

General Law Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-5 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING ONLINE SAFETY.

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Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

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REASONS FOR BILL

Senate Bill 5 intends to **support the responsible development and deployment of Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and other emerging technologies within the State of Connecticut. It contains a series of provisions aimed at protecting residents, promoting fair and responsible innovation, and empowering workers and decision-makers with the information and resources needed to navigate this profound transition in our state's economy.

Protecting Residents

Frontier models (which are typically developed by the largest, most powerful tech corporations) hold great promise, but lacking proper oversight, they have the potential to assist bad actors who intend to

cause catastrophic damage. **Whistleblower protections (Section 2)** aim to ensure that frontier developers' employees who report potentially dangerous activities may do so without fear of retaliation.

There have been documented incidents of AI companion chatbots encouraging users to engage in violence or self-harm. **AI companion chatbot protections (Sections 4-6)** require chatbot developers to make reasonable efforts to detect when users express these sentiments and to then redirect them to crisis resources. Periodic reminders that the user is interacting with AI are required. The provisions include **enhanced safeguards for users who are minors**, as this population has demonstrated particular vulnerability to the potential harms of this technology.

Promoting Fair and Responsible Innovation

Automated employment-related decision protections (Sections 7-14) aim to require transparency when AI or other automated technologies are a substantial factor in making decisions that impact hiring, firing, discipline, or other employment-related concerns.

- The federal Fair Credit Reporting Act of 1970 instituted the right to know and to dispute the information used to make credit decisions about a consumer; SB 5 includes similar *rights to examine and correct* incorrect third-party data used to make an employment-related decision.
- These provisions clarify that it is *illegal to make automated employment-related decisions that discriminate* based on an individual's membership in a protected class.
- To incentivize responsible behavior, the bill includes language specifying *anti-bias testing as a defense* against discrimination claims.

SB 5 intends to balance safety concerns with the promotion of innovation in Connecticut. The bill's **AI regulatory sandbox (Section 3)** and **safe harbor (Section 37)** programs aim to protect public safety while allowing those who develop and implement AI to apply for temporary flexibility in regulatory requirements.

SB 5 institutes other transparency measures aimed at improving fairness for consumers. Plain-language **disclosures of AI subscriptions' terms, conditions, and limits (Section 1)** intend to increase clarity regarding what consumers are purchasing. In recognition of it having become increasingly more difficult to distinguish AI-generated content from traditional content, the bill requires **digital watermarking (Section 15)** of select synthetically generated content.

In an effort to ensure that AI does not disrupt agreements that were fairly negotiated, the bill specifies that **AI use and implementation** cannot interfere with the terms of state employees' **collective bargaining agreements** while they are in effect (**Sections 16-17**).

Empowering Workers and Decision-Makers

SB 5 contains multiple provisions aimed at empowering the state's workforce to succeed in an AI-driven economy. The **Connecticut AI Academy (Sections 19, 21-24)** aims to develop and offer coursework addressing various identified needs within the sector. Changes to the **Technology Talent and Innovation Fund (Sections 27-28)** ensure that the fund's resources can be allocated toward needs in AI and quantum technologies. The bill empowers pre-service teachers by allowing **teacher certification programs (Section 30)** to include instruction in the responsible use of emerging technologies. By requiring the Office of Workforce Strategy to collaborate on **plans to improve AI skills in the state workforce** and to develop **technologist apprenticeships (Sections 34-35)**, the bill intends to ensure that Connecticut is future-ready.

SB 5 aims to recognize the importance of informed, proactive planning by Connecticut's decision makers. It allows legislative leaders to obtain non-partisan technical advice by designating **legislative liaisons from the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering (Section 18)**. The bill

creates an **AI Working Group (Section 20)** that seeks to create evidence-based recommendations for future policy. It institutes a **Connecticut Technology Advisory Board (Section 25)** to develop the state’s technology strategy, and it empowers the board by allowing funds from the updated **Computer Science Education and Workforce Development Account (Section 26)** to be allocated toward implementation of the board’s recommendations. In order to gather additional information relevant to policymaking, the bill requires that employers who issue federal WARN **notices regarding large layoffs** also disclose whether the layoffs are related to the use of AI or other developing technologies (**Section 29**).

SB 5 intends to empower state agencies to proactively address current and future impacts of emerging technologies. It requires the Department of Economic and Community Development to develop a program to **bolster AI cooperation (Section 31)** and specifies that certain AI-related topics must be included in its **strategic plan (Section 32)**. It also requires the Department of Labor to create an **AI Workforce Research Hub (Section 33)**, with the intent of increasing the state’s ability to enact evidence-based policy. The bill directs the Office of Workforce Strategy to plan to **improve the state workforce’s AI skills**, including through the creation of **technologist apprenticeships (Sections 34-35)**. It also directs the Office of Health Strategy to plan to use **AI to improve health outcomes (Section 36)** in the state.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE

The substitute language (LCO 3227) reflects feedback from various stakeholders and incorporates multiple revisions suggested throughout the committee process. To avoid potential confusion, the “Reasons for the Bill” section reflects the content of the *substitute* language.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY

[Department of Labor \(CTDOL\)–Dante Bartolomeo, Commissioner](#) provided written testimony on SB 5 that largely focuses on suggesting technical amendments to the raised bill.

- Connecticut AI Academy (Section 24)–She requests removing CTDOL from this section, as the Department does not directly provide training but rather contracts it out to Workforce Development Boards. She requests that the term “Workforce Investment Boards” be corrected to “Workforce Development Boards.”
- ReEmployCT portal (Section 26)–The testimony notes that providing AI Academy info to claimants would require resources currently not provided for in the Governor’s budget. Bartolomeo requests additional conversations about the effective date included in the raised bill.
- Artificial Intelligence Workforce Research Hub (Section 38)–CTDOL states that they lack the resources to implement this section, and they request that the effective date be pushed back.
- AI Apprenticeships (Section 39)–CTDOL clarifies that Registered Apprenticeship Programs are solely overseen by CTDOL’s Office of Apprenticeship Training (not the Office of Workforce Strategy). Consequently, they request to be involved in further conversations on this topic.

[Department of Consumer Protection \(DCP\)–Bryan Cafferelli, Commissioner](#) submitted written testimony to state that various provisions of the bill would place new responsibilities on the Department. DCP would therefore require additional resources not accounted for in the Governor’s budget.

[Department of Administrative Services \(DAS\)–Michelle Gilman, Commissioner](#) submitted written comments on SB 5. Although DAS is supportive of responsible AI adoption, Gilman expresses concerns about possible unintended consequences of certain provisions. DAS argues that the restrictions on AI use during collective bargaining agreements could delay efforts to modernize operations and streamline service delivery for residents. Gilman requests clarification regarding the

Artificial Intelligence Learning Laboratory Program proposed in Sections 5 and 6, noting that oversight requirements are different from those of the current “testbed” programs.

[Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity \(CWCSEO\)–Melvette Hill, Executive Director](#) submitted written testimony in support of SB 5. CWCSEO describes the bill’s provisions as “robust” and emphasizes the necessity of enhanced safeguards with respect to AI. They note that workplaces are increasingly using AI to make decisions in professions with a disproportionate number of women, especially Black and Latina women. In addition, CWCSEO argues that enhanced protections are needed regarding AI use and fair access to employment, citing a UNESCO report indicating that large language models have shown signs of gender bias in their decision making. The Commission urges the committee to “lead in shaping an artificial intelligence ecosystem that expands economic opportunity, supports workforce participation, protects youth and families, and ensures that the benefits of innovation are shared broadly across all communities.

[Department of Economic and Community Development \(DECD\)–Daniel O’Keefe, Commissioner](#) provided written and spoken testimony on SB 5. DECD supports the creation of an AI Policy Office within the department, writing that it would promote structured, informed decision making with respect to AI development in Connecticut. O’Keefe believes that the Connecticut AI Academy, AI Cooperation Program, and updated strategic planning requirements serve to support innovation and economic growth within the state. He notes that several initiatives would require resources not included in the Governor’s budget.

[Office of Workforce Strategy \(OWS\)–Dr. Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Chief Workforce Officer](#) provided written testimony on SB 5. OWS notes that the Technology Talent and Innovation Fund would require new funds that are not accounted for in the Governor’s budget. OWS reinforces DOL’s testimony regarding apprenticeship programs and requests that DOL be involved in future conversations on the topic. These apprenticeship programs would also require additional resources not included in the Governor’s budget.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT

[Senate President Pro Tempore Martin Looney](#) and [Senate Democrats](#) submitted identical testimony in support of SB 5, arguing that the bill will provide protections for residents, promote responsible use of AI, and empower the state’s economy. The testimony states that the bill’s chatbot protections are urgently needed, citing recent cases of minors who used AI companions that encouraged them to attempt suicide or even provided assistance in its completion. It also points to a recent murder-suicide in Greenwich that has been linked to chatbot use. In addition to pointing out the necessity of chatbot protections, the testimony characterizes the bill’s employment discrimination protections as crucial. The members state their support for the bill’s various workforce and economic development programs, writing that they will help Connecticut realize AI’s full potential.

[Rep. Nick Menapace](#) provided written testimony and spoke at the public hearing in support of SB 5. He describes the bill’s measures as “practical, bipartisan, resident-focused protections that complement the work happening in other states and reflect the values of transparency, accountability, and public safety.” Rep. Menapace applauds the bill’s requirement to clearly disclose terms of AI subscriptions and associated use of subscribers’ data, and he describes the whistleblower protections as essential to public safety. He argues that the AI Learning Laboratory will enable the state to make evidence-based policy that evolves with technology. Rep. Menapace points out that Connecticut is not pursuing this path on its own; he argues that this work is consistent with approaches being taken in neighboring states, including New York and Vermont. He characterizes AI policy development as an area in which values cross party lines, as legislators from both parties seek to promote fairness, transparency, and public safety.

[Easie–Rock W. Vitale, Founder and CEO](#) submitted written testimony in support of SB 5. He testifies from the perspective of an entrepreneur who helps businesses implement AI systems in 40+ industries. Vitale argues that by narrowing its provisions to hone in on automated decision-making in employment, the legislation takes a “smart, focused approach.” He believes that it is sensible that people should know when AI is part of a decision that impacts their livelihood. Vitale points out that the bill encourages responsible behavior by including provisions allowing the use of anti-bias testing as a defense in discrimination claims. He testifies that AI chatbot protections are “timely and necessary,” and he appreciates the strength of the Artificial Intelligence Learning Laboratory program’s model. Vitale writes that recent news coverage of the situation regarding Anthropic and the Pentagon demonstrates the necessity of the bill’s strong whistleblower protections. While Vitale states that he supports the bill, his testimony includes a list of seven targeted adjustments for the committee’s consideration.

[VRSim, Inc.–Matthew Wallace, CEO and President](#) submitted written testimony in support of SB 5. He states that his small business specializes in virtual reality simulation training systems, and VRSim “views the safe, ethical, and practical integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as vital to our state’s economic future and workforce development.” Wallace testifies that the bill’s AI Learning Laboratory Program and associated regulatory mitigation agreements provide needed support for the development and deployment of innovations within the state. He also states that the bill’s workforce development programs help upskill workers so that they are ready to contribute to the industry. Wallace refers to the bill as “a strategic investment in Connecticut’s future” and urges the committee to report it favorably.

[SEIU 32BJ–Rochelle Palache, Connecticut State Director](#) presented written testimony in support of SB 5, describing it as a “promising start” in protecting workers from uses of AI that circumvent the terms of union contracts and from discriminatory hiring practices that use AI. Palache encourages the committee to close “safe harbor” loopholes and to include a private right of action for workers who are harmed by AI decisions.

Communications Workers of America Local 1298 (CWA 1298)--[David Weidlich Jr., President](#) and [James Case, Member Lobbyist](#) testified in support of SB 5. They state that automated technologies that mimic human thought are quickly reshaping workplaces. CWA stresses the need for clear rules that provide transparency and accountability so that workers are adequately protected. They express support for amending the language to ensure that AI is a mandatory subject of collective bargaining.

[Connecticut AI Alliance \(CAIA\)–Dr. Vahid Behzadan, Co-Founder](#) submitted written testimony in partial support of SB 5. He states that CAIA, which is a consortium of 21 public and private higher education institutions, along with industry partners, nonprofit organizations, and public sector stakeholders, has been engaging in significant work within the scope of the bill.

Dr. Behzadan would like to ensure that SB 5 is implemented in a way that is not duplicative of infrastructure that CAIA is already putting into place. For example, he applauds Section 36 for leveraging CAIA’s expertise. While Dr. Behzadan expresses support for the creation of the AI Policy Office and Learning Laboratory, he recommends that the program be designed to build upon initiatives through which CAIA already provides small colleges with access to high-performance computing infrastructure. He encourages similar partnerships with respect to the Connecticut AI Academy, the AI Workforce Research Hub, and the creation of technologist apprenticeships. Dr. Behzadan offers CAIA’s expertise and resources to the Connecticut Technology Advisory Board, and he requests that CAIA, the Governor’s AI Working Group, and other established bodies be consulted in establishing its priorities.

Although CAIA supports the bill, they raise several areas of concern and make recommendations for improvements:

- **Automated employment decisions**—CAIA argues that these measures could place a significant regulatory burden on smaller nonprofit colleges. The testimony offers suggested changes should the provisions stay in the bill.
- **Frontier developer requirements**—Dr. Behzadan encourages the committee to refine the definition of “frontier developer” so that it does not unintentionally capture academic research institutions or smaller AI startups.
- **Avoiding duplication**—The testimony recommends that the state take an inventory of existing AI programs and resources so that new initiatives do not duplicate existing work.

[Charter Oak State College—David Ferreira, Provost](#) submitted written testimony in strong support of SB 5. He argues that the Connecticut AI Academy is urgently needed, as AI implementation in the workforce is slated to have a “staggering” and imminent impact on Connecticut’s workforce. Ferreira cites an estimate that 145,000 cognitive-heavy positions in Connecticut will be affected within the next one to three years. Consequently, he argues that the residents need the upskilling and reskilling that would be offered by the Connecticut AI academy. Ferreira testifies that the Connecticut Online AI Academy has already proven successful, and Charter Oak has the resources to deliver online training at scale. He adds that the legislation would enable his institution to expand its efforts to include targeted training for small businesses and nonprofits, K-12 educators, youth, and current participants in the workforce. He praises the bill’s inclusion of outreach efforts, stating that they ensure that the Connecticut AI Academy will be a “ladder of opportunity for all residents, regardless of their current economic status.”

[Anna Mae Duane, Director, UConn Humanities Institute](#) wrote and spoke in support of SB 5. She writes that she leads a multidisciplinary Human-Centered AI Research Working Group, going on to state that she recently hosted a panel exploring a question brought to her by UConn’s union: will AI replace us? Duane states that the room was full of students, faculty, and staff who want to ensure that AI makes everyone’s lives better. She argues that SB 5 provides that assurance, noting that we have already seen the damage caused by unregulated AI. Duane points to a model of OpenAI 4o that encouraged users to become emotionally attached to the software, resulting in dangerous consequences and costly litigation. She argues that SB 5 builds an infrastructure of thoughtful regulation that preserves human dignity and ensures that innovation will be sustainable.

[John Murphy, Assistant Professor in Residence, UConn Department of Digital Media and Design](#) testified in strong support of SB 5, with his remarks focusing on AI chatbot companion protections and automated employment decision provisions. Murphy argues that the chatbot safeguards are urgently needed, particularly for minors. He cites recent research indicating that young people are developing emotional attachments to these apps, expressing particular concern that the chatbots are often designed to maximize user engagement through manipulation. To further strengthen the bill, Murphy argues that disclosures that a user is interacting with AI should be persistent, and he suggests adding usage break reminders. With respect to employment provisions, Murphy testifies that the bill’s disclosure requirements are “reasonable and overdue.” He also expresses support for clear identification of synthetic digital content. Murphy’s written testimony adds additional suggestions to strengthen definitions, clarify enforcement mechanisms, and fund the governance infrastructure.

[Connecticut Computer Science Teachers Association\(CSTA\)—Norman Sondheimer, Ph.D.](#) wrote and spoke in strong support of SB 5, with a focus on provisions related to AI education and teacher training. He characterizes the measures pertaining to the Connecticut AI Academy, teacher training, and digital literacy as “thoughtful and strategic investments in our children’s future.” Sondheimer makes a specific request for an amendment to Section 10-16b that would require public schools to offer instruction in artificial intelligence and other emerging computer technologies. He points to the success of Public Act 19-128 with respect to increasing participation in computer coding instruction,

particularly among groups of students with historically low rates of participation. Sondheimer argues that the amendment will ensure that classroom opportunities are available to all students.

Connecticut Computer Science Teachers Association (CSTA)—John Tusch, President spoke to echo Sondheimer’s support for the bill and add comments regarding updated teacher certification and training requirements. Tusch stated that educators are eager for professional development on teaching “with and about AI,” and the workforce development account provides necessary financial support for such initiatives. He testified to advocate for an “AI across the curriculum” approach that would integrate computational thinking into every subject rather than treating it as a standalone subject. Tusch characterized the bill’s measures as a step in the right direction.

ReadyCT—Shannon Marimón, Executive Director submitted written testimony in support of SB 5. ReadyCT emphasizes that “education is the engine of opportunity” and the state must ensure that students are adequately equipped with computational thinking skills that are critical to success in high-stakes sectors. They testify that SB 5 supports workforce development by integrating essential safeguards and comprehensive educational resources. ReadyCT states that the bill’s teacher certification and professional development initiatives ensure that educators are equipped with the skills and knowledge required to provide proper guidance for students. They praise the measures of the bill aimed at increasing accessibility of resources, stating that they make training available to residents of every ZIP code. ReadyCT points to the Connecticut AI Academy as evidence of the bill’s commitment to equity. They argue that SB 5 prepares students to lead and builds a foundation for a stronger economy, and they urge the committee to support the bill.

AI Robotics Ethics Society (AIRES) at Brown University—Gabriel Gonzalez, Policy Team provided written testimony in support of SB 5, with his comments focusing on the bill’s education and innovation initiatives. Gonzalez praises the AI Learning Laboratory Program as a measure that does not block progress but rather ensures safe deployment. He applauds the creation of the Connecticut AI Academy, stating that it recognizes the technology’s potential while ensuring that residents use tools safely and effectively. Gonzalez adds that the workforce development account helps increase access to training for all.

AI Robotics Ethics Society (AIRES) at Brown University—Josephine Hardy, Policy Team submitted written testimony in support of SB 5 that focuses on its provisions requiring AI subscription services to make certain disclosures to consumers. She notes that AI tools often have long and complicated subscription terms, and these terms are frequently updated with little warning and without transparency. Hardy argues that the bill’s provisions put into place basic consumer protections that require clear disclosure of agreement terms/limits, notification of how data is used or retained, and whether their data is used to train models. She characterizes these measures as “proportionate” and “commonsense,” and she urges the committee to advance the bill with these provisions included.

AI Robotics Ethics Society (AIRES) at Brown University—Jay Maroney, Policy Team provided written testimony in support of SB 5 that focuses on the bill’s provisions related to automated employment-related decisions. Maroney writes, “Employment decisions are among the most consequential determinations affecting a person’s life, and individuals deserve to know when automated tools are involved and what to expect.” He characterizes the bill’s anti-discrimination protections and its encouragement of anti-bias testing as responsible measures that do not negatively impact innovation.

AI Robotics Ethics Society (AIRES) at Brown University—Garrett Xu, Policy Team submitted written comments in support of SB 5. He focuses on the bill’s provisions regarding AI companion models, frontier models, and whistleblower protections. He states that although AIRES does not believe that AI companions are “inherently malicious,” they believe that firm safeguards like those established in SB 5 must be enacted in order to protect vulnerable populations. Xu points to two

young people’s recent deaths by suicide that were linked to interactions with chatbots as evidence that state action is needed. He writes, “Safety is only a pipedream if we allow technology companies to treat individuals, especially the kids who are most at risk, as beta testers for high-stakes emotional experiments without any accountability.”

[Ted Yang](#) submitted written testimony in support of SB 5, stating that he appreciates that it focuses its provisions on the highest-risk uses and operators. He adds approval of the measures improving disclosures of AI subscriptions’ limits, enhancing safeguards relating to AI chatbots, and extending protections related to employment-related AI. He urges the committee to ensure that the bill’s requirements remain manageable for small companies and universities.

[Beverly Propen](#) and [Anonymous 41](#) submitted written testimony in support of the bill.

GENERAL COMMENTS

[Connecticut Voices for Children \(CT Voices\)--Carmen Clarkin, Special Assistant for Strategic Initiatives and Emily Knox, Research and Policy Director](#) testified to express general support for SB 5 but to recommend specific improvements to the bill’s language. Clarkin and Knox co-authored the written submission, and Clarkin spoke at the public hearing. They describe SB 5 as a “landmark proposal” that “positions Connecticut as a leader in responsible technological governance.” CT Voices praises the bill’s whistleblower protections, transparency measures, and employment protections, as well as its various economic and workforce development programs.

CT Voices raises the following concerns and suggests associated improvements:

- Risk tiers—They testify that they believe the bar for “catastrophic risk” is extremely high, and they argue that the language should be amended to include additional tiers modeled after the EU AI Act.
- Enforceability—CT Voices argues that without a private right of action, the ability to correct violations will be limited. They also argue that “technically feasible” should be removed from the section regarding human reviews, as it could provide a loophole for companies looking to avoid oversight.
- Accessibility for small developers—Although CT Voices supports the Connecticut AI Academy and AI Learning Laboratory programs, they raise the possibility that the \$5,000 application fee may pose a barrier to smaller developers and those from underrepresented communities. They recommend the inclusion of a fee-waiver program or other grants to support inclusive AI development.
- Mitigation agreements—They express concern that the 30-day timeline for approval of a regulatory mitigation agreement is too short to ensure safety and argue for flexibility in the language.
- “Obviousness loophole”—While CT Voices supports transparency measures in automated employment-related decisions, they caution that the “reasonable person” loophole could be taken advantage of by developers.
- “Reasonably foreseeable loophole”—Although CT Voices praises measures requiring detection of indications of suicidality in chatbot interactions and subsequent redirection to crisis resources, they warn that developers could exploit language requiring a harm to be “reasonably foreseeable.”

Overall, CT Voices argues that SB 5 supports innovation while simultaneously mitigating risk.

[Fathom—Andrew Freedman, CEO](#) provided written comments stressing the importance of building a practical AI governance framework that also supports innovation. They argue that such a framework includes independent expert verification within an “oversight marketplace,” which they believe should be paired with incentives that encourage voluntary participation in governance programs. Fathom’s model relies on Independent Verification Organizations (IVOs). These state-licensed entities perform

technical evaluations against measurable standards, and state regulators set standards while providing general oversight. They argue that this model reduces the burden placed on government agencies to perform technical reviews and places it in the hands of qualified organizations. Fathom adds that SB 5 provides significant regulatory incentives, including safe harbor provisions, presumptions of compliance, mitigation agreements, and opportunities to cure violations. They argue that SB 5 should include provisions explicitly incorporating IVOs into the state's AI oversight framework.

Michael Binko, Entrepreneur and Venture Capital Investor spoke at the public hearing to comment on how Connecticut can best support AI innovation. Binko advocated for an approach that balances regulation and growth potential. He remarked that he has worked with students at Trinity College to pilot an AI sandbox, and he encouraged the state to provide additional resources to small businesses that assist with AI adoption. To highlight AI's potential, Binko referenced examples of various technological innovations piloted within the state. He encouraged the committee to take advantage of the present opportunity to harness AI's potential to drive workforce and economic development.

[New England Connectivity and Telecommunications Association, Inc. \(NECTA\)--Anna P. Lucey, Executive Vice President, Legislative and External Affairs](#) testified primarily to express concerns regarding SB 5's automated employment decision provisions. They argue that these provisions would stifle innovation, curb investment, and impose unworkable compliance burdens on companies within the state. They raise the following main points regarding the automated employment decision sections:

- NECTA characterizes the definition of "automated employment-related decision" as too broad, and they recommend an amendment that would target systems that make decisions without a human in the loop.
- Similarly, they argue that the "substantial factor" qualifier is too vague, and they provide amended language that would instead cause the provisions to apply to automated decisions that are not overseen by a person.
- NECTA states that as drafted, the appeal process lacks clarity and is minimally useful to an individual who has been adversely impacted. They recommend revising the review process so that it instead provides for human review.
- NECTA argues that the bill "mandates" anti-bias testing and that this requirement is problematic. They believe there are no clear standards for such testing and that this provision should be struck from the bill.
- They testify that the employment decisions provisions lack a cure period, but that this should be included in the bill. NECTA states that cure periods offer incentives for companies to act in good faith.

NECTA adds additional concerns regarding other sections of the bill and offers accompanying suggestions for revision. Full language for any proposed revisions is included in NECTA's written testimony.

[Connecticut AFL-CIO--Ed Hawthorne, President](#) offered written and spoken testimony to express appreciation for many of SB 5's components while also urging the committee to close various loopholes and strengthen its enforcement mechanisms.

Hawthorne supports the bill's sections requiring employers to disclose when they are using AI to make automated employment-related decisions. However, he suggests the "reasonable person" standard is too subjective and that users should be notified every time they are interacting with an automated decision process. Accordingly, he encourages the committee to remove the "when technically feasible" qualifier and require meaningful human review of all AI decisions. He advocates for removal of a "trade secret" loophole, and he argues that impact assessments should be required before any automated employment-related decision technology is deployed. To increase accountability and enforceability, Hawthorne states that the bill should include a private right of action.

Hawthorne expresses AFL-CIO's support for the bill's protections of existing collective bargaining agreements. He believes that the collective bargaining language could be strengthened by making AI deployment a mandatory subject of such negotiations. In addition, Hawthorne proposes extending these collective bargaining protections to municipal workers and public school teachers. With respect to other provisions involving the Department of Labor, he testifies to express support but suggest minor changes. Hawthorne's written testimony lists other "concerns" that do not include accompanying revisions. AFL-CIO thanks the committee and Senator Maroney for their work in the area of AI regulation, and they encourage the committee to maintain a commitment to prioritizing people over profit.

[**AFSCME Council 4–Zak Leavy, Deputy Director–AFSCME Council 4**](#) offered written comments on SB 5 that largely echo the sentiments raised in AFL-CIO testimony.

AFT Connecticut–Stuart Savelkoul, Chief of Staff testified to comment on SB 5, characterizing it as a move in the "right direction" with respect to addressing the impact of AI on the workforce. He emphasized that the impact of AI in the workplace is not hypothetical but rather that it has already arrived. Savelkoul expressed broad support for foundational provisions regarding transparency, collective bargaining, whistleblower protections, and support for displaced workers. However, he cautioned that the "reasonable person" standard could be used to avoid compliance obligations. He encouraged the committee to close such loopholes, include worker voices on the bill's oversight bodies, and to include a private right of action.

AFT–Brad Murray, Deputy Research Director spoke to offer general support for various provisions of SB 5, commending the committee for its work in developing the definition of "substantial factor" as it pertains to high-risk AI systems. He noted that AFT members care deeply about protecting children and therefore appreciate the bill's strong guardrails with respect to AI companion chatbots. Murray offered a series of what he referred to as "friendly amendments" intended to strengthen the bill. He proposed adding AFT and other unions as official collaborators with the Connecticut AI Academy, stating that AFT already operates its own academy for members and could offer valuable insight to collaborators. Murray stated that AFT appreciates language protecting existing collective bargaining agreements but that they encourage the committee to make AI's impact a mandatory subject of collective bargaining. He added that AFT supports sending notices regarding automated employment-related decision processes to both the individual and their union. Murray also advocated for including a private right of action to the bill's language. He thanked the committee for its leadership in the absence of federal regulation.

[**CSEA SEIU Local 2001–Jan Lawrence, President, P-4 Council**](#) submitted written testimony focusing on comparing SB 5 and SB 86. They emphasize the importance of setting standards with respect to civil rights, labor rights, and public oversight in the area of AI regulation. Lawrence's comments pertain more directly to perceived weaknesses in SB 86, but the testimony ultimately encourages the committee to strengthen both bills.

[**4Cs SEIU 1973–Seth Freeman, President**](#) provided written testimony characterizing SB 5 as a "step in the right direction." He commends the bill's recognition that AI has reshaped workplaces and praises its inclusion of various associated protections. At the same time, Freeman advocates for strengthening the bill's language, encouraging the committee to ensure worker representation on oversight boards and to include a private right of action.

[**Connecticut Business and Industry Association \(CBIA\)–Chris Davis, Vice President**](#) testified to express support for SB 5's workforce development provisions but also to raise concerns about various aspects of its regulatory framework. Davis applauds the creation of the Connecticut AI Academy, the AI Learning Laboratory Program, the Artificial Intelligence Workforce Research Hub, along with the

updates to the Computer Science Education and Workforce Development Account. However, CBIA generally characterizes the bill’s regulatory framework as duplicative and burdensome. Davis testifies that automated employment-related decision provisions are unnecessary, arguing that employees are already protected under existing state law. His written comments detail potential new regulatory burdens and costs that could be placed on a Connecticut business. CBIA encourages the committee to narrow various definitions, extend implementation timelines, and provide exemptions for small businesses.

[**Connecticut Restaurant and Hospitality Association–Scott Dolch, President and CEO**](#) echoed CBIA’s concerns regarding SB 5’s potential impact on small businesses. They offer examples of how proposed regulations could impact a small restaurant or bistro. The written testimony includes a series of proposed changes aimed at limiting the bill’s impact on the restaurant industry.

[**Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges \(CCIC\)--Jennifer Widness, President**](#) testified to comment on SB 5. Her testimony expresses appreciation for the bill’s various economic and workforce development programs, and it raises concerns about the potential impact of its automated employment decision provisions on institutions of higher education. If the regulatory framework remains in the bill, CCIC asks that the committee narrow definitions of covered tools and provide flexibility (or exemptions) for institutions of higher education.

[**American Staffing Association \(ASA\)--Toby Malara, Vice President, Government Affairs**](#) provided written testimony in opposition to SB 5’s automated employment decision provisions. They argue that post consequential-decision notices are not feasible, and they are not able to comply with opt-out requirements. ASA requests that the committee strike the requirement to include opt-out rights in prior notice and to remove the post consequential-decision notice provisions. They ask that pop-ups be deemed sufficient to meet prior notice obligations.

[**Connecticut Association of Health Plans \(CTAHP\)--Susan Halpin, Executive Director**](#) provided general written comments on SB 5. CTAHP takes note of a recent memo from Attorney General Tong stating that Connecticut’s existing antidiscrimination laws apply to uses of AI. As in previous years, they urge the committee to use definitions that are consistent with existing federal guidelines. They also advocate for distinguishing between ordinary and high-risk uses of AI. These suggestions include accompanying language changes. With respect to the sharing of health data, they recommend pushing out the implementation date and adding specific data protections to the language.

[**LeadingAge Connecticut and Rhode Island–Mag Morelli, President**](#) primarily raises concerns regarding the bill’s automated employment decision protections. They state that many of the organization’s members already use automated tools to screen applicants and to schedule shifts. LeadingAge argues that there is “no evident reason” for the bill’s provisions, and these regulations would impose new compliance costs and administrative burdens. They state that aging service providers are already struggling with staffing and financial concerns, and they request that the committee reconsider these provisions.

[**Yale New Haven Health \(YNHHS\)--Paul Mounds, Jr., Vice President, Community, Corporate and Government Relations**](#) submitted written comments on SB 5. While YNHHS supports the bill’s overall goal of balancing safety and innovation, they request a series of targeted technical amendments addressing existing uses of AI in healthcare contexts.

[**Yale University**](#) submitted written comments that echo the healthcare-related concerns raised in YNHHS’s written testimony. They also urge the committee to take a more “risk-based approach” in crafting the bill’s regulatory structure.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION

[NetChoice–Patrick Hedger, Director of Policy](#) testified in opposition to SB 5 in its current form. Although the organization supports the bill's various workforce development programs, they argue that it raises constitutionality concerns. NetChoice contends that various standards are unconstitutionally vague, and they believe that the bill includes age-gating requirements that raise First Amendment concerns. They write that the bill "contributes to an unsustainable patchwork of state AI laws" that is harming consumers and businesses. NetChoice characterizes various provisions as duplicative of existing law, and they suggest that the committee pass only the workforce development measures of the bill.

[Chamber of Progress–Brianna January, Director of State and Local Government Relations, Northeast US](#) testified in opposition to SB 5, arguing that its regulatory requirements discourage the development of AI tools and services while increasing compliance burdens on businesses. They criticize various definitions, characterizing them as overbroad, and Chamber of Progress argues that the bill's safety protections for minors encourage age verification data collection. They testify that watermarking requirements are premature, stating that such technologies are evolving. January adds additional objections to the criteria used to define "speculative risk." Overall, the organization urges the committee to oppose the bill.

[Computer and Communications Industry Association \(CCIA\)–Kyle Sepe, State Policy Manager](#) wrote and spoke in opposition to SB 5, arguing that the bill's framework is unworkable and that it would block innovation while compromising security. They raise objections to certain key definitions within the bill, including "foundation model," "frontier developer," "large frontier developer," and "artificial intelligence companion." CCIA argues that some definitions are subjective and would create challenges with respect to compliance. They believe that non-discrimination and other provisions are duplicative of existing law and therefore unnecessary. CCIA recommends that the committee pause the legislation.

[Connecticut Hospital Association \(CHA\) Middlesex Health–Vincent Capece, President and CEO](#)

The above submitted largely identical testimony in support of various provisions but in opposition to certain regulatory measures. They express support for AI learning labs and increased student opportunities, chatbot protections for minors, provisions supporting mental health needs, and they appreciate the bill's initiatives aimed at collaboration between business, government, and the public. However, they characterize the bill's automated employment decision provisions as unworkable. With respect to synthetic digital content, they request carveouts for legitimate medical uses of AI such as radiology imaging and 3D modeling. The testimony expresses strong concern regarding the section that would use data in the Connie (the statewide health information exchange) to train AI models. They caution that it is unclear whether that section's provisions are compliant with HIPAA and other regulations that require strict data protection measures. They urge removal of this section unless clarity can be obtained.

[Connecticut Bankers Association \(CBA\)–Thomas Mongellow, President](#) testified to express concern about several provisions of SB 5. CBA writes that banks' use of AI is already subject to extensive regulation, and they note that the Attorney General's recent memo acknowledges that existing antidiscrimination statutes apply to uses of AI. Accordingly, CBA argues that the bill's employment decision provisions are broad and questions their necessity. They testify that provisions regarding synthetic digital content could have an impact on business operations. CBA urges the committee to reconsider the provisions of concern.

Reported by: Betsy Francolino

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