

Labor and Public Employees Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-348 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING PORTAL-TO-PORTAL WORKERS' COMPENSATION
Title: COVERAGE FOR PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES.

Vote Date: 3/17/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/3/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor & Public Employees Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The reason for this bill is to ensure that municipal Public Works employees qualify for portal-to-portal coverage when responding during emergency situations. Many public works employees are required to respond to work during extreme weather conditions, and this bill work require that injuries sustained during travel to such a situation would be covered under workers' compensation.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None provided.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Michael Adams, Legislative Assistant-AFSCME Council 4 – submitted testimony in support of the bill because this bill ensures that the public works employees are protected when they are working at clearing roads for first responders and commuters during snowstorms.

Ed Hawthorne, President-Connecticut AFL-CIO – written testimony was submitted supporting this bill that includes public works employees into the class of workers eligible to receive workers' compensation benefits for the PTSI they sustain at work and urge the Committee to provide this benefit. Workers' compensation reforms passed in 1993 removed coverage for mental health injuries that employees sustained on the job. In the last few years,

the General Assembly has taken positive steps to remedy the situation by requiring workers' compensation to cover treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Injuries for first responders. Many workers have encountered traumatic events at work and are struggling with anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, and other mental health issues. If these ailments are not recognized as workplace injuries, workers will be forced to seek treatment at their own expense. Or worse, they will not get the needed care, potentially putting themselves, co-workers, their families, and those they serve in danger.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Betsy Gara, Executive Director-CT Council of Small Towns (COST) – submitted testimony opposing this bill because expanding workers' compensation coverage to include public works employees traveling to and from work sets a difficult precedent that undermines the balanced framework of the workers' compensation no-fault system. With limited exception, workers' compensation is not intended to cover employees while they are commuting to and from work, only injuries sustained in the course of employment. She further writes that expanding workers' compensation in this manner will increase CT WCC costs and place a greater burden on towns and taxpayers. This legislation is an unfunded mandate which will potentially result in a cost to the state and self-insured municipalities. Unfunded mandates impose tremendous burdens on small towns and taxpayers.

Eric George, President- Insurance Association of CT, Kristina Baldwin, VP-American Property and Casualty Insurance Association and Sean McLaughlin, Regional VP-NAMIC – all three executives submitted the same written testimony opposing the continued effort to expand workers' compensation benefits and erode the longstanding legal requirement that to be compensable, injuries must arise out of and in the course of employment. This proposal would expand benefits that would increase workers' compensation insurance costs and impose additional burdens on employers. An employee seeking benefits must establish that an injury or illness arose out of and in the course of employment. SB 348 would broaden the standard by extending coverage to municipal and state public works employees for injuries sustained while commuting to or from work, mirroring an expansion that was previously granted to dispatchers during the 2023 session. Under the well-established rule, injuries sustained during a workers' normal commute are generally not compensable. Amending the statute to single out yet another category of employees sets a troubling precedent and invites further expansions for additional employee groups and risks undermining the integrity and stability of the workers' compensation system.

Zachary McKeown, Advocacy Manager-CCM – submitted written testimony opposing this bill because it would likely generate a significant increase of claims unrelated to their work, resulting in workers' compensation costs to significantly increase and threaten the affordability of workers' compensation insurance. This bill overturns the "coming and going" doctrine for determining whether an injury took place in the course of employment. Under the long-established workers' compensation law, it is generally settled that work does not begin until the employee arrives for work and ceases when the employee leaves.

Expanding this benefit to public works would adversely expand workers compensation and be an unfunded mandate in CT municipalities. CCM urges the Committee to take no action on SB 348.

Reported by: Jacqueline Olsen

Date: 3/26/2026