
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5455

AN ACT CONCERNING THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT SPECIAL POLICE FORCES AND FIRE DEPARTMENT.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the University of Connecticut (UConn) president, by July 1, 2027, to establish a recruitment and retention program for the UConn special police forces and fire department to address critical staffing shortages and high resignation rates. As part of the program, the president must develop salary schedules for all sworn members of the university's special police forces and all members of the fire department (UConn's first responders), and an education benefit for those members.

It also requires her, beginning by January 1, 2027, to annually submit a report on the recruitment and retention status of UConn's first responders to certain committees and entities.

Lastly, it expands the objective job-based criteria she must use to establish classifications for UConn's special police forces.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROGRAM

Salary Schedules and Education Benefit

Under the bill, the salary schedules must:

1. align compensation rates to eliminate pay disparities between UConn's first responders and members of comparable municipal and state law enforcement and fire service agencies and
2. eliminate significant step overlaps between ranks to ensure supervisors do not earn less than those they supervise.

UConn must give the developed salary schedules to the Office of Labor Relations and the collective bargaining unit representing UConn's first responders. The salary schedules, once received by these parties, (1) must be a mandatory subject of the next salary negotiations between the office and the bargaining unit, including any wage reopeners, and (2) may be used in earlier negotiations if agreed upon by the parties.

Education Benefit

The UConn president must develop an education benefit, which (1) may include tuition reimbursement or university fee waivers, and (2) must include, at a minimum, the required years of service for eligibility and allow the dependents of UConn's first responders to be eligible for the benefit, as she determines.

UConn must provide the benefit's parameters to the Department of Administrative Services commissioner. Upon receipt, the commissioner must implement the educational benefit without modification.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION REPORT

Beginning by January 1, 2027, UConn must annually submit a report on the recruitment and retention status of UConn's first responders to the Public Safety and Security and Higher Education and Employment Advancement committees, and to the UConn Board of Trustees. The report must, for both the special police and fire department, include at least the following:

1. the total number of authorized positions compared to filled positions, including a breakdown of any vacancies due to unfilled positions, personnel being in academy training or field training, or personnel being on administrative, military, or medical leave;
2. the total number of any resignations, retirements, and terminations in the previous year, and the average seniority of departing personnel for that year;
3. a detailed assessment of the entity's ability to provide mandated

- coverage at all applicable campuses and facilities; and
4. a fiscal impact analysis of the cost incurred to train and recruit personnel who resign within five years of being hired.

OBJECTIVE JOB-RELATED CRITERIA

By law, the UConn president must establish classifications for special police force positions at UConn and its campuses, including the UConn Health Center, using objective job-related criteria. The bill expands these criteria to specifically include the (1) knowledge and skill required to carry out the duties of each position in high-density campus environments, provide student-focused community outreach services, and provide specialized emergency services within the UConn Health Center, and (2) responsibilities of exercising jurisdiction over multiple UConn campuses.

Under current law and the bill, the criteria also include the (1) knowledge and skill required to carry out the duties of each position, (2) mental and physical effort required to carry out those duties, and (3) level of accountability assigned to each position. By law, the UConn president establishes and administers the necessary examinations for UConn's special police forces.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 27 Nay 2 (03/17/2026)