

# Labor and Public Employees Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No:** SB-435 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING AUTOMATED DECISION SYSTEMS PROTECTIONS  
**Title:** FOR EMPLOYEES.

**Vote Date:** 3/19/2026

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/10/2026

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor & Public Employees Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

The reason for this bill is to provide workers with appropriate protections from Automated Decision Systems in cases where management-level decisions are being made with limited or no human review. It requires notification of when these systems are being utilized, a human appeal process for employment decisions made by automated systems and requires annual audits of these systems in order to avoid inappropriate usage that may be discriminatory. It also prohibits state agencies from utilizing AI to perform management tasks and explicitly makes AI a subject of collective bargaining for public sector employees. The bill also prohibits firing, discriminating, or retaliating against an applicant or employee because they filed a complaint about a violation. Overall, the bill seeks to ensure employees are protected against potentially unfair usage of rapidly-emerging technologies.

### SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

LCO 3450 makes automated decision systems developers and deployers jointly liable for violations, removes an exemption to for a disclosure requirement, allows the labor commissioner to suspend the use of an AEDP system that violates the bill's bias audit provisions, adds sections on a state AI inventory and teachers' collective bargaining, and removes provisions related to private sector collective bargaining agreements.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

**Michelle Gilman, Commissioner, DAS:** Submitted testimony stating while they support the bills intentions, they have significant concerns with section 14. They state this section may

create operational and fiscal challenges as it prohibits the state from using AI unless explicitly authorized by statute. Due to AI being increasingly built into standard technologies many routine statutory approvals would be needed to keep using those systems that many agencies rely on. The state is also prevented from procuring any product containing AI unless authorized. AI is also often added into existing products that previously did not include it. In this case the state would be required to stop using and already purchased product until approved by the legislature. The audits and bias testing for all AI systems would also result in substantial fiscal costs that are not included in the Governor's proposed budget. The bill may unintentionally limit the states' ability to modernize systems and increase costs.

**Dante Bartolomeo, Commissioner, CT Department of Labor:** Submitted testimony stating it requires CTDOL to implement an approval process of independent auditors to conduct bias audits and maintain a registry of who was approved. They will receive bias audit reports from employers within thirty days of the audit being conducted. AI systems should be monitored with human review, but CTDOL does not directly employ AI subject matter experts. While CTDOL has employment law experts it would not have expertise to comply with automated employment related decisions. Mrs. Bartolomeo explains that the bill as written would result in a significant fiscal impact to hire staff with expertise in automated employment. It would likely require a longer effective date than October 1, 2027.

**Judicial Branch, External Affairs:** Submitted testimony stating the judicial branch takes no position on the bill's policies. They request clarification of language in section 14 that outlines no state agency shall authorize procurement or acquisition of any artificial intelligence unless authorized by law. They state the language is very broad and could impact the use of imbedded software that uses artificial intelligence. The judicial branch asked that the section be amended to reflect that and that the scope of "state agency" be clarified.

**Tanya Hughes, Executive Director, CHRO:** Submitted testimony in support of the bill as it brings antidiscrimination law into the era of artificial intelligence. AI training data is collected from across human history and when that data is from a history tainted by discrimination the AI system can continue to perpetuate those patterns of bias. One such example is when an AI noticed top performers in STEM fields were men. This was due to systemic bias in education that discouraged women, but the AI mistakenly took that information and rejected women from consideration entirely. Hughes states that this bill will address issues such as this by ensuring employers cannot hide behind AI when its effect is to discriminate in employment related decision processes. Often courts focus on the intent of a decision maker to discriminate but AI does not fit into that analysis, resulting in existing statutory protections being difficult to hold employers accountable. The bill fixes this by having employers conduct audit testing of their AI.

**David Krayeski, Undersecretary, Labor Relations, Office of Policy, and Management:** Submitted testimony providing comments on SB 435 stating it establishes many requirements concerning the use of automated employment-related decision systems and artificial intelligence technologies. Krayeski states the state has strong provisions already and collective bargaining agreements already contain enforceable protections for state employees. Those processes give employees a way to challenge decisions made that may involve AI. In 2024, DAS and OPM released the AI Responsible Use Framework that outlined the need for transparent governance in relation to AI. The framework requires agencies to evaluate the potential impacts on employees before adopting AI tools. Section 14 of this bill

would limit the use and purchase of AI by state agencies unless authorized. Any AI used would have to include a bias audit process. Section 14 does not strengthen the existing guardrails and will create additional costs and delays for agencies. Krayeski states that CT's existing laws as well as collective bargaining agreements already provide employees with meaningful protections. The new statutory oversight mechanisms in the bill would require additional administrative capacity and lead to increased compliance burdens for employers.

**Timothy Larson, Commissioner, Office of Higher Education:** Submitted testimony in opposition stating it may be premature to establish such a comprehensive regulatory framework for automated decision systems at this time. Many employers are only just beginning to explore these systems and their impacts on workplaces are still being studied. Creating requirements before these technologies are fully understood may create uncertainty for employers trying to adopt new tools. It would be more prudent to allow for more time to research and allow for policy makers to better understand the technology and its potential impacts.

**Daniel O'keefe, Commissioner, DECD:** Submitted testimony in opposition stating SB 435 would establish a regulatory framework governing the use of AI in CT workplaces. It defines systems and requires multiple disclosures to applicants and employees. O'keefe explains the bill would mandate human review of AI decisions and requires annual independent bias audits. It would further restrict state agencies from using AI unless expressly authorized. They believe the bill takes an overly restrictive approach to automated decision tools and imposes new limitations on the governments use of AI. Instead of building on the AI foundation that is already in place the bill adds rigid duplicative requirements that would slow AI adoption without improving safeguards. The extensive auditing and human review would also slow the hiring process and increase administrative costs.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Susana Barragan, YLS WIRAC:** Submitted testimony in support of SB 435 and offered ways to strengthen its enforcement mechanisms. They state AI has been being used with no accountability to hire, fire, and monitor employees. SB 435 builds the guardrails that would have employers disclose their use of automated employment related decisions and prevent discrimination by an algorithm. Enforcement authority would be with the Attorney General but may not be enough on its own. It could limit the ability for workers to advocate for themselves which is why they support the bills inclusion of a private right of action. Barragan states that along with this they request adding or applicant after an employee in the first sentence of section 12 to ensure all CT workers that are wronged by violations can pursue relief. They support that CT's general statutes would be amended to specify algorithmic discrimination is discrimination. This would allow for employers to be liable if their automated systems are discriminatory and complaints can be channeled through CHRO. Employers would be required to tell applicants and employees when an AI is being used in employment decisions which would improve transparency in the private sector. They recommend the bill be amended to improve transparency in the public sector as well. The bill includes guardrails for state agencies when they use AI. It cannot be used to materially affect the rights, welfare, civil liberties or public benefits of CT residents and a bias audit must be completed and published. To further strengthen this section, they recommend the last date of AI impact

assessment, risk tier assessment, if personally identifiable information is used, and projected costs or savings be included.

**Bianca Beland, Environmental Analyst, CSEA SEIU Local 2001:** Submitted testimony stating automated decision-making systems are being used in workplaces to monitor workers, assign tasks, evaluate performance, hire, discipline, schedule, promote, and pay workers. Without regulation the technology can shape workers livelihoods without clear accountability. They explain that automated decision systems aren't human and can't be programmed to have compassion, sympathy, or empathy. Computers did not evolve to be reliant on the trust of their communities. Monitoring software and hardware frustrate staff and distract them from their jobs. Oftentimes workers do not have a voice when those systems are implemented, and it can create a hostile work environment. They state workers deserve to know how the data collected on them is used. Workers must have a voice in how those tools are used and ensure that the technology supports rather than replaces them. Agencies should report additional details such as date on an AI systems last impact audit, whether it uses residents' personal data, its risk level and purpose behind its use.

**Arthur Bell, Business Agent, Teamsters Local 671:** Submitted testimony in support stating construction employers are deploying algorithmic scheduling systems, GPD monitoring, and automated dispatching. A 30-year operator with a perfect safety record can get passed over for a call because an algorithm scored their last three GPS pings poorly. They would not know why or how to challenge it and no human would be there for them to make their case. This is not efficiency but discipline without accountability. Workers deserve a right to challenge the results.

**James Case, Member Lobbyist, CWA Local 1298:** Submitted testimony in support stating it is refreshing to see legislation for workforce protections in automated decision systems. This bill would give employees control of their personal data, correct biased information, and ensure fairness. They state it includes remedies for something that impacts the workforce greatly.

**Bryan Chong, Communications Organizer, Teamsters Local 671:** Submitted testimony stating SB 435 gives you the right to see the data, challenge the result and have a human being make the final call when an algorithm makes a decision about your livelihood. Employers are not asking permission to automate discipline they are already doing it.

**Mary Consoli, RN BSN, AFT Connecticut:** Submitted testimony in support stating automated decision-making systems are being used to monitor workers. Assign tasks and evaluate performance. Unregulated these systems can impact pay, workload, and employment status without transparency. Workers deserve to know when information is collected and how it is used. They state it is time to update the AI inventory to increase transparency and accountability. The laws should require annual risk assessments, establish real enforcement, and withhold funds from agencies or hospitals that fail to comply. The improvements don't prevent innovation but would ensure government AI is used openly and responsibly.

**Guerino DAmato, ITA2:** Submitted testimony in support stating automated decision-making systems are being increasingly used in the workplace. They influence decisions on hiring, firing and promotion. There are concerns that the rapid pace of AI development might outstrip

the ability to implement necessary safety guardrails. Any guardrails should include having a contracting service with the state that has AI have a written determination that the AI services do not include work performed by bargaining unit employees. All AI should be evaluated quarterly for cost effectiveness and training in the use of AI programs should be open to avoid Shadow IT. AI should not be the deciding official in any decision related to employment and should not be used to replicate any likeness of a bargaining unit employee.

**Christopher DeCiantis, Information Technology Analyst, CSEA SEIU Local 2001:**

Submitted testimony in support stating that biometric and medical data should not be collected by third parties. How that data is stored should be included in the bargaining process and AI should never be used in hiring or firing decisions. AI has many shortcomings in its reliability such as confidently giving you the wrong answer.

**Eric Downer, Business Agent, Teamsters Local 671:** Submitted testimony in support saying workers are concerned about unregulated artificial intelligence and automation being used to replace or drive disciplinary decisions with no accountability. He states that they are already seeing large companies such as UPS using these systems. Workers deserve the right to know when a computer program is being used to discipline them so they can see the data being used and challenge the decisions. SB 435 would give workers this right and establish further reasonable guardrails.

**Bill Finch, Director, CTLMCC:** Submitted testimony in support stating AI is not without serious negative consequences. It has been the role of government to pass regulations to mitigate the negative impacts of technological advances. The protective actions in SB 435 are necessary, timely and appropriate use of government oversight. It ensures that decisions made by AI are disclosed and can be challenged. AI as a hiring tool lacks transparency and become an invasive big brother if not regulated.

**Seth Freeman, President, 4Cs SEIU 1973:** Submitted testimony in support stating that technology is moving faster than workplace protections and workers could lose their rights if an employer replaces human decision makers with software. Workers should know when AI is being used in hiring or disciplinary decisions. SB 435 does this by requiring transparency with bias audits, human oversight, and explanations of adverse decisions.

**Carol Gale, President, Hartford Federation of Teachers:** Submitted testimony in support stating the legislation would protect their rights and safeguard them from AI being used to make decisions and electronically monitor the workplace. The technology can shape workers livelihoods without clear rules or accountability. They impact pay, hours, and employment status with no transparency. The State of CT used an online evaluation system that boxed teachers into ratings of 1-4. After 15 years the state realized, the system was not helping develop teachers as it was missing human feedback. Hartford teachers are monitored digitally for staff attendance, student attendance, grading, lesson planning, instruction, and evaluations. All those attempts at efficiency and data collection result in highly pressurized environments and high teacher turnover. SB 435 takes measures to alleviate the situation by letting workers know when their data is collected and how it is used. CT creating an inventory of AI in state government systems was already an important first step. Gale states the language needs to be updated to include the last impact audit, if it uses residents' personal data, risk level, and their claimed savings.

**Corey Geisman, Executive Director, SEIU CT State Council:** Submitted testimony in support stating a Gallup poll found that 80% of U.S. adults believe the government should maintain rules for AI safety. Pew Research Center conducted a poll in 2023 that found 70% of surveyed adults in the U.S. have little trust in companies to make responsible decisions about AI. The bill requires transparency with bias audits and human oversight.

**Ed Hawthorne, President, Connecticut AFL-CIO:** Submitted testimony in support of SB 435 if amended. Mr. Hawthorne states that many fear AI can be used to eliminate jobs, spread misinformation, or make critical decisions that impact directly. A Reuters poll found that 71% of Americans are concerned AI will cause them to lose their job. A recent Gallup survey showed that 80% of U.S adults think the government should maintain rules for AI. That level of support is consistent across party lines with 88% of Democrats and 79% of Republicans favoring safeguards. AI in the workplace bring concerns it can be used for surveillance, discrimination and to lower wages. Legislation on AI should guard against harmful uses in the workplace, strengthen labor protections for collective bargaining, and require transparency. SB 435 does some of this by providing notice of AI usage and ensuring human review. Annual bias audits are required to ensure that it complies with civil rights protections. The bill would also make AI a mandatory subject of bargaining for municipal and state employees. Mr. Hawthorne states they would like to see teachers included as well and suggests the following amendments. Add clarity to section 3 as the "reasonable person" used in the statement is vague and can become a loophole. Expand section 7 by prohibiting any employee related decision not just the final one from being made without human review. An employee or candidates should have a right to appeal any employment related decision and request a reevaluation. Section 8 should be amended to prohibit AI's continued use if it fails a bias audit. Section 10 should have the trade secret loophole removed so employers can't withhold information stating it's a trade secret. Section 12 should be amended to allow for applicants for employment, employee or labor organization representing those affected to bring civil action. Developers and Deployers of the software should have joint liability. CT AI inventory should be updated as well to include date of last impact assessment listing, whether it uses personal information and a projected cost savings. He also states a new section should be added like what California and Vermont have that would require collection of job displacement data. This can be done by having claimants for unemployment answer if their layoff was due to AI or other technology changes.

**Zak Leavy, Deputy Director, AFSCME Council 4:** Submitted testimony in support stating artificial intelligence is an innovative tool that can help workers but should not be used to replace them. SB 435 takes steps to protect workers such as those in section 14 that requires state agencies to do their due diligence when considering using AI. When AI is authorized for state agency use, they must have independent bias audits done and posted publicly 60 days before the system goes live allowing for people to respond to its use. Section 17 goes further by having it so that AI cannot be used to reduce wages, benefits, nonovertime hours, or be used to do the functions of bargaining unit members. Section 13, 15 and 16 requires an employer to engage in good faith bargaining over the use of AI with the union. Leavy explains that this is done by making it a mandatory subject of collective bargaining. Section 8 requires an independent bias audit by an auditor approved by CTDOL before an AI system can be deployed. An independent audit will help identify any potential bias and is a strong step in addressing the impact of AI in the workplace.

**Anthony Lepore, Principal Officer, Teamsters Local 671:** Submitted testimony in support stating automation and AI are advancing faster than most can keep up with. It reduces workers to data points and places judgment with a single algorithmic standard for all. The bill requires employers to notify workers if an automated system is used and allow for human review as well as an explanation when an adverse decision is made.

**Rochelle Palache, 32BJ SEIU:** Submitted testimony in support stating AI is rapidly transforming CT's workplaces. Palache explains that 72% of small businesses currently use an AI platform. Employers introduce these technologies with little to no notice to their employees. AI systematically reproduces biases that are present in large datasets that can perpetuate further discrimination. Some 32BJ members report that some companies have replaced human resources functions with tech platforms. Those platforms are often developed without consideration to statutes or collective bargaining requirements. SB 435 establishes essential protections against many of the problems with AI and requires transparency with human oversight and bias audits. Employers will have to notify workers when an automated system is used, explain their use, and allow for appeals to those decisions.

**Stuart Savelkoul, Chief of Staff, AFT Connecticut:** Submitted testimony in support stating AI and automated decision systems have been rapidly entering workplaces. These tools are being used to screen applicants, evaluate performance, recommend discipline, and influence decisions on one's employment. Workers have a right to know when and how an algorithm influenced them as well as have a right to question its determination. Without safeguards these systems will be used to intensify work, invade privacy, and pose new risk of discrimination. Savelkoul states that SB 435 establishes clear guardrails for these systems especially when they are a substantial factor in employment decisions. There is a concern that employers will use the excuse of trade secrets when information is requested on how those systems work. Savelkoul explains that it would be concerning if a developer cannot explain what data is being collected, how its used, and whether bias audits have been done. That would raise serious questions on if that system should be trusted with employment decisions. Workers covered in collective bargaining agreements must have the right to negotiate those systems as it directly affects the terms and conditions of employment.

**Lester Tillman, IT Subject Matter Expert, CSEA SEIU Local 2001 and Travis Woodward, President, CSEA SEIU Local 2001:** Submitted similar testimony in support stating automated decision-making systems are increasingly being used in workplaces to monitor workers, assign tasks, evaluate performance, make decisions on hiring, discipline and pay. They explain that it is crucial this technology does not undermine a worker's rights or eliminate human judgment in decisions. SB 435 is necessary to ensure workers have a say in how these technologies reshape their jobs. It has measures such as notifying workers when electronic monitoring is used and how it influences their conditions. CT took an important first step when it created an inventory of state government AI systems. They explain this should be updated to have agencies report additional details such as data on the AI systems last impact audit, if it used residents' personal data, risk level and the purpose or claimed saving behind their use.

**David Weidlich Jr, President, CWA Local 1298:** Submitted testimony in support stating it has become more commonplace for automated decision-making systems being used in the workplace. They have been used to assign tasks, evaluate performance, discipline, hire and

determine employee pay. These systems shape workers livelihoods without transparency. Having both legislative enforcement and strong worker protections are vital as workers need a say in their implementation.

**Andrew Yackel, Organizer, Teamsters Local 671:** Submitted testimony in support of SB 435 stating that every one of these members has a camera pointed at their face for the entire shift. Every movement is flagged scored and uploaded to a dashboard they are never allowed to see. Yackel states SB 435 adds transparency with a human review and right to appeal.

**Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, ACLU-CT:** Submitted testimony in support stating algorithms and AI can perpetuate racial bias even though they are being used to make important decisions. SB 435 establishes protections for workers when these systems are used by requiring bias audits, human oversight, and transparency. Zaccagnino states that without regulation these systems can be used to negatively impact pay, workload, and employment status. The stat AI inventory should be updated to include last impact audit, if it used residents' personal data, risk level and the purpose or claimed saving behind their use.

**Val Zhukov, Business Agent, Teamsters Local 671:** Submitted testimony in support with some amendments. Zhukov states AI in the workplace is a one-way mirror where workers can't see anything. He explains that every driver they represent is getting scored and tracked for everything they do during their shift. That data is uploaded, and the driver never gets to see it. If AI use is expanding, then let it apply to the whole workplace. If AI can score a driver, then it can score a supervisor's discipline patterns to determine how fairly they spread discipline across their team. If AI can flag a driver for glancing at their phone, then it can flag a company for ignoring safety complaints. Zhukov states he is asking for equal application of AI if its going to be used in the workplace. SB 435 has good sections that call for bargaining rights. Human review, private right of action and bias audits. An amendment to this would be for when management accesses a worker's data is to make it available to that worker and to preserve that data for a set amount of time.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Paul Amarone, Senior Policy Director, CBIA:** Submitted testimony in opposition stating SB 435 is a comprehensive regulatory framework for automated decision systems and artificial intelligence. It requires employers who use automated tools in hiring, promotion, evaluation, scheduling, or termination to provide advance notice to employees of AI usage, conduct annual independent audits and ensure human review of automated decisions. The bill provides a private right of action for employees and expands collective bargaining rights related to AI. This would be difficult for employers to compile with and expose them to increased litigation. The bill could include resume screening software, applicant tracking systems, productivity workforce management software and online skills assessments. These routine technologies could trigger extensive regulatory obligations and audits. The obligations would be present before, during and after use and would be a significant cost to the employers when they must conduct extensive audits. Amarone explains that the bill would come with significant litigation risks as any employee may bring civil action over issuing questions, whether sufficient notice was provided or if an audit was adequate. Sb 435 would impose the most extensive regulatory framework in the country that would create significant burdens for CT employers.

**CHA, Connecticut Hospital Association:** Submitted testimony in opposition stating SB 435 is extremely broad regulatory framework that would affect workplace technologies that hospitals rely on every day. The bills definition of automated employment-related decision process is broad and would encompass many tools routinely used. These tools include applicant tracking, credentialing databases, scheduling platforms, timekeeping systems, and workforce analytics tools. This would result in a large portion of human resources technology used by the hospitals subject to the regulatory requirements. CHA explains that the bias audit requirements would result in significant financial burdens. Hospitals often use multiple vendor-provided workforce systems that they do not have access to the underlying data for an auditor to look at. A large volume of employment decisions such as transferring employees between departments, adjusting schedules, and promoting internal candidates occurs, which would increase the administrative workload if they must all comply with the bill's regulations. CHA notes that with another regulatory structure being added to those that already exist would delay recruitment with the use of those tools that are being used to address workforce shortages.

**Toby Malara, VP Govt Relations, American Staffing Assoc:** Submitted testimony in opposition stating that the nature of staffing agencies requires them to process and extraordinary volume of temporary job applications. AERDP are used to facilitate and find the best candidates for a variety of jobs. Staffing agencies in general will have no knowledge of how a board's algorithmic analysis screens and recommends potential candidates. Malara explains that section 3 would require the employer notify candidates that and AERDP is being used. Section 5 calls for the employer to let the employee opt out of having the AERDP used for them. Section 6 requires the data being used from the AERDP in a decision to be provided to the employee and allows them to appeal the decision. Those notices and opt out opportunities result in major challenges for employers. They explain it would not be feasible to provide notice to every applicant whose information may be viewed by an AERDP. The opt out of AERDP would also grind the hiring processes to a halt when most positions must be filled quickly. Section 8 requires a complete bias audit to be done and then thereafter annually. This would be difficult as many staffing agencies do not have the financial means to retain expert consultants to perform the audits. Malara urges the committee to strike section 5,6, and 8 completely for the before mentioned reasons and adds that no other state has finalized a thoughtful artificial intelligence law yet with balanced protections.

**Jessica Olander, President, CT River Valley Chamber:** Submitted testimony in opposition stating the bill would be unworkable and costly for business. They explain that the bill establishes an extraordinarily complex regulatory framework that would impose extreme compliance burdens on CT employers while discouraging innovation. Employers using routine technologies would be subject to those extensive regulatory obligations and mandatory human review procedures. The mandated independent bias audits before and annually after would cost tens of thousands of dollars per system. A provision allowing for private right of action will result in employers facing lawsuits over technical compliance questions. Olander states that SB 435 would risk duplicating existing protections, while layering on costly and uncertain regulatory requirements.

**Francis Palasieski, Director of Government Affairs, Lumber Dealers Assn. of CT:** Submitted testimony in opposition stating the bill creates an overly complex burdensome regulatory framework for industries that require efficiency in workforce management. Many

companies rely on software to assist with tasks related to employment functions. Palasieski explains that SB 435's extremely broad definitions would apply to that routine software and would trigger extensive regulatory obligations. The detailed explanations, documentation and annual independent bias audits would be extremely difficult for most businesses to meet. Many employers do not have access to proprietary algorithms and the cost required for the independent audits along with compliance costs could reach thousands of dollars per system annually.

**Anonymous 12, 13, 14:** Submitted testimony in opposition for reasons largely unrelated to the content of the bill or stating it would increase government costs.

**Frank Ricci, Labor Fellow, Yankee Institute:** Submitted testimony in opposition stating the bill would impose sweeping new regulatory burdens on CT employees. It would regulate the use of automated decision systems and artificial intelligence with a costly compliance framework that would slow innovation and investment. Ricci explains that when rigid regulatory barriers are placed companies respond by delaying expansion or relocating to more business-friendly states. The bill requires unions to be notified when a system may affect unionized workers so they can negotiate on it. Ricci believes this would slow modernization through extended negotiation. The independent audits that are mandated creates significant regulator hurdles and potential legal exposure. This would result in increased litigation risk and compliance costs that would overall increase the costs of doing business. Those costs are then spread out in the form of higher prices, reduced hiring, and slower wage growth.

**Reported by: Lawrence Sanchez & Cam Clarke**

**Date: 3/31/2026**