

Government Administration and Elections Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5548 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT CONCERNING EMPLOYEE RESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES AND CERTAIN

Title: HIGHER EDUCATION RECORDS.

Vote Date: 3/23/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/18/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

HB 5548 main goal is to add more protections to public agency employees under the Freedom of Information Act. This bill will add any employee of a public agency to the list of individuals covered by FOIA's limitation on disclosing home addresses as well as creating a FOIA exemption for the faculty or staff of a public higher education institution. There has been concern that bad actors are taking advantage of the FOIA system and they are bombarding the system with these bad faith requests. Faculty at higher education institutions may also be deterred from working in the state if they have to be constantly dealing with FOIA requests.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[The Freedom of Information Commission, Managing Director, Paula Pearlman](#) opposes 5548 as she believes it would prohibit access of record from citizens. She states that, "exempting from disclosure all records "arising out of teaching or research" belonging to not only professors but also staff, the bill is prohibiting access to records that are integral to the mission and function of public higher education institutions".

[The Connecticut Council on Freedom of Information, Treasurer, Jacqueline Smith](#) opposes HB 5548 because she knows that faculty members have asserted in the past that they have been harassed and even threatened, she describes there are two provisions of the FOIA designed to deal with it. She states that as of right now, "There is no evidence – none whatsoever -- that any individual at a public institution of higher learning has ever used the

vexatious requester provision". She includes that this bill is an overreaction to the events happening in Washington D.C.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[University of Connecticut-American Association of University Professors, Executive Director, Michael Bailey](#) supports HB 5548 as he believes it will continue to support open records laws that encourage government transparency and that allow for the general public to access copies of administrative records. He continues by saying HB 4448 has the proposed language that gives the necessary tools to deny requests that only intended for harassment.

[Connecticut Education Association, President & Vice President, Kate Dias & Joslyn DeLancey](#) supports HB 5548 as have seen the rise of threats and harassment to teachers from members of the public which has increased fear for their wellbeing and families. In addition, they ask legislators to consider exempting the personal telephone numbers of public-school teachers from disclosure as they believe it will give teachers an extra sense of security under the FOIA.

[The Connecticut American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, President, Ed Hawthorne](#) supports HB 5548 can unintentionally create undue burdens for dedicated public servants. He continues by explaining how public servants have often been harassed and have had disturbances at their place of residence/work. He states that, "Public servants understand the importance of transparent and accountable government, but they also wish to protect the privacy of their personal information and the safety of their families".

[University of Connecticut, Professor of Law, Roger Sherman & Sachin Pandya](#) supports HB 5548 because they know that harassment can be in the form of third parties who use state freedom of information (FOI) statutes to target staff and faculty at public universities to discourage research/teaching. They continue with stating that, "public university faculty face high legal uncertainty when it comes to FOI coverage of records arising out their research and teaching". They strongly believe HB 5548 is critical to reducing FOI-facilitated harassment.

[University of Connecticut, Professor, Andrew Bush](#) supports HB 5548 as he believes it will exempt faculty at public higher education institutions from certain FOIA requests He continues by stating that these requests are more often than not used to harass faculty for political reasons.

[University of Connecticut, Professor, Valerie Duffy](#) expresses strong support for HB 5548 due to requests becoming increasingly used in ways to burden institutions rather than promoting transparency under FOIA. She states that, "It is essential that faculty retain the ability to engage in open, evidence-based inquiry, debate findings, and advance knowledge for the public good— without being subject to burdensome or politically motivated requests".

[Civil Service Employees Association State Employees Union, President, Travis Woodward](#) supports HB 5548 as he believes there need to be added protections for public agency employees. He recalls a time where "a co-worker of mine was verbally accosted near the project by a resident who was unhappy about construction noise [and] this was a person who could reasonably be believed to want to take violent action against my co-worker". He

explains that House Bill 5548 will not harm public operations and will help ensure the safety of public agency workers.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Humane World for Animals, Connecticut State Director, Annie Hornish](#) strongly opposes HB 5548 as she believes it will have citizens not be able to access information related to animals used for research and testing at public institutions/higher education in CT. She describes if HB 5548 were to pass in CT it would be a step in the opposite direction and continue to shield information from the public.

Reported by: Rachel Casasnovas

Date: 3/31/26