



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 517**

February Session, 2026

Substitute House Bill No. 5342

*House of Representatives, April 8, 2026*

The Committee on Government Administration and Elections reported through REP. BLUMENTHAL of the 147th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE  
AND OTHER MEANS TO GENERATE DECEPTIVE SYNTHETIC MEDIA  
AND AFFECT ELECTIONS.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

- 1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) As used in this section:
- 2 (1) "Candidate" means any individual who seeks nomination for  
3 election, or election to public office whether or not such individual is  
4 elected;
- 5 (2) "Deceptive synthetic media" means any image, audio or video of  
6 an individual, and any representation of such individual's speech or  
7 conduct that is substantially derived from any such image, audio or  
8 video, which a reasonable person would believe depicts the speech or  
9 conduct of such individual when such individual did not in fact engage  
10 in such speech or conduct;
- 11 (3) "Election" has the same meaning as provided in section 9-1 of the

12 general statutes;

13 (4) "Individual" means a human being;

14 (5) "Person" has the same meaning as provided in section 9-601 of the  
15 general statutes; and

16 (6) "Primary" has the same meaning as provided in section 9-372 of  
17 the general statutes.

18 (b) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, no person shall  
19 distribute, or enter into any agreement to distribute, a communication  
20 containing any image, audio or video of an individual during the  
21 ninety-day period preceding any election or primary if:

22 (1) Such person (A) knows or should reasonably know that such  
23 image, audio or video is deceptive synthetic media, or (B) in the case  
24 where the individual depicted therein is a public official or public figure,  
25 acts with reckless disregard as to whether such image, audio or video is  
26 deceptive synthetic media;

27 (2) The communication containing such deceptive synthetic media is  
28 distributed without the consent of such individual; and

29 (3) Such distribution is intended to injure a candidate or influence the  
30 result of such election or primary.

31 (c) A person may distribute, or enter into an agreement to distribute,  
32 a communication containing deceptive synthetic media during the  
33 ninety-day period preceding a primary or election if:

34 (1) For such deceptive synthetic media that:

35 (A) Is an image or consists only of an image, (i) a disclaimer stating  
36 "This communication contains an image that has been manipulated" or  
37 "This image has been manipulated", as applicable, or using substantially  
38 the same words, appears in text that is clearly visible to and easily  
39 readable by the average viewer, and (ii) in the case of any such image  
40 that was generated by editing or manipulating an existing image, a

41 citation directing such viewer to the original source from which the  
42 unedited or unmanipulated version of such existing image was  
43 obtained;

44 (B) Consists only of audio, (i) a disclaimer stating "This  
45 communication contains audio that has been manipulated", or using  
46 substantially the same words, is read in a clearly spoken manner, in a  
47 pitch that can be easily heard by the average listener and in the same  
48 language as the deceptive synthetic media and any other language such  
49 person should reasonably expect such listener to speak or understand,  
50 and which disclaimer is read at the beginning of such communication,  
51 at the end of such communication and, if such communication is greater  
52 than one minute in length, interspersed within such communication at  
53 not less frequently than thirty-second intervals, and (ii) in the case of  
54 any such audio that was generated by editing or manipulating existing  
55 audio, a citation directing such listener to the original source from which  
56 the unedited or unmanipulated version of such existing audio was  
57 obtained; or

58 (C) Is a video, (i) a disclaimer stating "This communication contains  
59 video that has been manipulated", or using substantially the same  
60 words, appears in text that is clearly visible to and easily readable by the  
61 average viewer and is in the same language as the deceptive synthetic  
62 media and any other language such person should reasonably expect  
63 such viewer to speak or understand, and which disclaimer appears for  
64 the duration of such communication, and (ii) in the case of any such  
65 video that was generated by editing or manipulating an existing video,  
66 a citation directing such viewer to the original source from which the  
67 unedited or unmanipulated version of such existing video was  
68 obtained; or

69 (2) Such person is:

70 (A) A radio station or television station, whether broadcast, cable or  
71 satellite and including, but not limited to, any producer or programmer  
72 or any certified competitive video service provider, community antenna  
73 television company, holder of a certificate of cable franchise authority

74 or holder of a certificate of video franchise authority, as those terms are  
75 defined in section 16-1 of the general statutes, or a streaming or other  
76 digital broadcast service provider, that (i) broadcasts such  
77 communication containing deceptive synthetic media as part of a bona  
78 fide newscast, news interview, news documentary or other on-the-spot  
79 coverage of bona fide news events, (ii) (I) retains the disclaimer upon  
80 such communication required under subdivision (1) of this subsection,  
81 or (II) except in the case of any such on-the-spot coverage, adds such a  
82 disclaimer at the time of such broadcast if such communication did not  
83 previously include such a disclaimer, and (iii) except in the case of any  
84 such on-the-spot coverage for which such person does not have reason  
85 to believe that such communication contains deceptive synthetic media,  
86 clearly states in the content of such broadcast that such communication  
87 contains deceptive synthetic media; or

88 (B) An Internet web site or regularly published newspaper, magazine  
89 or other periodical of general circulation, including, but not limited to,  
90 any regularly published periodical of general circulation that is  
91 published electronically or on the Internet, that (i) publishes such  
92 communication containing deceptive synthetic media as part of such  
93 person's routine carriage of news and commentary of general interest,  
94 (ii) (I) retains the disclaimer upon such communication required under  
95 subdivision (1) of this subsection, or (II) adds such a disclaimer at the  
96 time of such publication if such communication did not previously  
97 include such a disclaimer, and (iii) clearly states in the content of such  
98 publication that such communication contains deceptive synthetic  
99 media.

100 (d) Whenever a person purchases advertising space for the broadcast  
101 of a communication described in section 9-621 of the general statutes,  
102 which broadcast is by an entity described in subparagraph (A) of  
103 subdivision (2) of subsection (c) of this section, such entity may require  
104 that such person attest, under penalties of false statement, that such  
105 communication does not contain any deceptive synthetic media. If such  
106 entity obtains such attestation from such person, such entity shall not be  
107 liable under this section, unless such entity (1) develops knowledge that

108 such communication contains deceptive synthetic media, and (2) with  
109 such knowledge, proceeds to distribute, continue to distribute or enter  
110 into an agreement to distribute such communication containing  
111 deceptive synthetic media.

112 (e) (1) If an individual violates the provisions of subsection (b) of this  
113 section with the intent to distribute a communication containing  
114 deceptive synthetic media to an audience and such audience exceeds  
115 one thousand individuals, such individual shall be guilty of a class C  
116 misdemeanor, except that:

117 (A) If such violation was committed with the intent to (i) cause  
118 violence or bodily harm, or (ii) distribute a communication containing  
119 deceptive synthetic media to an audience and such audience exceeds ten  
120 thousand individuals, such individual shall be guilty of a class A  
121 misdemeanor; and

122 (B) If such violation was committed less than five years after a prior  
123 conviction under subsection (b) of this section, such individual shall be  
124 guilty of a class D felony.

125 (2) Any penalty imposed under subdivision (1) of this subsection  
126 shall be in addition to any injunctive or other equitable relief or any  
127 general or special damages ordered under subsection (f) of this section.

128 (f) (1) (A) The Attorney General, an individual described in  
129 subsection (b) of this section, or a candidate who alleges that such  
130 candidate has been or is likely to be injured by the distribution of a  
131 communication containing deceptive synthetic media in violation of the  
132 provisions of said subsection, may commence a civil action in a court of  
133 competent jurisdiction seeking to permanently enjoin any person whose  
134 violation of the provisions of said subsection is reasonably believed to  
135 be imminent, or who is in the course of violating the provisions of said  
136 subsection, and other equitable relief.

137 (B) An individual described in subsection (b) of this section, or a  
138 candidate who has been injured by the distribution of a communication

139 containing deceptive synthetic media in violation of the provisions of  
140 said subsection, may commence a civil action in a court of competent  
141 jurisdiction seeking to recover general or special damages resulting  
142 from such distribution.

143 (2) In any civil action commenced under subdivision (1) of this  
144 subsection, the plaintiff shall bear the burden of proving by clear and  
145 convincing evidence that the defendant distributed, or will imminently  
146 distribute, a communication containing deceptive synthetic media in  
147 violation of the provisions of subsection (b) of this section.

148 (3) Any party, other than the Attorney General, who prevails in a civil  
149 action commenced under subdivision (1) of this subsection may be  
150 awarded reasonable attorney's fees and costs to be taxed by the court.

151 (g) (1) The provisions of subsections (a) to (f), inclusive, of this section  
152 shall not apply to (A) any image, audio or video of an individual, or any  
153 representation of an individual's speech or conduct that is substantially  
154 derived from an image, audio or video, that constitutes parody or satire,  
155 provided a reasonable person would not believe that such individual in  
156 fact engaged in speech or conduct as depicted in such image, audio or  
157 video, or (B) any political advertising or campaign communication the  
158 distribution of which is required by law, including, but not limited to,  
159 47 USC 315 and any rule or regulation prescribed thereunder, as  
160 amended from time to time.

161 (2) It shall not be a violation of the provisions of subsection (b) of this  
162 section for a person who is required to distribute, or who is required to  
163 enter into an agreement to distribute, any communication containing  
164 deceptive synthetic media to do so for the purpose of complying with  
165 the prohibition set forth in 47 USC 315, or any rule or regulation  
166 prescribed thereunder, as amended from time to time, against  
167 censorship over the material broadcast by a legally qualified candidate,  
168 as defined in 47 CFR 73.1940, as amended from time to time.

169 (3) Nothing in this section shall be construed to impose liability on a  
170 person engaged in the provision of (A) broadband Internet service, as

171 defined in 47 CFR 8, as amended from time to time, or a  
 172 telecommunications service, as defined in section 16-247a of the general  
 173 statutes, for the transmission of content provided by another person or  
 174 for the routine delivery of an electronic mail message, as defined in  
 175 section 53-454 of the general statutes, (B) direct-to-home satellite  
 176 services, as defined in 47 USC 303, as amended from time to time, or any  
 177 affiliate of a person providing the services described in this  
 178 subparagraph, or (C) cable service, as defined in 47 USC 522, as  
 179 amended from time to time, for the transmission of content provided by  
 180 another person.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2026	New section

**GAE**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 27 \$	FY 28 \$
Judicial Dept. (Probation); Correction, Dept.	GF - Potential Cost	Minimal	Minimal
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Potential Revenue Gain	Minimal	Minimal

Note: GF=General Fund

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

The bill, which creates a new crime for violations of the bill's provisions with penalties ranging from a class C misdemeanor to a class D felony, results in a potential cost to the Department of Correction and the Judicial Department for incarceration or probation and a potential revenue gain to the General Fund from fines. On average, the marginal cost to the state for incarcerating an offender for the year is \$3,300<sup>1</sup> while the average marginal cost for supervision in the community is less than \$600<sup>2</sup> each year for adults and \$450 each year for juveniles.

The bill also allows certain individuals or the Attorney General to bring a civil action in Superior Court over alleged violations, which does not result in any fiscal impact to the state. The court system disposes of

<sup>1</sup> Inmate marginal cost is based on increased consumables (e.g., food, clothing, water, sewage, living supplies, etc.) This does not include a change in staffing costs or utility expenses because these expenses would only be realized if a unit or facility opened.

<sup>2</sup> Probation marginal cost is based on services provided by private providers and only includes costs that increase with each additional participant. This does not include a cost for additional supervision by a probation officer unless a new offense is anticipated to result in enough additional offenders to require additional probation officers.

over 250,000 cases annually and the number of cases is not anticipated to be great enough to need additional resources. The Attorney General has the necessary resources and expertise to meet the requirements of the bill.

***The Out Years***

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the number of offenses and fines collected.

**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 5342*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND OTHER MEANS TO GENERATE DECEPTIVE SYNTHETIC MEDIA AND AFFECT ELECTIONS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill generally makes it a crime for a person, 90 days before an election or primary, to (1) distribute certain communication with deceptive synthetic media or (2) enter into an agreement to distribute it. Under the bill, a “person” is an individual, committee, firm, partnership, organization, association, syndicate, company trust, corporation, limited liability company, or any other legal entity, but not the state or any of its political or administrative subdivisions.

Specifically, the bill prohibits this if:

1. the person knows, or should reasonably know, it is deceptive synthetic media (or in the case of a public official or figure, acts with reckless disregard);
2. it is distributed without the depicted individual’s consent; and
3. it is intended to injure a candidate or influence election or primary results.

However, the bill exempts distributing certain deceptive synthetic media if it has a disclaimer as required by the bill. The bill also establishes several specific exemptions including for (1) parody and satire, (2) certain political advertising and campaign communications, and (3) certain news reporting.

The bill allows the state attorney general and certain people to bring a civil action against someone who violates the bill’s provisions and

subjects violators to criminal penalties ranging from a class C misdemeanor to a class D felony, depending on the circumstances.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

### **DECEPTIVE SYNTHETIC MEDIA**

Under the bill, “deceptive synthetic media” is any image, audio, or video of an individual, and any representation of his or her speech or conduct that is substantially derived from it, which a reasonable person would believe depicts the individual’s speech or conduct when the individual did not do so.

### **DISCLAIMER**

Under the bill, deceptive synthetic media may be distributed lawfully within the 90-day period if it contains a disclaimer as required by the bill. The disclaimer varies depending on the type of media (image, audio, or video).

#### ***Image Disclaimer***

Under the bill, the image must contain a disclaimer stating, “This communication contains an image that has been manipulated,” “This image has been manipulated,” as applicable, or one that uses substantially the same words. Additionally, the disclaimer must:

1. appear in text clearly visible to, and easily readable by, the average viewer and
2. have a citation to the original source of the unedited or unmanipulated version of the image if the media was generated by editing or manipulating an existing image.

#### ***Audio Disclaimer***

The audio must contain a disclaimer stating, “This communication contains audio that has been manipulated” or one that uses substantially the same words. Additionally, the disclaimer must:

1. be read in a clearly spoken manner,

2. be in a pitch that can be heard by the average listener,
3. be read in the same language as the rest of the media and any other language the person would reasonably expect the listener to speak or understand, and
4. include a citation to the original source of the unedited or unmanipulated version of the audio if the media was generated by editing or manipulating existing audio.

The disclaimer must be read at the beginning and end of the communication. If the communication is greater than one minute, it must be read during the audio at least every 30 seconds.

### ***Video Disclaimer***

The video must contain a disclaimer stating, "This communication contains video that has been manipulated" or one that uses substantially the same words. Additionally, the disclaimer must:

1. appear throughout the entire video in text clearly visible to, and easily readable by, the average viewer;
2. be in the same language as the rest of the media and any other language the person would reasonably expect the listener to speak or understand; and
3. have a citation to the original source of the unedited or unmanipulated version of the video if the media was generated by editing or manipulating existing video.

## **EXEMPTIONS**

### ***General Exemptions***

The bill's provisions also do not apply to (1) media that constitutes parody or satire that a reasonable person would not believe the depicted individual actually did or (2) any political advertising or campaign communications that must be distributed as required by law, including federal equal time requirements.

Federal law generally requires radio and television stations to give all legally qualified candidates equal opportunity to use their broadcasting stations if the station allows at least one candidate to do so. The law explicitly states that stations are not authorized to censor the media a candidate provides (47 U.S.C. § 315). The bill exempts these stations from the bill's prohibition if they must distribute or agree to distribute deceptive synthetic media and cannot censor the content as required under this law.

For content transmitted by another person, the bill also specifies it may not be construed to impose liability on (1) broadband internet or telecommunication service providers, for transmitting content another person provides or routine email deliveries; (2) direct-to-home satellite service providers and their affiliates, for providing satellite services; or (3) cable service providers, for transmitting content another person provides.

### ***News Broadcasts***

Under the bill, radio or television stations (including broadcast, cable, and satellite) and streaming or other digital broadcast service providers (collectively "broadcasters") may broadcast deceptive synthetic media if it is part of a bona fide newscast, news interview, news documentary, or other on-the-spot coverage of bona fide news events.

The broadcast must either retain the disclaimer required by the bill or add one if the original communication did not have one, except for on-the-spot coverage. Additionally, a broadcast must clearly state in its content that the communication contains deceptive synthetic media, except for on-the-spot coverage of a communication that the person does not have reason to believe contains deceptive synthetic media.

Websites or regular periodicals may publish this media if (1) it is part of their routine news coverage and commentary of general interest, (2) they retain the disclaimer required by the bill or add one if not present, and (3) they clearly state in their content that the communication contains deceptive synthetic media.

***Political Advertising Attestation***

If a person purchases advertising space for political advertising, as defined under the state's campaign finance laws, the bill allows a broadcaster to require the purchaser to attest, under penalty of false statement, that the communication does not contain any deceptive synthetic media. By law, making a false statement is a class A misdemeanor (punishable by up to 364 days imprisonment, a fine of \$2,000, or both).

If the broadcaster receives this attestation, it may not be held liable under the bill unless it develops knowledge that deceptive synthetic media is being used and still proceeds in distributing, agreeing to distribute, or continuing to distribute the media.

**PENALTIES*****Criminal***

Under the bill, if a person intends to distribute deceptive synthetic media to an audience and that audience exceeds 1,000 individuals, a violation of the bill can result in at least a class C misdemeanor, which carries a maximum penalty of incarceration of three months, a \$500 fine, or both. For violations (1) committed with the intent to cause violence or bodily harm or (2) distributed to an audience of more than 10,000 individuals, the bill increases the penalty to a class A misdemeanor. The penalty may also be increased to a class D felony (up to five years imprisonment, a \$5,000 fine, or both) for a subsequent conviction within five years.

These criminal penalties are in addition to any injunctive or equitable relief or special damages pursued in a civil action.

***Civil***

The bill also allows (1) the attorney general; (2) an individual depicted in the deceptive media; or (3) a candidate alleging an injury or the likelihood of injury to themselves by the media's distribution, to seek a permanent injunction or other equitable relief against a person violating, or that will imminently violate, the bill's provisions. The

plaintiff must prove their claim by clear and convincing evidence.

Plaintiffs, other than the attorney general, may seek general or special damages due to the distribution and the court may award attorney's fees and costs to a prevailing plaintiff.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 14 Nay 5 (03/20/2026)