” created by artificial intelligence (AI) or other means, and it seeks to regulate their distribution within 90 days of an election or primary. The committee has noted that the AI technology used to create this deceptive content has become more powerful, with deceptive content often being virtually indistinguishable from genuine media. At the same time, they have also observed that this technology has become widely available. These two factors suggest that average people can readily access the tools needed to create deceptive content. By requiring clear and specific disclosures on such content, the bill aims to preserve the public trust in the election process.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

Makes a technical change.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas](#) provided written and spoken testimony in support of HB 5342 with clarifications and technical adjustments. She argues that the bill is necessary because it has already been seen that AI-generated deepfakes have the potential to impact elections. Her written testimony cites examples of robocalls mimicking President Biden’s voice to try to persuade New Hampshire voters not to vote in the primary and of AI-generated content spreading misinformation about voting. Thomas states that synthetic media has become so realistic that reasonable people can easily be misled. She maintains

that the bill's provisions balance the public interest in fair elections with free speech protections. Thomas elaborates that the bill allows for parody, satire, and news reporting while establishing clear disclaimer requirements and structured criminal and civil remedies.

Requested changes:

- Thomas argues that the bill's protections for political candidates should be extended to election workers, citing prior incidents where these individuals have been targeted with AI-generated misinformation.
- She requests that the 90-day timeline be extended to cover early voting and other elements of the state's elections calendar.

[Judicial Branch—External Affairs Division](#) submitted written commentary to request a clarifying technical amendment to Section 1(e)(1)(A), stating that the amendment “will allow the Judicial Branch to more accurately track these violations.” (Full language included in written testimony.)

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[League of Women Voters of Connecticut \(LWVCT\)—Jennifer Dayton, Vice President, Advocacy](#) wrote and spoke in support of HB 5342. During the public hearing, she stated that AI-generated content is already interfering with voters' decision-making because misinformation spreads at a faster rate than fact checkers can respond. Her written testimony provides supporting evidence regarding the impact of synthetically generated content on elections. LWVCT commends the committee for raising a bill that protects voters' right to access accurate election information. They support the bill's disclaimer requirements, noting that research indicates that voters need warnings about AI-generated content. LWVCT echoes Secretary Thomas's recommendation that the bill's language be expanded to protect election workers.

[Public Citizen—Ilana Beller, Organizing Manager](#) provided written and spoken testimony in support of HB 5342. Beller testifies that AI-generated deepfakes have generally become indistinguishable from real content. She cites examples of how elections around the world and in the United States have been impacted by such content. Beller writes, “It is not hard to envision a nightmare scenario where a well-timed fraudulent deepfake swings the outcome of an election.” She adds that this content has the potential to further undermine public trust because bad actors could pretend that “real” evidence of their behavior was actually a deepfake. Beller characterizes HB 5342 as necessary and testifies that Connecticut would be following the lead of twenty-seven other states that have enacted protections against election-related deepfakes.

Connecticut Citizen Action Group—Helen Humphreys, Senior Organizer and Communications Coordinator spoke in support of HB 5342. She characterized the bill as timely, relevant, and common-sense policy, stating that its protections are needed. Humphreys urged the committee to move the bill forward to help maintain residents' trust in the democratic process.

[Mitch Kennedy](#) submitted written testimony in support of the bill for reasons unrelated to its content.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Connecticut Business and Industry Association \(CBIA\)--Paul Amarone, Senior Policy Director](#) submitted written testimony in opposition to the bill, largely expressing concerns about the compliance burdens it would place on the state's businesses that attempt to operate in good faith. CBIA argues that the "should reasonably know" standard is unnecessarily vague; consequently, businesses who air political advertisements would face substantial compliance costs. They add that the bill's disclaimer requirements are complex, presenting additional compliance difficulties for small businesses. CBIA expresses concern that the bill's penalty structure could impose substantial costs even when a business successfully defends itself against a claim or charges. Alternatively, they suggest that the committee rework the legislation to target bad actors who make deceptive content.

[Connecticut Broadcasters Association \(CBA\)--Stephanie Perl, Board Member](#) wrote and spoke in opposition to HB 5342. The primary basis for CBA's objections is its contention that the bill should place liability on those who make deceptive content, not the stations that distribute it. CBA argues that they should have the right to be informed about an ad's use of deceptive AI-generated content. However, they do not have the resources to verify how each individual ad was produced. According to CBA, twenty-eight states have passed legislation regulating synthetic media's use in elections, and the "most effective" statutes have not placed liability on broadcasters. They express interest in continuing the conversation on how to hold accountable the producers of deceptive election-related media.

Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE)--John Coleman, Legislative Counsel spoke in opposition to the bill, with his main concerns pertaining to First Amendment protections. He argued that "deceptive synthetic media" is constitutionally protected speech, and he cautioned that the bill's provisions could make people afraid to joke or exaggerate. Coleman added objections to the bill's mandatory disclaimers as an unconstitutional form of compelled speech. He urged the committee to reject the bill.

[Michele May](#) submitted written testimony in opposition to HB 5342. She writes, "While the goal of protecting voters from malicious deception is legitimate, this bill is drafted in a manner that invites censorship, partisan abuse, and the criminalization of ordinary political speech." May argues that the bill makes it unclear to those involved in campaigns whether their content could be captured under the definition of "deceptive synthetic media." She adds that the bill's substantial penalties have the potential to stifle speech from smaller campaigns, but larger ones will use their resources to fight any action in court. May raises additional First Amendment concerns. Alternatively, she suggests that the committee should narrow the bill's focus, redirect energy toward transparency measures, and "[protect] robust political debate."

[Anonymous 39](#) opposes the bill.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

[ACLU Connecticut—Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel](#) submitted written testimony expressing appreciation of the bill's intent but raising First Amendment concerns about the regulation of political speech. Zaccagnino writes, "Rather than imposing new, broad restrictions on emerging forms of political expression, we encourage the legislature to focus

on enforcing these existing protections, ensuring that they are adequately adapted to address specific harms posed by new technologies without unduly restricting free speech.”

[New England Connectivity and Telecommunications Association, Inc. \(NECTA\)--Anna Lucey, Executive Vice President, Legislative and External Affairs](#) submitted written testimony to request a technical amendment to the bill’s language. NECTA argues that the bill’s provisions should focus on the creator’s intent, maintaining that those who are fooled by realistic synthetic media should not be subject to penalties.

Requested amendment:

- In Section 1, subsection (b), change the phrasing to “actual knowledge.” (Full language included in written testimony.)

Reported by: Betsy Francolino

Date: March 31, 2026