
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 408

AN ACT CONCERNING LIQUOR PERMITS, FIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION INSPECTIONS, THE REGISTRATION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION AND JUICE BARS.

SUMMARY

This bill makes changes to laws governing juice bars, residential property owner and landlord reporting to municipalities, fire marshal inspections, and liquor permitting. Generally, it:

1. allows towns and municipalities, by ordinance, to prohibit the (a) operation of juice bars within their borders or (b) sale of alcohol on any cafe permit premises while a juice bar is operating (§ 4);
2. authorizes towns, by ordinance, to set the hours during which a juice bar may operate so long as it does not permit one to do so after 10 p.m. (§ 4);
3. imposes new restrictions on juice bars and requirements on their associated cafe permittees, including requiring convictions for violating the juice bar law to be reported to the Liquor Control Commission for possible permit suspension (§ 4);
4. requires municipalities with a population of at least 20,000 to require certain residential property owners and landlords to report specified information to the municipality, such as their current residential address (§ 3);
5. reduces the frequency of required building inspections by local fire marshals, generally from annually to biennially (§ 2); and
6. requires liquor permit renewal applicants to certify on their applications that a local or deputy fire marshal, fire inspector, or other municipal fire code inspector or fire investigator has or will, within the calendar year, inspect all the applicant's premises

operating under his or her permit that allows for on-premises consumption of alcohol (§ 1).

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 4 — JUICE BAR RESTRICTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

The bill makes several changes to the law regulating “juice bars,” which are places where nonalcoholic beverages are served to minors (under age 21) on the premises of a cafe permit holder. Generally, existing law:

1. allows a cafe to operate a juice bar in a room or separate area where alcohol is not sold, consumed, dispensed, or present;
2. requires cafe permittees, between five and 30 days before a scheduled event, to send the chief law enforcement officer of the municipality where the cafe is located written notice by certified mail or email of when the cafe premises will have a juice bar during that event;
3. allows the chief local law enforcement officer to designate one or more officers to attend the scheduled event; and
4. prohibits cafe permit holders, and their agents and employees, who operate juice bars on the premises from serving alcohol to a customer without a conspicuous wristband issued by the permittee showing they have verified that the customer is of legal drinking age (at least age 21).

The bill requires cafe permittees, at all times when a part of the premises is being operated as a juice bar, to limit the number of patrons where the juice bar is being operated to no more than 10% of the total building occupant load established by the fire marshal under the Fire Safety Code. It also allows, at any time before or during a scheduled event, the chief law enforcement officer, or the officer’s designee, to reject the event or order it to be terminated if either, in their sole

discretion, determines that (1) there is insufficient police capacity to properly and safely monitor the event or enforce the law or (2) the event may, or has, become a danger to public safety.

Under existing law and the bill, violators of the above provisions are subject to a fine, up to one year imprisonment, or both. The maximum fines are (1) \$2,500 for a first offense; (2) \$5,000 for a second offense; and (3) \$10,000 for a third or subsequent offense.

The bill requires cafe permittees who are convicted of violating the state's juice bar law to immediately report their convictions to the Liquor Control Commission, which may suspend their permit based on the conviction.

§ 3 — MUNICIPAL LANDLORD IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The bill requires municipalities with a population of at least 20,000 based on the most recent decennial census ("covered municipalities") to require certain residential property owners and landlords to report specified information to the municipality. Existing law allows, but does not require, all municipalities to do so. Specifically, it allows them to require nonresident property owners and landlords renting to federal Housing Choice Voucher program participants (also known as "project-based housing providers" or PBHPs) to report certain information to the tax assessor or another designated municipal officer. This information must include the following:

1. the owner's or PBHP's current residential address, if they are an individual, or
2. the current residential address of (a) the agent in charge of the building and (b) each person who exercises day-to-day financial or operational control of the property ("controlling participants"), if the owner or PBHP is a business entity that owns rental property in Connecticut (i.e. a corporation, partnership, trust, or other legally recognized entity).

For business entities, this report must also include "identifying information" for the controlling participants.

The bill expands this reporting requirement to also include (1) other identifying information for the nonresident owner, PBHP, or agent in charge of the building and (2) at least two telephone numbers that are accessible on a 24-hour basis for emergency response purposes.

Under the bill, covered municipalities must require nonresident property owners and PBHPs to report the information described above, as modified, to them.

Definitions

The bill adds definitions for both “identifying information” and “nonresident owner,” which are undefined under current law. Under the bill, “identifying information” is proof of a person’s name, birthdate, current residential address, driver’s license number, or other government-issued identification number. A “nonresident owner” is a person or business entity that does not live at the rental property and is either (1) an “owner” (one or more people with legal title to the property or beneficial ownership and a right to present use and enjoyment of the premises, including mortgagees in possession) or (2) the “controlling participant” of the entity that owns the property (see above).

The bill also makes a minor change to the “agent in charge” definition by specifying that their management duties include property supervision and maintenance to comply with state law and local codes.

FOIA Exemption

Under current law, reports submitted to a tax assessor on or after October 1, 2023, are exempt from disclosure under the state’s Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The bill makes these reports exempt regardless of when they were submitted.

Violations of Reporting Requirement

Under the bill, a person who violates the reporting requirement discussed above commits a violation and is subject to a fine of between \$250 and \$1,000, rather than an infraction as under current law. (Infractions are punishable by fines, usually set by Superior Court judges, of between \$35 and \$90, plus a \$20 or \$35 surcharge and an

additional fee based on the fine's amount. An infraction is not a crime, and violators can pay the fine by mail without making a court appearance.)

Existing law also allows municipalities to adopt an ordinance setting a civil penalty for violations of the reporting requirement. The penalty cannot exceed \$500 for a first violation and \$1,000 for subsequent violations. Anyone who is assessed a civil penalty may appeal to Superior Court (CGS § 47a-6b).

§ 2 — LOCAL FIRE MARSHAL INSPECTIONS

Existing law authorizes local fire marshals and the state fire marshal to inspect all buildings, facilities, processes, equipment, systems, and other areas regulated by the Fire Safety Code and the State Fire Prevention Code within their respective jurisdictions in the interests of public safety and to satisfy themselves that all relevant laws are complied with.

By law, each local fire marshal must regularly inspect, or cause to be inspected, all (1) public service buildings and facilities and (2) occupancies regulated by the fire codes other than single-family and duplex residential buildings. Current law requires them to do so at least once a year or at longer intervals prescribed by the state fire marshal in adopted amendments to the fire codes where the interests of public safety can be met by less frequent inspections. The bill:

1. specifies that local fire marshals can have local fire department members or qualified third parties conduct these inspections;
2. changes the frequency of the basic requirement from once every year to once every two years; and
3. modifies what the state fire marshal can prescribe by allowing her to adopt amendments to the fire codes that set a schedule of inspections that are less frequent than once every two years, including for residential buildings designed to be occupied by three or more families, which current law does not allow.

Separate but related, the bill specifically allows local fire marshals to have local fire department members or qualified third parties inspect buildings and facilities within their jurisdictions for which they have received information from an authentic source that the building or facility is hazardous to life safety from fire.

BACKGROUND

Related Bills

sHB 5161 (File 105), § 1, reported favorably by the Housing Committee, has similar provisions to § 3.

SB 274 (File 153), § 1, reported favorably by the Planning and Development Committee, has similar provisions to § 3.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 19 Nay 10 (03/17/2026)