

Planning and Development Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5509 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING JUSTICES OF THE PEACE.

Vote Date: 3/13/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/11/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Planning and Development

REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill seeks to enhance the administrative tasks and qualifications required by Justices of the Peace officeholders. In addition to publishing a manual relevant to their duties, the bill would prohibit misconduct, specify when vacancies are made available, apply a 48-hour waiting period for marriage license issuances, and establish a working group. Many proponents support the bill, remaining open to refinements in their organization so as to better carry out their duties.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

The substitute language deletes provisions concerning employer liability for justices of the peace and removes town clerk appointments for vacancies in the office of justice of the peace created by the adoption of a municipal ordinance.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Office of the Secretary of State, Secretary of State, Stephanie Thomas:

Supports HB 5509 and clarifies that Justices of the Peace are the faces of real legal responsibility and public trust. By recognizing this in statute and refamiliarizing those with the relevant requirements, the Office hopes to reinforce the seriousness surrounding the justices' roles, duties, and services.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Connecticut Town Clerks Association, Vice President, Marc Garolfalo:

Supports establishing new standards for individuals serving as Justices of the Peace. Mr. Garolfaldo also appreciates the provision that gives the Secretary of State the authority to determine misconduct warranting punitive action such as suspension or revocation.

Justice of the Peace Association, Managing Member, Loretta Jay:

Ms. Jay explains the need for reform, pointing out the outdated and inequitable state of appointment processes, misconduct/fraudulence, and training/examinations.

Elizabeth McGuire:

Anna Neumon, Meriden:

Alan Shaw, Stamford:

As Justices of the Peace, they speak to the privilege of serving in the role and remain open to enhancing its professionalism through legislation. For future reference, they request membership in any working groups that may come up.

Kathrine Vass, Stratford:

A “JP” and ordained minister, she appreciates the proposed waiting period and the effort to reduce marriage fraud. She offers numerous working group considerations, like creating/registering officiant designations.

Brian Gay, Middletown:

Supports the bill and highlights the need for improvements in current systems, including JP appointments, transferability between towns, and inadequate training. He welcomes the establishment of a task force.

Laura Minor, Stratford:

Is in support of professionalizing JP’s in Connecticut. Ms. Minor’s greatest interest lies in improving the transferability of her status among towns.

Michelle Rodriguez, Clinton:

Aside from transferability between municipalities, Ms Rodriguez supports the legislation’s role in preventing individuals from holding the title of Justice of the Peace without performing the respective duties

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Cynthia Steckler:

Opposes the bill, referring to it as unfair, unethical, and undemocratic.

Reported by: Zachary Robinson

Date: 3/19/26