

Human Services Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-501 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE COMPLEX REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY
AND WHEELCHAIR REPAIR ADVISORY COUNCIL.

Vote Date: 3/19/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/17/2026

File No.: 490

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Human Services Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill seeks to strengthen Connecticut's framework for the provision, maintenance, and oversight of complex rehabilitation technology and wheelchair repair services by updating statutory requirements and refining the role of an advisory body dedicated to these issues. Individuals who rely on specialized mobility equipment often face significant delays in repairs, limited access to qualified providers, and fragmented coordination across agencies and insurers, all of which can directly impact their health, independence, and quality of life.

By establishing clearer standards and creating a more formal mechanism for stakeholder input, the bill aims to improve system accountability, identify service gaps, and ensure that policies reflect the real-world needs of individuals with disabilities. Ultimately, the legislation is intended to promote timely access to critical equipment and repairs, enhance consumer protections, and support greater independence and safety for those who depend on complex rehabilitation technology.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language for SB 501 was used to significantly revise and consolidate the bill into a broader, omnibus-style measure addressing multiple, largely unrelated policy areas (e.g., motor vehicle taxation, innovation banks, insurance assessments, and other statutory changes). Rather than advancing the original, narrower proposal, the s-language replaces

and expands the bill's content to incorporate updated provisions, technical corrections, and negotiated policy changes that emerged during the legislative process.

In practice, this type of s-language is typically used to (1) incorporate stakeholder and leadership priorities into a single vehicle, (2) make technical and conforming changes across statutes, and (3) allow the bill to move forward under emergency certification or end-of-session timing constraints. Here, the substitute language reflects a shift from the original concept to a comprehensive package designed to address multiple issues efficiently within one piece of legislation.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Department of Social Services, Andrea Barton Reeves, Commissioner: testified on SB 501 by acknowledging the importance of improving access to complex rehabilitation technology and timely wheelchair repairs, particularly given the significant impact delays have on individuals' health and independence. She also raised considerations regarding implementation, including administrative coordination and potential fiscal impacts for the Department of Social Services, indicating the need for careful planning as the bill is advanced.

Office of the Healthcare Advocate, Kathleen Holt, Healthcare Advocate: submitted testimony on SB 501 emphasizing that delays in obtaining and repairing complex rehabilitation technology can significantly harm patients' health, independence, and quality of life. She supports efforts to improve oversight and accountability in the system, while underscoring the need to ensure reforms are implemented in a way that effectively protects and benefits consumers.

Department of Aging and Disability Services, Amy Porter, Commissioner: submitted testimony on SB 501 emphasizing the importance of timely access to complex rehabilitation technology and repair services for individuals with disabilities, particularly as delays can impact health, independence, and community living. She expressed general support for improving the system, while also noting the need to ensure any changes are implemented in a coordinated and sustainable manner for both consumers and providers.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Wheelchair Reform Coalition, Maureen Amirault, Member and Co-Chair of the CRT & Wheelchair Repair Advisory Council: submitted testimony in support of SB 501, highlighting significant delays in wheelchair repairs and the serious impact those delays have on individuals' independence and daily functioning. Drawing from personal experience, she emphasized the need for stronger oversight and accountability to ensure timely repairs and improve the overall system for wheelchair users.

Wheelchair Reform Coalition, Maryann Colón, Member: submitted testimony in support of SB 501, emphasizing that delays and barriers in wheelchair repair services can significantly impact individuals' health, mobility, and independence. She highlights the need for stronger

oversight and improvements to ensure timely, reliable repairs for those who depend on this critical equipment.

Home Medical Equipment and Services Association of New England (HOMES), Executive Director, Lauryn Estrella: submitted testimony in support of SB 501, emphasizing that delays and barriers in obtaining and repairing complex rehabilitation technology negatively impact patient health and independence. She highlights the need for clearer standards and improved coordination to ensure timely access to equipment and services for individuals who rely on them.

Citizens Coalition for Equal Access, Secretary, Ruth Grobe: submitted testimony in support of SB 501, emphasizing that delays in obtaining and repairing wheelchairs and other complex rehabilitation technology can severely impact individuals' health, independence, and daily functioning. She underscores the need for systemic improvements and stronger oversight to ensure timely, reliable access to essential mobility equipment.

CT ADAPT, Mary-Ann Langton, Disability Advocate: submitted testimony in support of SB 501, emphasizing that timely wheelchair repairs and access to complex rehabilitation technology are critical to maintaining independence and avoiding institutionalization for individuals with disabilities. Drawing from lived experience and advocacy, she highlights the urgent need for stronger system accountability and reforms to ensure reliable, timely service.

Wheelchair Reform Coalition, Corey Lee, Member: submitted testimony in support of SB 501, emphasizing that delays in obtaining and repairing wheelchairs significantly limit individuals' mobility, independence, and ability to participate in daily life. He highlights the need for reforms to ensure timely access to repairs and reliable equipment for those who depend on it.

The Arc Connecticut, Danielle M. Middlebrooks, Director of Advocacy & Public Policy: submitted testimony in support of SB 501, emphasizing that delays in obtaining and repairing complex rehabilitation technology can significantly harm individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities by limiting independence and access to community living. She argues the bill would improve accountability and timeliness in the system, helping ensure individuals receive the equipment and repairs they need to live safely and independently.

Wheelchair Reform Coalition, Mary Moberg, RN: testimony in support of SB 501, emphasizing that individuals who rely on wheelchairs depend on strong advocacy and oversight to ensure timely repairs and protect their mobility. She highlights the importance of maintaining and strengthening the advisory council as a critical voice for consumers and improving accountability in the repair system.

Connecticut Aging and Disability Services, Mairead Painter, Connecticut State Long Term Care Ombudsman: emphasized that delays in wheelchair repairs and access to complex rehabilitation technology can significantly impact the health, safety, and quality of life of individuals receiving long-term care services. She highlights the need for stronger oversight and system improvements to ensure timely, reliable access to essential mobility equipment for vulnerable populations.

Disability Rights Connecticut, Connecticut's Protection and Advocacy System, Sheldon Toubman, Litigation Attorney: supports, emphasizing that delays in obtaining and repairing complex rehabilitation technology can violate individuals' rights to independence and community integration. He argues the bill would strengthen accountability and ensure timely access to essential equipment, helping individuals with disabilities live safely and fully in the community.

Suzanne Garraffa
MBraces, Pradipta Mazumder, Orthodontist
Tiffanie McDonald
Carol Scully, Disability Advocate
Submitted general testimony of support.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

NCART- The National Coalition for Assistive & Rehab Technology, Wayne Grau, Executive Director: opposes to the bill as written, expressing concerns that certain provisions could create unintended burdens on providers and disrupt the delivery of complex rehabilitation technology services. He recommends targeted amendments to improve the bill, emphasizing the need to balance patient access with operational and reimbursement realities for suppliers.

National Seating & Mobility, Inc., Diane Racicot MBA RD, Vice President of Payer Relations: opposes, expressing concerns that certain provisions could impose operational and reimbursement challenges for providers of complex rehabilitation technology. She emphasizes the need for revisions to ensure the bill does not unintentionally disrupt service delivery or create barriers to timely equipment and repairs for patients.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF GENERAL COMMENTS:

Numotion, Gary Gilberti, Executive Vice President: highlighted the challenges providers face in delivering timely wheelchair repairs and complex rehabilitation technology services, including administrative burdens and reimbursement limitations. He emphasized the need for clearer standards and system improvements to ensure patients receive timely, high-quality service while supporting provider sustainability.

American Association for Healthcare, Cadie McGonagill, Senior Director of Payer Relations: highlighted concerns about certain provisions that could impose additional administrative and operational burdens on providers of complex rehabilitation technology. She emphasizes the need to ensure any reforms are workable for suppliers while still improving timely access to equipment and repairs for patients.

Reported by: Mackenzie Frenette

Date: April 6, 2026