

Public Safety and Security Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5405 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING CRANE OWNERS, CRANE OPERATORS AND
HOISTING EQUIPMENT OPERATORS.

Vote Date: 3/17/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/5/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Public Safety and Security Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The Public Safety and Security Committee raised this bill in order to better address non-compliant companies and workers who do not have proper licensing to work on specific job sites. The bill expands a preexisting examining board for crane operators which is formed within the Department of Administrative Services from five members to seven and includes members both within the profession of crane operating and the general public. This bill authorizes DAS to strengthen its authority to oversee, penalize, and potentially revoke licensing for companies working without proper authorization, prioritizing safety for workers and ensuring that the work performed is meeting proper standards and skills necessary in the state of Connecticut.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The JFS language amends the bill to include various changes submitted by the Department of Administrative Services. Section 1 of the bill is removed and in its place is clarifying definitions for terms included in this bill (i.e. "crane"). Section 2 of the bill is also removed and in its place expands the Examining Board for Crane Operators within the Department of Administrative Services from five to seven members, which will consist of members both within the crane operating profession and members of the general public. Section 3, subsection b, is removed and in its place changes the stipulations and creates an exemption from subsection a, which states that a stop work order may be issued if DAS determines there is incompetence or negligence, a lack of safety, or failure to comply with the law. In the JFS language, there are provisions added that exempt certain types of workers from Section 3. Section 4, subsection b, also is removed and follows closely to the change in Section 3, adding an exemption for certain types of workers, where the established board may suspend or revoke licenses or certificates if the board determines there has been a demonstration of incompetence or negligence by the holder. The JFS language removes Section 5 completely and

authorizes DAS to do the following: enter a job site, require a license holder (including both the operator and owner) to show proof of their license, and proof of the work agreement made. Section 7 of the bill is removed and in its place the substitute language clarifies the authority of the examining board and authorizes DAS to enforce a civil penalty to those not in compliance.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Gilman, Michelle, Commissioner-DAS: Commissioner Gilman explained how the DAS, through OSFSM, supplies regulatory oversight of the state demolition and crane safety codes, including licensing of operators and contractors and inspection of crane installations and usage. Commissioner Gilman stated that the agency appreciates the additional tools that are supplied within this bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Clark, Martin, Owner-King-Clark LLC: Mr. Clark stated how worksite safety is a critical component of his business model and he only employs highly skilled individuals and supports strong apprenticeship and training standards. He explained how the work they do can be dangerous, and if they are going to compete against companies that employ poorly skilled & unlicensed employees and equipment, our state inspectors must supply the necessary accountability measures to enforce existing statutes.

Paradise, RJ, Branch Manager—Bay Crane: Mr. Paradise stated how worksite safety is a core value of his business model and he supports strong apprenticeship and training standards. He also states that he employs highly skilled, Connecticut-licensed crane operators. Mr. Paradise explained how the work they do can be dangerous, and if they have to compete against companies who do not value worksite safety, Connecticut needs strong enforcement and accountability.

Fernandes, John, Owner-A-A Crane and Rigging LLC: Mr. Fernandes stated how worksite safety is a central component to his business model, and he supports strong apprenticeship and training standards and employs highly skilled, Connecticut-licensed crane operators. Mr. Fernandes explained how the work they do can be dangerous, and if they have to compete against companies who do not value worksite safety, then we need strong enforcement and accountability.

Murphy, Keith, Chairman-Crane Operators Examining Board: Mr. Murphy explains in his testimony how his professional accomplishments in the crane operations field make him passionate about his profession and have allowed him to see firsthand the need for change that this bill addresses. Mr. Murphy believes that adding two additional board members would relieve the pressure to have enough board members to make a quorum and would also bring the board up to speed with other examining boards in Connecticut. Mr. Murphy also believes that Section 29-224b and Section 29-224c and Section 29-225 will all bring about effective change.

Schrade, Scott, President, A-Quick Pick Crane Service Inc.: Mr. Schrade stated how worksite safety is a central component to his business model, and they proudly support strong apprenticeship and training standards and employ highly skilled, Connecticut-licensed crane operators. Mr. Schrade explained how the work they do can be dangerous, and if they have to compete against companies who do not value worksite safety, he believes that we would need strong enforcement and accountability.

Brown, Nate, Business Manager-Operating Engineers Local 478: Mr. Brown stated that regarding Sec. 29-222 of this bill, the IUOE proposes adding two additional members to the Crane Examining Board: one additional crane operator and one additional crane owner. Pertaining to Sec. 29-224b, the

IUOE added a sentence clarifying that inspectors also have the ability to request that crane operators and owners produce their licenses and registration. Within this bill, the IUOE renumbered the original 29-224c to 29-224d and also made the board's authority to issue penalties more prescriptive than originally. Mr. Brown also explained how Sec. 29-225 was modified to list the penalties the board can impose for violations of the license or registration or violations of a stop work order.

Leon, Joelyn, Director-Foundation for Fair Contracting-Supports: Ms. Leon explained how the FFC is a nonprofit labor-management organization, and their perspective is that strong licensing laws only work when they are paired with meaningful enforcement authority. Ms. Leon described how cranes and hoisting equipment present unique risks on job sites, and when properly licensed operators and registered owners follow the law, projects are safe and efficient. But, she states, when this is all ignored, unnecessary danger occurs. Ms. Leon stated how meaningful penalties promote a level playing field and how contractors who invest in proper licensing, training, and compliance should not be placed at a competitive disadvantage. The FFC is also in support of the establishment of a dedicated investigations and inspections account.

Strede, Gregg, Training Director-Operating Engineers Local 478: Mr. Strede stated that due to how crane licenses are enforced and administered by the DAS, his companies' instructors and staff are regularly interfacing with the examining board and with the state inspectors. He claims the Crane License Examining Board has had obstacles with enforcement, specifically relating to the board's ability to impose civil penalties and disincentivize unsafe practices. The state crane inspectors are also limited in their enforcement capabilities as well, but Mr. Strede believes that HB 5405 will help ensure a high level of integrity amongst crane operators and owners throughout the state.

Zimmer, Kyle, Owner-Zimmer Consulting LLC: Mr. Zimmer explains how when cranes and hoisting equipment are operated by licensed professionals, they are indispensable tools, but when standards are ignored, they are very dangerous. Mr. Zimmer believes that the ability to issue and enforce stop-work orders is particularly important, as when unsafe crane activity is occurring, Connecticut must have the authority to act immediately to prevent injury or death. He states that waiting for a lengthy enforcement process when dangerous conditions continue is not acceptable. Mr. Zimmer also supports the strengthened penalty structure and believes that without enforceable consequences, licensing laws lose their power, and responsible contractors are undermined by others who cut corners.

Butts, John, Staff Liaison Safety Committee— Mr. Butts states how the CCIA is in support of this legislation but has concerns pertaining to Section 3. The CCIA recognizes how the ability to issue stop work orders can be an important safety tool, but since crane operations are often on the critical path of large commercial projects, even small interruptions can create significant scheduling impacts on multi-trade complex projects, which is why it is important that the statutory standards for issuing be clearly defined. Mr. Butts also stated that this bill does not clearly define the threshold for "incompetence," "unsafe manner," or "negligence." The CCIA recommends for it to do so to ensure consistent application. Mr. Butts also stated that the scope of a stop-work order should be limited to the specific piece of equipment or activity as opposed to business operations. Mr. Butt also stated how the CCIA understands that the reference to an "employee" of DAS in Section 3, Line 31, is the current statute, but they believe the term is too broad, and clarifying this is necessary. Mr. Butts also stated how this bill needs to contain an immediate informal review mechanism, and DAS could offer an informal conference within 48 hours of a written request and be allowed to modify a stopwork order after an informal review. The department should be required to issue written findings within a time period soon after the informal review, and the CCIA supports meaningful penalties for serious safety violations, especially in cases where a violation has been mitigated.

Toner, Joseph, Executive Director-CT State Building Trades Council: Mr. Toner stated how cranes and hoisting equipment are very dangerous, but when operated by licensed professionals and

maintained by law, they are beneficial tools. Mr. Toner believes that the ability to enforce stopwork orders is important, as the state must have authority to act immediately to prevent catastrophes, as waiting is not acceptable under these conditions. Mr. Toner also expressed support for the strengthened penalty structure, as it creates deterrence, and without this, licensing laws lose their effectiveness, and responsible contractors get undercut.

Kaar, Marko, Director of Safety Operations- Bartlett Brainard Eacott: Due to how BBE values jobsite safety, Mr. Kaar explained their support for this bill but had several concerns. Regarding Section 3, Mr. Kaar stated how even brief interruptions in crane operations can cause implications for multiple trades. Mr. Kaar also noted how this bill does not clearly define the threshold for "incompetence," "unsafe manner," or "negligence," and Mr. Kaar requests clearer statutory standards regarding issues for stop work orders, as it would supply consistent application. Mr. Mark also believes that the scope of a stopwork order should be limited to the specific activity or piece of equipment as opposed to broader business operations, as this protects people's safety at these worksites while avoiding multi-trade shutdowns, and he explained how one worker's mistake should not result in a shutdown. Mr. Kaar stated how even though the term "an employee" in section 3, line 31, is the current statute, it is too broad for this context and how this bill should contain an even more immediate informal review mechanism, such as how the DAS could supply informal conferences within 48 hours. Mr. Kaar also agrees with the penalties described in Section 4; however, he believes that due process must be given. Mr. Kaar also does not agree with how the account should be used "for the purposes of investigations and inspections" as stated in Section 5, as he believes that fines should be allocated to outreach and training opportunities. A suggestion Mr. Kaar supplies is that these funds should be used towards other areas like updating the DAS website regarding crane and housing-related matters.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed.

Reported by: Emma Rybacki, Clerk
Emma Green, Assist. Clerk

Date: 3/30/26