

Labor and Public Employees Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5496 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PROTECTIONS FOR
Title: UTILITY AND PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEES.

Vote Date: 3/17/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/10/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor & Public Employees Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The reason for this bill is to provide appropriate protections for utility workers who have to enter customers' homes as a part of their job. Workers who have to enter homes in order to perform their duties may be at a higher risk of being attacked due to misunderstandings, and this legislation would seek to help prevent such attacks. Similar proposals were made in previous legislative sessions regarding visiting nurses.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

LCO 3234 defines workplace violence within the legislation.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None provided.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Michael Adams, Legislative Assistant, AFSCME Council 4: Submitted testimony in support stating utility employees perform essential services and often interact directly with the public. The bill will make improvements to their safety by requiring employers to assess risks of workplace violence and developing training programs on responding to dangerous situations.

James Case, Member Lobbyist, CWA Local 1298: Submitted testimony in support stating they have worked in every type of environment from mansions to shacks. While on the job they have been threatened and attacked. They state there are inherent dangers when working in areas that are unknown. The bill would affirm safety requirements and help prevent harm.

Ed Hawthorne, President, Connecticut AFL, CIO: Submitted testimony in support stating utility workers face similar risks to home health care workers. In the course of their work, they interact with people who may be dealing with stress of anxiety. The customers may be angry about disruptions and take out their anger on the utility workers. Hawthorne states every worker deserves a safe place to work and asks that the bill be amended to extend its protections to utility workers who must perform their jobs on residential property.

David Weidlich Jr, President, CWA Local 1298: Submitted testimony stating they support requirements for employers to ensure workers safety with training programs as well as with recording incidents.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Paul Amarone, Senior Policy Director, CBIA: Submitted testimony in opposition stating many utility and municipal public works workers interact directly with customers. The bill requires employers conduct a risk assessment and implement a workplace violence prevention and response training program. HB 5496 imposes duplicative mandates as there are already robust workplace safety and violence prevention programs. These employers conduct regular risk assessments and provide extensive safety training and many of those practices are already required through federal workplace safety standards.

James Berardino, Legislative Director, COST: Submitted testimony in opposition stating the bill seems duplicative in nature as municipalities already must follow OSHA standards. It would impose overlapping and inconsistent obligations on employers and employees. They state unfunded mandates drive up costs.

Elizabeth Gara, Executive Director, CWWA: Submitted testimony in opposition stating the bill seems duplicative in nature as water utilities already must follow OSHA standards. They are worried the bill duplicating requirements would undermine current efforts in place.

Anonymous 12 and 13: Submitted testimony in opposition for reasons largely unrelated to the content of the bill.

Reported by: Lawrence Sanchez

Date: 3/27/2026