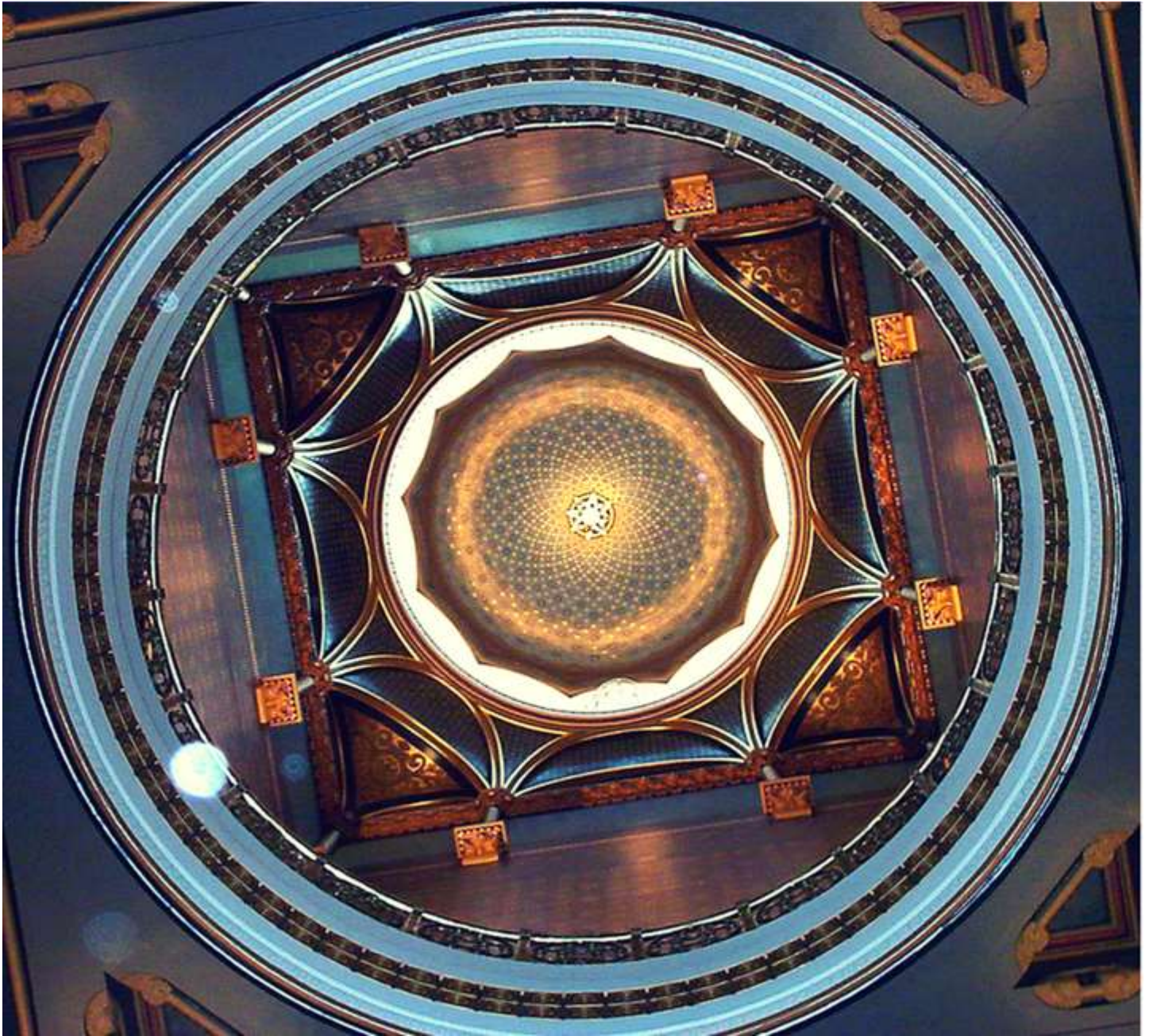


MAJOR PUBLIC ACTS

2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION



OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH

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Notice to Readers

These summaries, composed by the Office of Legislative Research (OLR) with the assistance of the Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA), briefly describe the most significant, far-reaching, and publicly debated acts adopted by the General Assembly in its 2026 regular session. Acts that have been assigned a public act (PA), special act (SA), or resolution act (RA) number are identified by that number; otherwise, we refer to the bill or resolution number.

Not all provisions of the acts are included. More detailed summaries can be found at <https://cga.ct.gov/olr/>. Summaries of the major acts and all other public acts will be provided in our 2026 Public Act Summary Book, which will be available later this year.

OLR also produces several “Acts Affecting” reports highlighting legislation in the following policy areas: animals and agriculture, banking, business and jobs, children, criminal justice and public safety, education, energy and utilities, environment, first responders, health professionals, higher education, housing and real estate, insurance, municipalities, people with disabilities, seniors, taxes, town clerks and elections, transportation, and veterans and military. These reports will be available online later this summer.

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Aging

Private Equity Ownership of Nursing Homes

Beginning February 1, 2028, a new law generally requires each nursing home that is a Medicaid provider to be fully controlled by its licensee. Unless the Department of Social Services (DSS) grants a nursing home a one-year waiver, by this date, the licensee must have full control over the nursing home's governance, assets, and activities. The law also requires these homes to attest to the Department of Public Health (DPH) each year that no investment company has control over the home's resident health, safety, or care. Nursing homes that do not comply with this attestation requirement may be fined up to \$2,000.

If an investment company has a beneficial ownership interest of at least 5% in a nursing home, beginning July 1, 2028, the nursing home may be required to get a surety bond to cover 90 days of the home's operating costs, to be used in the event of an emergency closure, financial distress, or receivership. But this requirement only takes effect if DSS is able to identify a surety bond (or other, similar security instrument) that is financially feasible, by January 1, 2028.

The law also establishes several reporting requirements, requiring (1) nursing homes to annually report to DSS on investment companies with certain ownership interests in them and (2) DSS to report to the legislature, by February 15, 2028, on certain aspects of nursing home ownership, including any differences in the quality of care provided by nursing homes that investment companies have an ownership stake in ([sSB 125](#), as amended, most provisions effective October 1, 2026).

Appropriations

Biennial Budget Adjustments

This session's budget adjustments include: (1) General Fund appropriations of \$24.9 billion in FY 27, (2) Special Transportation Fund (STF) appropriations of \$2.4 billion in FY 27, and (3) other appropriated funds of \$858 million in FY 27. The budget across all appropriated funds is estimated to result in a balance after factoring in the revenue cap of \$240.3 million.

The budget adjustments also appropriate \$183 million to the State Department of Education (SDE) in FY 26 for supplemental education grants, \$100 million for municipal grants, and \$50 million to the Federal Cuts Response Fund established under [SA 26-1](#) to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM). They also authorize \$249.3 million in deficiency appropriations to agencies across the General Fund and STF, and reduce appropriations by \$168.3 million from the General Fund, STF, and Insurance Fund.

The adjustments result in the budget being under the spending cap by \$0.2 million in FY 26 and \$0.6 million in FY 27. This calculation incorporates the Governor's Declarations of the Existence of Extraordinary Circumstances dated [November 12, 2025](#), and [May 2, 2026](#), exempting \$500 million and \$413 million, respectively, in appropriations from the spending cap. Per the latter declaration, \$80 million of appropriations in excess of the cap in FY 26 are carried forward into the subsequent year's spending cap calculation base.

The FY 27 growth rate for all appropriated funds is 3.5% over FY 26 appropriations ([PA 26-68](#) and [PA 26-76](#), various sections and effective dates).

Banking

Data Security

A new law requires certain financial institutions and Department of Banking (DOB)-licensed individuals to adopt written programs with standards on developing, implementing, and maintaining reasonable data security safeguards for customer information. The new law also requires DOB licensees and Connecticut banks and credit unions to initially notify the department within three business days after a data security incident that may (1) materially affect their ability to operate safely or comply with the law; (2) significantly disrupt customer services; or (3) involve unauthorized access to personal information ([PA 26-51](#), § 1, effective October 1, 2026).

Children

Child Welfare Policy and Oversight Committee and DCF Online Dashboard

In response to recent concerns regarding the Department of Children and Families (DCF), which include several widely publicized fatalities of children who were under DCF care, the legislature created a 32-member Child Welfare Policy and Oversight Committee as part of a comprehensive new law addressing this issue. The committee, made up of state officials, legislators, and child welfare providers and experts, is charged with evaluating and making recommendations about the operation, policies, and service outcomes of DCF and other state agencies providing child welfare services in Connecticut. Its first report to the Committee on Children is due January 1, 2028.

The same act also requires DCF to create a public, online dashboard by January 1, 2027, with information on DCF's state-wide programs for children and young people who (1) are abused, neglected, and uncared for and (2) have mental health needs and substance use disorders. The new law also creates a working group to identify additional information to be included in the dashboard ([PA 26-26](#), §§ 11, 12, & 18, various effective dates).

Child Welfare and Safety

This session, the legislature made various changes to child welfare and safety laws, including requiring:

1. the DCF commissioner to make an emergency placement of a child to an unlicensed relative or fictive kin caregiver if certain conditions are met and the placement is in the child's best interests;
2. DCF to carry out specified procedures when a child who is the subject of a DCF investigation, under protective supervision, receiving protective services, or residing with a child who meets one of these criteria is taken out-of-state by a parent or guardian;
3. DCF personnel to consider children's opinions during home visits when investigating a report of a young child's abuse or neglect;
4. the assignment of a new investigator in certain circumstances of alleged abuse or neglect; and
5. additional follow-up and oversight of people who are convicted of certain crimes against children and then live with a minor child, including notifying DCF when people convicted of these crimes are released from incarceration ([PA 26-26](#), §§ 1, 13, 15, 22 & 23, effective October 1, 2026).

Commerce

Connecticut-Germany and Connecticut-India Trade Commissions

This session, the legislature established the Connecticut-Germany Trade Commission and the Connecticut-India Trade Commission to advance bilateral trade and investment between Connecticut and these countries. The commissions must also initiate joint action on policy issues, promote business and academic exchanges, and encourage mutual economic support and infrastructure investment. Beginning by February 1, 2028, each commission must annually report to the governor, Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), and Commerce Committee on its activities and recommendations for policy and legislative changes needed to carry out its duties ([sSB 132](#), as amended, effective upon passage).

Education

Homeschooling

Starting with the 2027-28 school year, a new law requires parents who withdraw a child from public school to go, in person, to the school district's office and sign a withdrawal form. It also prohibits parents withdrawing their child for parent-managed learning (such as homeschooling) from doing

so if DCF records show that any adult living with the child is on the state's child abuse and neglect registry or currently under investigation for child abuse or neglect.

Starting with the 2028-29 school year, this new law also requires parents of most school-age children to annually complete an intent to educate form indicating whether their child will enroll in a public school, attend a nonpublic school, or be instructed through parent-managed learning. The new law (1) deems parents in compliance with this requirement if their child attends a public school or a nonpublic school that files the required annual attendance report and (2) generally excludes children currently being instructed through parent-managed learning from this requirement ([PA 26-37](#), most provisions effective July 1, 2027).

Misconduct-Related Information Disclosure During Prospective School Employee Hiring Process

A new law makes various revisions to the laws on the disclosure of certain misconduct-related information during the hiring process of a prospective school employee. Among other things, the new law:

1. expands the scope of what former employers and SDE must disclose to include allegations currently under investigation;
2. expands the scope of the applicant's written statement and the forms filled out by the applicant's current and prior employers by asking if the applicant is currently under investigation for abuse, neglect, or sexual misconduct and was, or is currently, facing an allegation involving the injury or risk of injury to, or impairing the morals of a minor;
3. expands the information that SDE must release to school governing entities to include if it knows of any pending investigation of abuse, neglect, or sexual misconduct; and
4. adds that eligible and nongovernmental school operators can also request from the State Board of Education information about whether SDE has been notified by a former employer that the applicant is under investigation for abuse, neglect, or sexual misconduct unless the investigation resulted in a finding that all allegations were false ([sHB 5323](#), §§ 11-13, as amended, effective July 1, 2026).

Supplemental Education Funding

As part of this year's budget adjustments, the legislature provided \$162.2 million in supplemental education aid grants to be distributed to towns in addition to Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funds. Under this new law, the one-time funds for FY 27, as well as a separate \$10.9 million municipal learning aid grant for FY 27, are not considered part of the minimum budget requirement (MBR) for FY 28 town education funding. The law addresses how towns that have already adopted their FY 27 budgets can amend their budgets or tax levies considering the new state aid.

The same legislation also provides certain programs with supplemental grants as follows: \$5.6 million for magnet school operators that are not boards of education, \$2.8 million for magnet schools operated by local or regional boards of education, \$8.7 million for charter school operators, and \$800,000 for boards that operate vocational-agricultural centers ([PA 26-68](#), §§ 178, 390, 391 & 393-395 and [sHB 5563](#), §§ 503-507 of Senate “A,” as amended, most provisions effective upon passage).

Energy and Technology

Renewable Energy Programs

This year, the legislature planned for the next iteration of programs to support solar and other renewable energy projects. A new law requires the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) to establish successor programs for current clean energy programs that govern how electric customers who install, lease, subscribe to, or otherwise contract with renewable energy facilities are compensated for the energy these facilities produce. PURA must issue final orders establishing the programs by December 1, 2027. The act includes several other provisions related to renewable energy that address, among other things, portable solar generation devices (“balcony solar”), a pilot program on energy storage, and safety requirements for solar and battery projects ([HB 5340](#), as amended, various effective dates).

Environment

Bottle Bill Changes

This session, the legislature passed two acts that make several changes to the state’s beverage container redemption law (“bottle bill”). The new laws, among other things:

1. replace the prior redemption center registration with a licensure requirement and require license applicants to pay a \$2,500 application fee;
2. ban redemption centers, dealers, and distributors from accepting certain beverage containers;
3. reduce the (a) container redemption threshold over which redemption centers must take certain information from people redeeming containers and (b) general cap on how many containers a person may redeem in a day;
4. increase the required remittance of unclaimed bottle bill deposits to the General Fund for FY 27 under certain conditions;
5. authorize a rebate to certain deposit initiators who reported a negative balance in their special account for the quarter ending June 30, 2026, and requires they apply the rebate to reduce this negative balance; and

6. increase the fines for violating the act's requirements and give municipal police enforcement authority over those violations.

Starting April 1, 2026, the new laws also reduce the handling fee distributors pay to certain redemption centers by up to one cent if the redemption center does not use certain scanning technology to redeem beverage containers. This reduction ends July 1, 2027, or when the redemption center uses the specified scanning technology to redeem beverage containers at its facility, whichever comes first. Additionally, the new laws prohibit willfully collecting or charging a refund value on beverage containers not purchased in Connecticut and make violations a class A or B misdemeanor or class D felony depending on the volume of containers ([PA 26-2](#), effective March 3, 2026, and [sSB 457](#), as amended, effective October 1, 2026, except the provision modifying redemption center handling fees is effective upon passage).

Finance, Revenue and Bonding

Hospital Provider Tax and Medicaid Supplemental Payments

This session, the legislature restructured the hospital provider tax primarily by (1) decreasing the tax on inpatient hospital services from 6% to 4% for FYs 27 through 31 and 3.5% starting in FY 32; (2) decreasing the total revenue on which the outpatient hospital services tax is calculated; (3) changing the base year used to calculate the tax; and (4) requiring children's general hospitals to pay the tax starting July 1, 2026

The act also diverts hospital provider tax revenue to a new dedicated account that must be used to make newly revamped supplemental payments to hospitals, hospital-affiliated medical groups, and faculty practice plans. The act sets up several supplemental payment pools and a corresponding payment schedule for each one. It also sets requirements for various disproportionate share hospital payments ([PA 26-68](#), §§ 357-363, and [PA 26-76](#), §§ 18-20 & 82, most provisions effective July 1, 2026).

Other Taxes

The legislature made a number of tax changes as part of its budget adjustments. Among the most notable provisions, the adjustments:

1. create a research and development tax credit for qualifying small businesses that applies against the state's personal income tax;
2. create an income tax credit for income-eligible family caregivers who incur eligible expenditures to care for and support an eligible family member;

3. create a sales and use tax exemption for nonelectronic school supplies that are bought for nonbusiness purposes;
4. increase the exemption amount for sales tax free week from \$100 to \$300 and adds backpacks and cleated shoes to the list of items that can be bought tax-free;
5. replace the three state cannabis taxes that are based on the amount of THC in a product with a single tax of 10.75% of the product's sales price; and
6. conform the state corporation business tax to recent changes in the federal deduction for domestic research and experimental expenditures and disallows the retroactive application of these changes ([PA 26-68](#) and [PA 26-76](#), various sections and effective dates).

General Law

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

New legislation adds various requirements and establishes and repurposes certain programs and studies related to AI. Among other things, it:

1. requires AI subscription-based providers to give consumers a written notice of the key terms and conditions and requires the consumer to accept them in writing;
2. prohibits “frontier developers” (those that train large-scale AI models using a large quantity of computing power) from disciplining or penalizing a whistleblower employee or certain other employees for reporting certain catastrophic risks (for example, a material contribution to the death of 50 or more people);
3. requires the DECD commissioner to develop a plan to create an AI regulatory sandbox program for testing products or services;
4. requires AI companion operators to include a protocol with certain required detection methods for specified user expressions (such as self-harm) and give certain notices to a user disclosing that the user is communicating with an AI companion;
5. requires those who use an automated decision technology in making an employment related decision to give certain disclosures and a written notice with specific disclosures; and
6. requires the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) to develop and administer a pilot program to evaluate the use of independent, third-party verification programs for assessing whether AI models adhere to standards reflecting best practices for preventing personal injury, property damage, data privacy harms, and other harms ([PA 26-15](#) and [sHB 5222](#), §§ 46-47 & 67, as amended, various effective dates).

Cannabis, Hemp, and THC Infused Beverages

A new law makes various unrelated changes to laws on cannabis, hemp, and THC-infused beverages. Among other things, it:

1. renames “marijuana” as “cannabis” throughout the statutes;
2. eliminates the requirement that cannabis or medical cannabis be dispensed by a licensed pharmacist;
3. generally sets a 60-day deadline to dispose of medical cannabis and cannabis samples that fail testing;
4. broadens the circumstances under which a municipality may prohibit a business from operating because it poses an “immediate threat to public health and safety”;
5. allows a change in ownership or control in an equity joint venture after five years of final licensure, under certain circumstances and procedures;
6. allows cannabis policies and procedures from DCP and the Social Equity Council to be effective up to July 1, 2028;
7. allows for the sale of certain medical use cannabis products that are currently only available to qualifying patients to other consumers;
8. increases the allowable THC levels, from three to five milligrams (mgs), for infused beverages sold in package stores and from three mgs to 10 mgs, for ones sold in a dispensary facility, hybrid retailer, or retailer; and
9. beginning December 1, 2026, allows hemp manufacturers to manufacture certain cannabinoids and “intermediate hemp derivatives” (extracts with a total THC concentration of more than 0.3% on a dry weight basis) ([PA 26-8](#), and [sHB 5222](#), §§ 48-57, as amended, various effective dates).

Consumer Privacy and Protection

New legislation makes various consumer privacy and protection changes. Among other things, it:

1. requires data brokers to register with DCP, establishes a deletion mechanism program for consumers to request that data brokers delete their personal data, requires data brokers to check the program once every 45 days, and creates a civil penalty of up to \$200 per day, per violation, per consumer;
2. generally (a) requires online businesses that use surveillance pricing to increase the price of consumer goods or services to make a specific disclosure about doing so and (b) prohibits retailers from using surveillance pricing;

3. limits the use of facial recognition technology to matching still images or video to a database and requires certain signage, and prohibits controllers from selling precise geolocation data; and
4. gives consumers a property right and exclusive control over their biological samples that are given to a direct-to-consumer genetic testing company and their results ([PA 26-64](#); [sHB 5222](#), §§ 39-44, 58 & 66, as amended; and [sHB 5563](#), §§ 501 & 502 of Senate “A,” as amended, various effective dates).

Government Administration and Elections

Absentee Voting

This session, following the adoption of the 2024 constitutional amendment, the General Assembly adopted no-excuse absentee voting, allowing all eligible voters to cast absentee ballots, instead of just those with a valid reason. Relatedly, the legislature made various changes to the state’s absentee balloting laws including (1) modifying the contents of absentee balloting sets, such as including a privacy sleeve; (2) establishing procedures for curing absentee ballots for voters that failed to sign theirs; (3) requiring the secretary of the state (SOTS) to adopt absentee ballot tracking software for voters to track their ballots; and (4) creating procedures for voters to automatically receive absentee ballot applications ([PA 26-42](#), §§ 1-10 & 14-17 and [PA 26-76](#), §§ 37-39, most provisions effective upon passage).

Election Administration and Procedures

This year, the legislature made several changes related to election administration, including (1) modifying early voting procedures, such as allowing early voting ballots to be counted and stored in tabulators; (2) requiring certain entities to notify SOTS of election-related court actions (for example, claims involving the state’s voting rights act); and (3) limiting the voter registration information that is available under the state’s Freedom of Information Act ([PA 26-1](#), §§ 69-97, various effective dates).

The General Assembly also implemented various election reforms and provisions including (1) explicitly allowing the State Elections Enforcement Commission to investigate and resolve alleged violations of election regulations; (2) authorizing 17-year old voters who will be 18 by election day to use absentee voting and early voting for the upcoming election; and (3) adopting risk-limiting audits for state elections ([PA 26-42](#), §§ 22-73, various effective dates).

Prohibited Acts Near Election Sites

A new law generally prohibits law enforcement, and those that have authority over them, from knowingly being within 250 feet of election sites (such as early voting locations, polling places, or

absentee ballot drop boxes), with several exceptions. These exceptions include, among others, (1) when voting as allowed by state law; (2) if requested by the governor, SOTS, or moderator under specified circumstances; or (3) when authorized by a judicial warrant or order to conduct certain law enforcement activities (for example, arrests or detentions) and they notify SOTS and the attorney general at least 24 hours before.

The law also prohibits anyone from wearing a mask or other face covering within 250 feet of an election site, with certain exceptions. It also establishes criminal penalties for violations and disenfranchises individuals for certain violations ([PA 26-42](#), § 57, and [PA 26-76](#), § 36, effective July 1, 2026).

Government Oversight

Human Trafficking Prevention

A new law has several provisions aimed at preventing and responding to human trafficking in the state. Among other things, it:

1. requires OPM's Criminal Justice and Planning Division to evaluate and develop a plan on coordinating trafficking prevention efforts between state agencies and law enforcement;
2. requires (a) DCF and the judicial branch to provide certain employees with training on trafficking and (b) police officer basic and review training programs to include trafficking training;
3. sets policy, plan, and security requirements for DCF-licensed congregate care residence operators;
4. requires DCF and the state's attorneys to set up multidisciplinary teams to help abused, neglected, or trafficked children, instead of only allowing them to do this as under prior law; and
5. requires the Department of Correction (DOC) to issue a request for proposals for a confidential crisis hotline to report sexual violence ([sHB 5476](#), as amended, various effective dates).

Legislatively Directed Funds

A new law increases oversight and management of legislatively directed funds (LDFs) and agencies' "Other Expenses" appropriations. LDFs are generally legislative appropriations for a contract, grant, loan, or other form of economic assistance to a specific entity. Among other things, the law:

1. limits state agencies from entering written agreements to give an entity funds at the legislature's direction, unless legislation or OFA's budget sheets include specific recipient information;
2. prohibits certain uses of agencies' Other Expenses appropriations and creates a transition process for certain non-compliant uses;
3. requires OPM to adopt LDF policies, procedures, and training; and
4. requires reports and publications from LDF recipients, state agencies, OPM, and the Auditors of Public Accounts ([PA 26-27](#), effective July 1, 2026).

Higher Education and Employment Advancement

State-Support for Promise Programs

This session, the legislature passed a bill requiring the Office of Higher Education to establish a program to support the creation of new scholarship programs (referred to as promise programs) throughout the state. The program must prioritize programs serving students in alliance districts and maintain a goal of establishing eight new promise programs by January 1, 2031 ([PA 26-68](#), § 382, effective July 1, 2026).

Supplemental Graduate Loan Program and CHESLA

A new law requires the Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA) to create a Supplemental Graduate Loan Program to provide loans to Connecticut students enrolled in graduate programs. CHESLA must adopt eligibility criteria and guidelines for the program. The new law also (1) authorizes \$30 million in new bonds for FY 26 for the program and (2) increases, from \$300 million to \$750 million, the total amount of outstanding CHESLA bonds that may be secured by special capital reserve funds ([PA 26-68](#), §§ 340, 341 & 344, effective upon passage).

Housing

Tenant Utility Payments

New legislation prohibits residential rental agreements from requiring that tenants pay for utilities if there is no separate meter used to measure utilities delivered exclusively to their dwelling unit. Statutorily prohibited provisions in a rental agreement are unenforceable and, according to the Connecticut Supreme Court, landlords may estimate their building's utility costs for the year and build that figure into monthly rent as part of a rental agreement ([sSB 335](#), effective October 1, 2026, and applicable to rental agreements entered into or renewed on or after that date).

Human Services

Changing or Replacing Covered Connecticut

A new law makes changes to the Covered Connecticut program, which provides subsidized insurance coverage through Access Health CT to households with income up to 175% of the federal poverty level (FPL) who are ineligible for Medicaid. In practice, the program is partially federally funded through a Section 1115 Medicaid demonstration waiver and DSS must apply to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to periodically renew or make changes to the waiver. Under the new law, if CMS denies or fails to approve the waiver by July 1, 2027, DSS must either (1) continue Covered Connecticut as a state-funded program or (2) seek necessary federal approvals to establish a Basic Health Program (BHP), which is an option under the Affordable Care Act to cover households with incomes between 133% and 200% of FPL ([PA 26-68](#), §§ 454 & 455, effective upon passage, except the provision creating a BHP account is effective upon CMS's approval of the state's BHP).

Insurance and Real Estate

Health Insurance Benefit Mandates

This session, the legislature passed a new law that generally requires certain individual and group health insurance policies to cover the following:

1. Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections (PANDAS) and Pediatric Acute-onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome (PANS) treatment;
2. prosthetic devices designed exclusively for athletic purposes;
3. scalp cooling systems used in connection with chemotherapy, at least equivalent to the coverage Medicare provides for them; and
4. infertility diagnosis and treatment under an expanded definition of “infertility” that, among other things, establishes various ways in which infertility can be determined.

The new law applies to each insurer, hospital or medical service corporation, health maintenance organization (HMO), or fraternal benefit society that delivers, issues, renews, amends, or continues in Connecticut individual or group health insurance policies that cover (1) basic hospital expenses; (2) basic medical-surgical expenses; (3) major medical expenses; (4) hospital or medical services, including those provided under an HMO plan; or (5) specified disease coverage. Because of the federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), state insurance benefit mandates do not apply to self-insured benefit plans ([PA 26-33](#), effective January 1, 2027).

ICHRA Tax Credit

A new law establishes a tax credit for qualified small businesses that offer employees an Individual Coverage Health Reimbursement Arrangement (ICHRA) through the state's health insurance exchange. The credit may be claimed against the state insurance and health care center taxes, corporation business tax, or income tax (excluding withholdings generally). To qualify, a small business (1) cannot employ more than 50 employees in the state when it applies for the tax credit and (2) must have adopted an ICHRA instead of a traditional employer-provided health insurance plan. The available credit is the lesser of (1) the sum of qualified contributions made by the qualified small business during the applicable income or taxable year or (2) \$1,000 per covered employee, up to \$5 million total in any income or tax year ([PA 26-76](#), § 85, effective upon passage and applicable to income and tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2026).

Judiciary and Public Safety and Security

First Responder Recruitment and Retention

A new law provides financial assistance to eligible police officers, firefighters, and EMS personnel (first responders). Among other things, the act requires the Board of Regents for Higher Education to waive CT State and Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) tuition for (1) first responders who certify their eligibility and are enrolled or accepted for admission, and (2) students attending the state fire school who are enrolled in a program offered together with the respective college or university that accredits courses in the program. The act caps the total number of these waivers at CT State and CSCU at 200 per school year, respectively.

The act also requires the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) to develop and administer a mortgage assistance program for eligible first responders who submit a compliance certification and are buying a home as their principal residence in the community where they serve. This mortgage assistance must be provided under CHFA-established guidelines. In doing so, CHFA may (1) use down payment assistance or any other appropriate housing subsidies and (2) allow the mortgagee to realize a reasonable portion of the property's equity gain when it is sold.

The act also requires the UConn president, by July 1, 2027, to establish a recruitment and retention program for the UConn special police forces and fire department to address 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, and an education benefit for those members ([PA 26-12](#), §§ 41-43 & 65-72, various effective dates).

Gun Law Changes

This session, the legislature made various changes in the state's gun (firearm) laws, including the following:

1. generally making it a class D felony to knowingly import into Connecticut or knowingly advertise, sell, offer, or expose for sale any convertible pistol manufactured on or after October 1, 2026;
2. prohibiting anyone without a local dealer permit from (a) advertising, selling, or delivering unfinished frames or unfinished lower receivers, (b) offering or exposing them for sale or delivery, or (c) possessing them with the intent to deliver them or sell them at retail;
3. explicitly allowing anyone to deliver or surrender any firearm or ammunition they possess to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection or a local police department, which must then hold them for at least 14 days, up to a maximum of one year; and
4. requiring local handgun permitting authorities to refund \$70 to applicants if the authority does not act within statutorily established timeframes ([PA 26-41](#) and [PA 26-68](#), §§ 162 & 163 most provisions effective October 1, 2026).

Hate Crimes Statutory Consolidation

A new law generally consolidates the various classes that existing law protects against crimes motivated by bias (for example, race, disability, or sexual orientation) into one protected social category for hate crimes. It also labels as specific hate crimes (1) certain crimes under prior law that were penalized as a hate crime if based on bigotry or bias, (2) crimes with enhanced penalties if motivated by bias, and (3) certain discriminatory practices under prior law. The act also allows the court to require a hate crime offender to participate in (1) a pretrial hate crimes diversion program as part of accelerated rehabilitation and (2) certain anti-bias programs as a condition of probation or conditional discharge.

The new law also extends the attorney general's authority to investigate hate crimes, initiate legal action, and seek relief to apply to all hate crimes under the act. It similarly expands the Hate Crimes Investigative Unit's duties to cover all hate crimes under the legislation. Lastly, it requires the Connecticut Sentencing Commission, in consultation with the State-Wide Hate Crimes Advisory Council, to review Connecticut's hate crime laws to determine appropriateness of the penalties and to report their findings and recommendations to the legislature by January 1, 2027 ([sSB 90](#), as amended, most provisions effective October 1, 2026).

Health Care for Incarcerated Individuals

The legislature passed several measures aimed at improving health care for people incarcerated in DOC facilities. For example, the new laws require DOC to:

1. provide health care to incarcerated people for free and cancel any outstanding fees or other costs;
2. implement an electronic health records system (within available bond authorizations) that allows for care requests to be made electronically;
3. take steps to ensure continuity of medications upon a person's intake; and
4. along with a new Correction Medical and Health Commission, (a) publish a quarterly scorecard with medical staffing-related information and (b) develop a health services staffing shortage contingency plan for each correctional facility.

Among other things, the acts also (1) require the correction ombuds to hire a correction mental health care clinician to help incarcerated people with things like service access and medication management and (2) create a program to give student loan reimbursement grants, within available bond authorizations, to nurses and certain social workers who work at DOC facilities ([PA 26-40](#); [sHB 5563](#), as amended; [SB 391](#); and [PA 26-76](#), § 60; various effective dates).

Law Enforcement Authority & Oversight

The legislature passed a new law with law enforcement authority and oversight reforms, several of which apply to “peace officers,” including certain federal law enforcement officers. Among other things, the new law:

1. prohibits peace officers without a judicial warrant from detaining, arresting, or taking someone into custody based on a civil offense in a state or municipal facility or a “protected area” like a school, hospital, or house of worship;
2. prohibits peace officers from wearing a facial covering when interacting with the public and performing their duties unless doing so is for health or safety or other specified reasons;
3. generally requires peace officers to be clearly identified by their badge and name tag when making a planned, authorized arrest, or interacting with the public in an official capacity;
4. changes when the state's inspector general must investigate a peace officer's use of physical force on someone that results in the person's death or the death of a person in custody;
5. subject to several exceptions, makes federal law enforcement agencies liable when their officers interfere with someone taking a photo or video of them or another officer performing their duties;

6. extends to all peace officers the existing prohibition on hiring police officers who (a) were dismissed for malfeasance or serious misconduct or (b) resigned or retired during an investigation for this conduct; and
7. creates an individual cause of action, including against a federal or state officer or employee, for alleged civil rights violations.

This new law also sets conditions and restrictions on how law enforcement and public agencies may use automated license plate reader systems or associated data, including limits on (1) when they can use the systems or data or share the data and (2) how long they can keep the data ([PA 26-14](#) and [PA 26-76](#), § 46, effective upon passage, except the provision restricting taking someone into custody for a civil offense in certain locations is effective October 1, 2026).

Labor and Public Employees

Contract Worker Retention

This session, the legislature enacted a new law that, among other things, generally requires entities that take over certain service contracts at covered locations, contract out services, or receive property in a sale or transfer to retain the terminated contractor's employees for at least 90 days. It requires advance notice to (1) a contractor whose contract will be terminated or not renewed, (2) employees, and (3) the union representing employees.

The new law also specifies that terminated contractors can take disciplinary action against an employee, such as termination, if the employee's attendance or performance records would lead a reasonably prudent employer to take similar action. These actions must be consistent with state law or the employee's collective bargaining agreement and occur before the (1) start of the successor service contract or (2) successor employer gets control of the site or sites covered by the contract ([PA 26-12](#), § 9, and [PA 26-68](#), § 247, effective July 1, 2027).

Omnibus Labor Bill

This session the legislature passed a new omnibus labor law that, in combination with this year's budget adjustments, covers a wide variety of issues. Among other things, it:

1. allows certain teachers, health care providers, and related employees to receive enhanced workers' compensation benefits if they are unable to work due to being assaulted at work;
2. requires employers to include a position's wage or wage range, and a general description of the position's benefits, in their job advertisements;

3. brings all employers under a law that generally prohibits requiring employees to sign an agreement that requires the employee to repay the employer if he or she does not stay at the job for a certain duration; and
4. makes certain construction contractors jointly and severally liable for any unpaid wages owed to a subcontractor's employees ([PA 26-12](#); [PA 26-68](#), §§ 206, 247, 253 & 371-373; and [PA 26-76](#), § 66, various effective dates).

Warehouse Workers

A new law limits the extent to which employers at certain warehouse distribution centers can require their employees to meet production quotas. It generally applies to employers that employ at least (1) 250 employees at a single warehouse in the state or (2) 1,000 employees at multiple warehouses in the state. Among other things, the new law (1) requires the covered employers to give their employees a written description of the quotas they must meet and any adverse employment actions they may face for failing to do so and (2) prohibits the employers from using quotas that (a) prevent compliance with the state law on meal periods or (b) interfere with an employee using bathroom facilities ([PA 26-1](#), §§ 50-57, effective July 1, 2026).

Planning and Development

Increased State Aid and Authority to Lower Mill Rates

In this year's budget adjustments, the legislature allocated approximately \$100 million to OPM for one-time payments to all municipalities in specified amounts. Municipalities can use these payments to fund services and provide tax relief. For municipalities that already adopted a FY 27 budget (except Bridgeport), a provision in the budget adjustments allow them, by vote of their legislative bodies or boards of selectmen, to adjust their local budgets to reflect these and other unanticipated payments from the state. They may also lower their mill rates if they do so by July 1, 2026. Municipalities must report to OPM on their use of these payments by January 1, 2027 ([PA 26-68](#), § 464, and [sHB 5563](#), §§ 506 & 507 of Senate "A," as amended, effective upon passage).

Relatedly, the legislature effectively paused enforcement of the municipal spending cap for another year, extending it through FY 27. This means municipalities will not see a decrease in their municipal revenue sharing grant if their budget expenditures exceed the statutory spending cap ([PA 26-68](#), § 175, effective October 1, 2026).

Public Health

Benchmarks for Health Care Quality and Cost and Hospital Payment Growth and Primary Care Spending Targets

A new law transfers to the OPM secretary the Office of Health Strategy (OHS) commissioner's duties to develop and assess compliance with benchmarks for health care quality and cost growth and primary care spending targets. (The new law does so as part of its overall elimination of OHS and general transfer of OHS's duties to other agencies.) The new law makes several changes to this process and establishes additional responsibilities for the OPM secretary in this role, including those related to developing and adopting hospital payment growth benchmarks.

Regarding the annual health care cost growth benchmark, the new law sets a statutory benchmark of 3.9% for 2028 through 2032 and requires the secretary to develop and adopt annual benchmarks for 2033 and every five years after that, using a formula the new law prescribes. It generally maintains existing law's requirements regarding health care quality benchmarks but creates a new method the secretary must use to develop and adopt primary care spending targets.

Among other things, the new law also requires the secretary to adopt a (1) hospital payment growth methodology that considers certain factors and (2) revised methodology for assessing compliance with the health care cost growth benchmark. Provider entities and hospitals that exceed the applicable benchmark may develop and implement a cost growth benchmark plan to achieve compliance and may be subject to penalties for failing to do so ([PA 26-68](#), §§ 364-369, and [PA 26-76](#), §§ 26, 27 & 95-98, most provisions effective July 1, 2026).

Private Equity and Health Care Business Transactions

This session, the legislature took steps to address the role of private equity in health care and on how the business and regulation of health care affect patient care access and quality. Under a new law, hospitals are barred from entering into sale-leaseback transactions involving their main campus real property starting in July 2027. This law also requires hospitals, starting by February 15, 2027, to annually submit to DPH an attestation that no private equity entity (1) has a controlling interest in or ultimate governance control over its main campus or (2) is allowed to direct the hospital's adoption of any policy or procedure that would interfere with clinicians' professional judgment or clinical decisions ([PA 26-22](#), effective upon passage).

A second new law replaces the state's existing certificate of need (CON) program for health care entities with a new, generally streamlined CON process starting in July 2027, with final decision-making authority vested in a panel of the DPH and DSS commissioners and the OPM secretary or

their designees. It creates a new CON program within DPH to support the review of CON applications. Among other changes, the bill (1) eliminates required CON approval for certain service terminations, and creates a separate process to oversee hospital service pauses or terminations; (2) shortens the list of factors that must be considered in the CON review process; and (3) requires the panel to create an expedited review pathway for certain application categories or subcategories ([PA 26-68](#), §§ 226-246, effective October 1, 2026).

State Immunization Standards

In response to recent changes in federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) vaccine standards, the legislature enacted a new law requiring DPH to establish immunization standards of care for all Connecticut residents, instead of only children and adolescents. In developing these standards, it allows DPH to consider recommended vaccine schedules from several medical professional organizations, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics and American Academy of Family Physicians.

Among other things, the new law also requires (1) the Connecticut Vaccine Program to give all children’s vaccines included under DPH’s standard of care, instead of only those recommended by the CDC; (2) establishes, within available appropriations, a new DPH-administered Vaccines for Adults Program that gives vaccines at no cost to under- and uninsured adults; (3) requires certain health insurance policies to cover immunizations included in DPH’s standards of care; and (4) allows licensed pharmacists to give vaccines listed in DPH’s standards of care, instead of only CDC-recommended vaccines, for adults and certain minors.

Additionally, the new law expressly provides that the state’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act does not apply to school and child care facility immunization requirements ([PA 26-3](#), various effective dates).

Transportation

Dynamic Part-Time Lanes (Flex Lanes)

A new law authorizes the Office of the State Traffic Administration to temporarily designate any highway lane or shoulder for certain specified uses to control and manage traffic (a “dynamic part-time lane,” also known as a flex lane), including, among other things, (1) as a high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane or dedicated bus rapid transit or emergency vehicle lane; (2) to redirect an opposing lane into a one-way lane; or (3) as needed for the state’s highway system to function.

Relatedly, the new law restricts motor vehicle operation in flex lanes based on the lane's currently designated use. For example, a flex lane actively dedicated for emergency vehicles is limited to these operators or other motor vehicle operators obeying a law enforcement officer's direction. It also allows (1) the Department of Transportation (DOT) to establish a program to operate flex lane control systems (automated enforcement systems) and (2) any municipality operating a bus in a flex lane to participate in this program if it adopts an ordinance meeting certain requirements.

The new law additionally sets various conditions, requirements, and procedures for operating a flex lane control system (automated enforcement system), issuing tickets and enforcing violations, and collecting and retaining data. Generally, many aspects of this framework are similar to provisions in existing law governing DOT's work zone speed camera program ([PA 26-63](#), §§ 5-11 & 13, most provisions effective January 1, 2027).

Nonconsensual Towing and Unclaimed Vehicle Disposal

In the 2025 legislative session, the legislature amended the laws on nonconsensual towing, towing rate setting, and unclaimed vehicle disposal procedures. This session, the legislature built on those reforms by, among other things:

1. requiring the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to create an electronic portal on its website where towing companies can upload information on vehicles they tow and the general public can search to find where their towed vehicle is stored;
2. modifying the unclaimed vehicle disposal process by (a) allowing towing companies and garage owners to start the process 30 days after towing a vehicle (rather than after 15 or 45 days, depending on value) and (b) requiring vehicles less than 15 model years old (rather than those worth more than \$1,500) to be initially offered at public auction;
3. requiring nonconsensual towing rates to be annually adjusted for inflation in years two and three of the rate-setting cycle and establishing an additional comment period if the DMV commissioner substantially modifies the proposed police-ordered towing rate schedule developed by the Police-Ordered Towing Council;
4. limiting the timeframe for filing customer complaints about police-ordered towing to two years after the date the vehicle was towed; and
5. establishing a standing towing advisory council to advise the DMV commissioner on laws and best practices for motor vehicle towing and storage and the redemption and sale of unclaimed vehicles ([PA 26-24](#), §§ 29-43, most provisions effective October 1, 2026).

Tweed-New Haven Airport

The General Assembly enacted numerous provisions impacting Tweed-New Haven Airport. Among other things, these provisions:

1. modify the appointments of the Tweed-New Haven Airport Authority board of directors 30 days after a building permit is issued for a passenger terminal facility located on the East Haven side of the airport;
2. generally require, starting after the building permit is issued, the affirmative vote of at least 10 board members for any amendments to the authority's bylaws;
3. expand and modify the authority's powers and duties;
4. require the state treasurer to annually make certain payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT payments) to East Haven and New Haven after the OPM secretary certifies that East Haven has approved a building permit as described above (but no earlier than July 1, 2027);
5. make numerous changes related to bonds issued by the Tweed-New Haven Airport Authority, including authorizing revenue bonds to benefit a participating corporation involved with certain airport projects; and
6. require the DECD commissioner to establish an airport development zone surrounding Tweed-New Haven Airport if East Haven or New Haven, or the two jointly, submit a proposal to do so that meets certain requirements ([PA 26-68](#), §§ 166-173, and [PA 26-76](#), §§ 89-94, effective July 1, 2026).

Veterans' and Military Affairs

Veteran and Military Benefits and Services

This session, the legislature enacted a new law that makes various unrelated changes to state law concerning veteran and military affairs. Among other things, it:

1. creates a Veteran Dental Care Program to help eligible veterans receive certain dental services (capped at \$3,000 a year per veteran and \$1,000,000 per fiscal year for the program);
2. requires the state early intervention system to take steps to provide a minimally disruptive transition of a military-connected child;
3. increases the grace period for certain motor vehicle-related renewals or testing for certain armed forces members from 60 to 90 days from release from qualifying service;
4. requires DMV to waive fees for the original issuance of a Department of Veterans Affairs-verified veterans' driver's license or identity card; and
5. establishes state income tax deductions for (a) compensation for an honor guard detail at a veteran's funeral and (b) pay a National Guard member receives for being ordered out for active service ([PA 26-35](#), various effective dates).