

Public Safety and Security Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-402 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT REVISING THE DEFINITION OF "RETIRED POLICE OFFICER" FOR PURPOSES OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS REGARDING SCHOOL SECURITY

Title: SERVICES.

Vote Date: 3/17/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/10/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Public Safety and Security Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill was raised in order to expand the requirements of School Resource Officers to include that of "retired police officers." As noted in testimony provided by the Department of Education, expanding the eligibility of School Resource Officers to retired members of police forces would greatly increase the safety and security of schools in Connecticut.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner, Department of Education:](#) Commissioner Russell-Tucker is in support of the bill. She states it will amend Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) 10-244a which regulates what individuals can carry a firearm if they are hired as a security in a school. She states that this is important to the safety of the students and staff within a school.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Kate Dias, President, Connecticut Education Association:](#) Ms. Dias is in support of the bill; however, she would like to see some modifications made. She states that section 19 of the bill clarifies that a retired police officer must not be prohibited from being hired to serve as school security guards, to which she agrees with. She asks that while these officers are

trained with firearms, drug detection, and gang identification, they should also be trained in trauma-informed practices and de-escalation techniques. She adds that in 2023, legislation was passed which clarified the role of School Resource Officers, this also required School Resource Officers to undergo social- emotional learning and restorative training. Ms. Dias feels this is important to ensure the needs of students with intellectual disabilities are taken care of.

Anonymous 17: Supports the bill “for simple tech clarification, not a paragraph.”

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Robbie Goodrich, Executive Director, RACCE Inc.: Mr. Goodrich is in opposition of the bill. He states that he is concerned with the research and evidence that states that armed security officers and staff do not deter but incentivize violent behavior. He quotes a few surveys which claim to show that students would feel safer if their school staff were trained on how to use guns. He offers language amendments he would like to see added to the bill.

Stacey Tie, Special Education Equity for Kids Advocacy Committee: Ms. Tie is in opposition of the bill because she believes that mental health and educational professionals are more appropriate to respond to a student’s behavioral issue than a resource officer. She creates a scene of a young child with autism and sensory sensitivities, who is overwhelmed with multiple chairs moving around. She states that when this student becomes overwhelmed, the behavior may look aggressive and a resource officer may be called in. However, she notes, this may overwhelm the student more. She claims that if a person is present in the room beforehand, that understands the needs of the student, this scenario would become a lot safer.

Joseph Sokolovic, Vice Chair, Bridgeport Board of Education: Mr. Sokolovic opposes the bill unless amendments are made to Section 6. He states that Section 6 of the bill expands who is allowed to own a firearm within schools to retired parole officers. He claims this will have negative impacts on the minority students at the school and those with disabilities. He claims that studies have shown that students are more aggressive when officers are in the building. He adds that these instincts involve a disproportionate amount of black male students and leads to more criminalization of minors. Mr. Sokolovic states that his other concern with Section 6 is that it includes retired parole officers. He claims that their training is inadequate to deal with children. He offers some amendments he would like to see done to the bill.

Reported by: Emma Rybacki, Clerk
Olivia Buczak, Assist. Clerk

Date: 3/26/26