



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 548

February Session, 2026

Substitute House Bill No. 5533

House of Representatives, April 9, 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 PROTECTION OF ELECTION ADMINISTRATION PROCESSES, ELECTIONS SITES, ELECTION WORKERS AND ELECTORS.

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) "Election" has the same meaning as provided in section 9-1 of the
- 3 general statutes;
- 4 (2) "Elections site" means (A) a polling place on the day of an election,
- 5 primary or referendum, (B) a location designated for the conduct of
- 6 early voting during the period of early voting at an election or primary,
- 7 (C) a location for same-day election registration on the day of a regular
- 8 election, or (D) a drop box designated for the deposit of absentee ballots
- 9 during the period beginning on the first day of issuance of absentee
- 10 voting sets and ending at the close of the polls at an election, primary or
- 11 referendum;

12 (3) "Primary" has the same meaning as provided in section 9-372 or 9-
13 463 of the general statutes, as applicable; and

14 (4) "Referendum" has the same meaning as provided in section 9-1 of
15 the general statutes.

16 (b) (1) No officer or agent of any organization or entity authorized by
17 the federal government or by any state to use force against, search,
18 detain or arrest individuals, and no person authorized by the federal
19 government or by any state to order, bring, keep or have under such
20 person's authority or control any such officer or agent, shall (A)
21 knowingly be within two hundred fifty feet of any elections site, unless
22 (i) the Governor deems such force necessary to repel armed enemies of
23 the United States or of the state, (ii) in the case of any such search,
24 detention or arrest, such officer, agent or person (I) is acting in an official
25 capacity, (II) has given notice to the Secretary of the State and the
26 Attorney General not less than twenty-four hours prior to such search,
27 detention or arrest, and (III) is authorized by a judicial warrant or
28 judicial order of a court of competent jurisdiction to specifically conduct
29 such search, detention or arrest within two hundred fifty feet of such
30 elections site, and at the specific location at which such search, detention
31 or arrest is to be conducted, provided such officer, agent or person is
32 within such two hundred fifty feet only for as long as reasonably
33 necessary to conduct such search, detention or arrest, (iii) exigent
34 circumstances reasonably require the presence of any such officer, agent
35 or person to protect against a serious threat to life or property, provided
36 such officer, agent or person is within such two hundred fifty feet only
37 for as long as reasonably necessary to protect against such threat, or (iv)
38 the Secretary of the State or moderator (I) requests such force to
39 suppress disorder, or (II) has given permission for such an officer, agent
40 or person to be present and such permission has not been withdrawn,
41 (B) knowingly be within two hundred fifty feet of an elections site for
42 the purpose of attempting to examine the qualifications to vote of any
43 individual at such elections site, or (C) knowingly loiter or remain
44 within two hundred fifty feet of an elections site.

45 (2) Nothing in subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be construed to
46 (A) prevent any officer, agent or person described in said subdivision,
47 when off duty, from voting in accordance with the provisions of title 9
48 of the general statutes or otherwise engaging in protected political
49 expression, or (B) prohibit any such officer, agent or person from
50 passing within two hundred fifty feet of an elections site only for as long
51 as necessary to be within such two hundred fifty feet while on the way
52 to a place or location other than such elections site.

53 (c) (1) Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, no
54 person shall wear any mask or other covering that obscures the face,
55 head or identity of such person within two hundred fifty feet of any
56 elections site.

57 (2) A person may wear such a mask or other covering within such
58 two hundred fifty feet if the wearing of such mask or other covering (A)
59 is reasonable given the weather conditions, provided such person
60 complies with any request from the moderator to remove such mask or
61 other covering, or (B) is medically necessary or of religious significance.

62 (d) (1) No person shall be required to present any form of
63 identification within two hundred fifty feet of any elections site.

64 (2) Nothing in subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be construed to
65 prevent any election, primary or referendum official from performing
66 any duty under title 9 of the general statutes.

67 (e) Any person who violates any provision of this section shall be
68 guilty of a class C felony and shall be disfranchised.

69 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) As used in this section,
70 "person", "possess", "firearm", "deadly weapon" and "peace officer" have
71 the same meanings as provided in section 53a-3 of the general statutes;
72 "election" and "referendum" have the same meanings as provided in
73 section 9-1 of the general statutes; and "primary" has the same meaning
74 as provided in section 9-372 or 9-463 of the general statutes, as
75 applicable.

76 (b) A person is guilty of possession of a weapon near an elections site
77 when, knowing that such person is not permitted by law to do so, such
78 person possesses a firearm or deadly weapon within two hundred fifty
79 feet of any (1) polling place on the day of an election, primary or
80 referendum, (2) location designated for the conduct of early voting
81 during the period of early voting at an election or primary, (3) location
82 designated for same-day election registration on the day of a regular
83 election, (4) central location designated for the counting of absentee
84 ballots, early voting ballots or same-day election registration ballots at
85 an election, primary or referendum, as applicable, (5) place where a
86 recanvass is being conducted, or (6) drop box designated for the deposit
87 of absentee ballots during the period beginning on the first day of
88 issuance of absentee voting sets and ending at the close of the polls at
89 an election, primary or referendum.

90 (c) The provisions of subsection (a) of this section shall not apply to
91 the otherwise lawful possession of a firearm or deadly weapon:

92 (1) On private property that is not part of any elections site described
93 in subdivisions (1) to (6), inclusive, of subsection (b) of this section;

94 (2) That is (A) not loaded, and (B) in a locked container, or a locked
95 firearms rack, that is on a motor vehicle;

96 (3) In the case of any elections site described in subdivisions (1) to (6),
97 inclusive, of subsection (b) of this section that is in or on the real
98 property comprising a public or private elementary or secondary
99 school, by a person (A) for use in a program approved by school officials
100 in or on such school property, (B) in accordance with an agreement
101 entered into between school officials and such person or such person's
102 employer, or (C) while traversing such school property for the purpose
103 of gaining access to public or private lands open to hunting or for other
104 lawful purposes, provided such firearm or deadly weapon is not loaded
105 and the entry on such school property is permitted by the local or
106 regional board of education;

107 (4) By a peace officer while engaged in the performance of such peace

108 officer's official duties; and

109 (5) By a person passing within two hundred fifty feet of an elections
110 site described in subdivisions (1) to (6), inclusive, of subsection (b) of
111 this section only for as long as necessary to be within such two hundred
112 fifty feet while on the way to a place or location other than such elections
113 site.

114 (d) Possession of a weapon near an elections site is a (1) class D felony
115 for a first offense, and (2) class B felony for any subsequent offense.

116 Sec. 3. Section 9-364a of the general statutes is repealed and the
117 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

118 (a) As used in this section, "election worker" means any municipal
119 clerk, assistant municipal clerk, registrar of voters, deputy registrar of
120 voters, election official described in section 9-258, primary official
121 described in section 9-436 or recanvass official described in section 9-
122 311, and "personal identifying information" has the same meaning as
123 provided in section 53a-129a.

124 (b) Any person who influences or attempts to influence by force or
125 threat the vote, or by force, threat, bribery or corrupt means [,] the
126 speech, of any other person at a primary, caucus, referendum,
127 convention or election; any person who influences or attempts to
128 influence by force, threat or harassment any election worker in the
129 performance of any duty under the provisions of this title related to
130 election administration at a primary, referendum, election or recanvass;
131 any person who wilfully and fraudulently suppresses or destroys any
132 vote or ballot properly given or cast, whether so given or cast by mail,
133 by deposit in a secure drop box or in person at a polling place or
134 designated early voting or same-day election registration location, or
135 who, in counting such votes or ballots, wilfully miscounts or
136 misrepresents the number thereof; and any presiding or other officer of
137 a primary, caucus or convention who wilfully announces the result of a
138 ballot or vote of such primary, caucus or convention, untruly and
139 wrongfully, shall be guilty of a class C felony.

140 (c) Any person who, with intent to harass, terrorize or alarm any
141 election worker, or to improperly influence any election worker in the
142 performance of any duty under this title related to election
143 administration at a primary, referendum, election or recanvass, publicly
144 discloses the personal identifying information of such election worker
145 shall be guilty of a (1) class A misdemeanor for a first offense, and (2)
146 class C felony for any subsequent offense.

147 (d) Any election worker described in subsection (b) or (c) of this
148 section, as applicable, shall have a civil cause of action against the
149 person who, with respect to such election worker, violated said
150 subsection.

151 Sec. 4. Section 9-352 of the general statutes is repealed and the
152 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

153 (a) Any election official who, with intent to cause or permit any
154 voting tabulator to fail to correctly register all votes cast thereon, (1)
155 tampers with or disarranges [such tabulator] in any way such tabulator
156 or any part or appliance thereof, or (2) causes such tabulator to be used
157 or consents to its being used for voting at any election with knowledge
158 of the fact that the same is (A) not in order, or (B) not perfectly set and
159 adjusted to correctly register all votes cast thereon, [or] shall be guilty of
160 a class D felony.

161 (b) Any election official who, for the purpose of (1) defrauding or
162 deceiving any elector, or [of] (2) causing it to (A) be doubtful for what
163 candidate or candidates or proposition any vote is cast, or [causing it to]
164 (B) appear upon such tabulator that votes cast for one candidate or
165 proposition were cast for another candidate or proposition, removes,
166 changes or mutilates any ballot shall be guilty of a class D felony.

167 (c) Any election official who provides to any third party that has not
168 been authorized by the Secretary of the State any tabulator or any part
169 or appliance thereof shall be guilty of a class D felony.

170 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) Any person who knowingly (1)

171 tampers with, alters, destroys or unlawfully carries away a drop box
172 designated for the deposit of absentee ballots; (2) changes or destroys a
173 ballot after it has been deposited in such a drop box; (3) adds one or
174 more ballots to those which have been lawfully deposited in such a drop
175 box, whether before or after such ballots have been counted, by
176 fraudulently depositing such additional ballot or ballots into such drop
177 box in a manner not authorized by law and falsely claiming that such
178 additional ballot or ballots were lawfully deposited into such drop box,
179 with the intent to interrupt or invalidate an election, primary or
180 referendum; or (4) adds one or more ballots to those which have been
181 retrieved from such a drop box by fraudulently introducing such
182 additional ballot or ballots while such ballots are being counted or
183 recanvassed, with intent to affect the result of an election, primary or
184 referendum or to enter any ballot into evidence at any hearing held
185 pursuant to chapter 149 or 152 of the general statutes for the contest of
186 such election, primary or referendum, shall be guilty of a class D felony.

187 Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) If any municipal official,
188 including any election worker, as defined in section 9-364a of the
189 general statutes, as amended by this act, receives from any private or
190 governmental entity, individual or official a subpoena, warrant or other
191 request for or to inspect any record or recording of or produced at, or
192 any tabulator, ballot box or other device used in the conduct of, any
193 election, primary or referendum, such municipal official shall, not later
194 than thirty-six hours after the receipt of such subpoena, warrant or other
195 request, provide a copy of such subpoena, warrant or other request to
196 the offices of the Attorney General and the Secretary of the State. The
197 offices of the Attorney General and the Secretary of the State shall post
198 notice, on each of said offices' Internet web sites, of the methods by
199 which a municipal official may provide such copy to said offices. In the
200 case of the Secretary of the State receiving such a subpoena, warrant or
201 other request, the Secretary shall immediately provide a copy of such
202 subpoena, warrant or other request to the office of the Attorney General.

203 Sec. 7. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) As used in this section,
204 "election worker" means any municipal clerk, assistant municipal clerk,

205 registrar of voters, deputy registrar of voters or election official
206 described in section 9-258 of the general statutes.

207 (b) The Attorney General may seek preliminary or permanent
208 injunctive, declaratory or other appropriate equitable relief to prevent
209 or redress interference in connection with any election for presidential
210 electors, a senator in Congress or representative in Congress by bringing
211 a complaint to any judge of the Supreme Court, in which the Attorney
212 General shall set out the claimed interference. The Attorney General
213 shall file a certification attached to the complaint indicating that a copy
214 of the complaint has been sent by first-class mail or delivered to the
215 Secretary of the State, the State Elections Enforcement Commission and
216 any other interested party. If such complaint is made prior to such
217 election, such judge shall proceed expeditiously to render judgment on
218 the complaint and shall cause notice of the hearing to be given to the
219 Secretary of the State and the State Elections Enforcement Commission.
220 If such complaint is made subsequent to the election, it shall be brought
221 not later than fourteen days after the election. Upon receipt of such
222 complaint, such judge shall forthwith order any injunctive or
223 declaratory relief necessary to preserve or restore the status quo,
224 including, but not limited to, ordering that an election worker retain
225 custody of any record or recording of or produced at, or any tabulator,
226 ballot box or other device used in the conduct of, such election. Upon a
227 showing of exigent circumstances, such judge may issue an immediate
228 ex parte order granting such relief as such judge deems appropriate.
229 Such judge shall forthwith order a hearing to be had upon such
230 complaint, upon a day not more than five or less than three days from
231 the making of such order, and shall cause notice of not less than three or
232 more than five days to be given to any candidate or candidates whose
233 election may be affected by the decision upon such hearing, to any
234 election worker who may be affected by the decision upon such hearing,
235 to the Secretary of the State, to the State Elections Enforcement
236 Commission and to any other party or parties whom such judge deems
237 proper parties thereto, of the time and place for the hearing upon such
238 complaint. Such judge, with two other judges of the Supreme Court to
239 be designated by the Chief Court Administrator, shall, on the day fixed

240 for such hearing and without unnecessary delay, proceed to hear the
 241 parties. If sufficient reason is shown, such judges may order that the
 242 State Elections Enforcement Commission maintain custody of any
 243 record or recording of or produced at, or any tabulator, ballot box or
 244 other device used in the conduct of, such election. If sufficient reason is
 245 shown, such judges may order permanent injunctive, declaratory or
 246 other appropriate equitable relief in connection with the State Elections
 247 Enforcement Commission or election worker custody of any record or
 248 recording of or produced at, or any tabulator, ballot box or other device
 249 used in the conduct of, such election.

250 Sec. 8. Subsection (a) of section 3-129g of the 2026 supplement to the
 251 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
 252 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

253 (a) The Attorney General may investigate, intervene in or bring a civil
 254 or administrative action in the name of the state, seeking injunctive or
 255 declaratory relief, damages, and any other relief that may be available
 256 under law, whenever any person is or has engaged in a practice or
 257 pattern of conduct, or has established a policy, that:

258 (1) Subjects, or causes to be subjected, other persons to the
 259 deprivation of any rights, privileges or immunities secured by the
 260 constitutions or laws of this state or the United States; or

261 (2) Interferes, or attempts to interfere, by threats, intimidation, [or]
 262 coercion or physical obstruction, with the exercise or enjoyment by other
 263 persons of any rights, privileges or immunities secured by the
 264 constitutions or laws of this state or the United States.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2026	New section
Sec. 2	July 1, 2026	New section
Sec. 3	July 1, 2026	9-364a
Sec. 4	July 1, 2026	9-352
Sec. 5	July 1, 2026	New section

Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 7	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 8	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	3-129g(a)

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 \$
Correction, Dept.; Judicial Dept. (Probation)	GF - Potential Cost	Minimal	Minimal
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Potential Revenue Gain	Minimal	Minimal

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

Sections 1 through 5 create new or expand existing criminal penalties ranging from a class D felony to a class B felony, resulting 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 \$3,300¹ while the average marginal cost for supervision in the community is less than \$600² each year for adults and \$450 each year for juveniles.

Section 6 requires all municipal officials and election workers who receive a subpoena, warrant, or other request for certain election records to notify certain state officials, resulting in no fiscal impact as this

¹ 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.

² 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.

requirement can be met with existing resources.

Sections 7 and 8 authorize the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) to seek relief to prevent election interference and broadens the OAG's authority to bring actions based on alleged civil rights violations resulting in no fiscal impact to the state. The OAG has the 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 5533*****AN ACT CONCERNING PROTECTION OF ELECTION ADMINISTRATION PROCESSES, ELECTIONS SITES, ELECTION WORKERS AND ELECTORS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill makes various changes in the state's election laws, including, among other things, to penalty and enforcement provisions. Generally, the bill does the following:

1. (a) prohibits certain officers or agents from knowingly being within 250 feet of an elections site (with specified exceptions) or taking certain actions within this perimeter, (b) generally prohibits anyone from obscuring their identity with a mask or covering within this perimeter, and (c) subjects violators to a class C felony and disenfranchisement (§ 1);
2. criminalizes carrying a firearm or deadly weapon within 250 feet of an elections site, with certain exceptions (such as for peace officers engaged in official duties) (§ 2);
3. modifies the penalties for harassing election workers and extends these protections to include assistant municipal clerks (§ 3);
4. makes it a class D felony for an election official to give an unauthorized third party any tabulator or tabulator part or appliance (§ 4);
5. prohibits tampering with absentee ballot drop boxes and related ballots and establishes criminal penalties (§ 5);
6. requires municipal officials and election workers to notify the attorney general (AG) and the secretary of the state (SOTS) of

- subpoenas, warrants, and other requests for certain election records they receive by giving them a copy of the request (§ 6);
7. authorizes the AG to file election interference complaints with the state supreme court (§ 7); and
 8. broadens the AG's general authority to bring actions based on alleged civil rights violations (§ 8).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 1 — PROHIBITED ACTS NEAR AN ELECTIONS SITE

The bill generally prohibits certain acts near elections sites and subjects violators to a criminal penalty. Under the bill, an “elections site” includes (1) a polling place on the date of an election contest, (2) an early voting location during the early voting period, (3) a same-day election registration location on election day, and (4) an absentee ballot drop box during an absentee voting period.

First, the bill generally prohibits officers and agents authorized by any state or the federal government to use force against, search, detain, or arrest people, and those that supervise or oversee these officers, from knowingly being within 250 feet of any elections site. However, these officers and agents may be within this perimeter if:

1. voting while off-duty as allowed by state law;
2. engaging in protected political expression while off-duty;
3. in transit to another location;
4. the governor deems it necessary for them to use force to repel armed enemies of the U.S. or the state;
5. the person conducting the search, detention, or arrest (a) is acting in their official capacity, (b) notified SOTS and the AG at least 24 hours before, (c) has a legal judicial warrant or order to specifically conduct these activities within the 250-foot perimeter

and at the specific location, and (d) is present only as long as reasonably necessary to conduct the activity;

6. exigent circumstances reasonably require it to protect against a serious threat to life or property, but only as long as reasonably necessary to do so; or
7. SOTS or the moderator (a) requests force to suppress disorder or (b) gives permission (and the permission has not been withdrawn).

Additionally, the bill specifically prohibits these officers, agents, and supervisors from knowingly (1) being within 250 feet of an elections site to attempt to examine voter qualifications or (2) loitering or remaining within this perimeter. Relatedly, the bill specifies that no person may be required to present any identification within 250 feet of an elections site, but this provision does not prevent election, primary, or referendum officials from performing their election duties under state law.

The bill also prohibits any person from wearing a mask or covering that obscures their face, head, or identity within 250 feet of an elections site unless it is (1) medically necessary or of religious significance or (2) reasonable given the weather conditions, as long as the person complies with a moderator's request to remove the mask or covering.

Under the bill, any violation of these provisions is a class C felony, punishable by up to 10 years in prison, up to a \$10,000 fine, or both. Further, any person who violates these provisions must be disenfranchised. (The bill does not specify the process for disenfranchising a person, such as providing notice to election officials that a person may not vote or hold public office. It is also unclear how the state's existing electoral rights forfeiture and restoration laws apply to this provision (CGS §§ 9-46 & 9-46a).)

§ 2 — POSSESSION OF A WEAPON NEAR AN ELECTIONS SITE

The bill creates a new crime of possession of a weapon near an elections site, which is when someone possesses a firearm or deadly

weapon within 250 feet of certain elections sites when the person knows it is unlawful to do so. A first offense is a class D felony (punishable by up to five years in prison, up to a \$5,000 fine, or both) and subsequent offenses are a class B felony (punishable by up to 20 years in prison, up to a \$15,000 fine, or both).

Under the bill, "elections sites" include the following:

1. polling places on the day of an election contest,
2. early voting locations during an early voting period,
3. same-day election registration locations on election day,
4. central ballot counting locations,
5. recanvass locations, and
6. drop boxes during the absentee voting period.

The bill exempts the lawful possession of a firearm or deadly weapon in the following circumstances:

1. on private property that is not part of an elections site;
2. when unloaded and on a motor vehicle in a locked container or firearms rack;
3. for election sites on school grounds, (a) as part of a program approved by school officials; (b) according to an agreement between school officials and a person or that person's employer; or (c) when traversing school property to gain access to public or private lands open to hunting or for other lawful purposes, if entry is allowed by a local or regional board of education and the firearm is unloaded;
4. by a peace officer engaged in official duties; and
5. by a person passing within the restricted perimeter for only as long as needed to travel to another location.

Under existing law and the bill, a “deadly weapon” includes any weapon, loaded or unloaded, from which a shot may be fired, or a switchblade knife, gravity knife, billy, blackjack, bludgeon, or metal knuckles. It does not include an electronic defense weapon (taser) used by a peace officer.

Under existing law, unchanged by the bill, a person possessing a firearm or deadly weapon in or on public or private elementary or secondary school property, or at a school-sponsored activity, knowing they are not authorized to do so is guilty of a class D felony (CGS § 53a-217b).

§ 3 — HARASSMENT OF ELECTION WORKERS

Under current law, it is a class A misdemeanor (punishable by up to 364 days in prison, up to a \$2,000 fine, or both) to publicly disclose an election worker’s personal identifying information (such as name, birthdate, and Social Security number) with the intent to harass, terrorize, or alarm the worker or influence them in performing their election administration duties. The bill makes subsequent offenses a class C felony.

It also expands the definition of “election worker” to include assistant municipal clerks, in addition to municipal clerks; registrars of voters; deputy registrars; and election, primary, and recanvass officials as under current law. In doing so, the bill:

1. extends the above penalties to anyone who publicly discloses an assistant municipal clerk’s personal identifying information as described above;
2. subjects anyone who influences (or attempts to) an assistant municipal clerk performing election administration duties to a class C felony, as is the case for other election workers under current law (this includes influencing the election worker by force, threat, or harassment); and
3. gives assistant municipal clerks a civil cause of action against

violators of the above provisions, as is the case for other election workers under current law.

§ 4 — PROHIBITION ON SHARING TABULATORS OR TABULATOR PARTS WITH UNAUTHORIZED THIRD PARTIES

Under existing law, it is generally a class D felony for an election official to tamper with voting tabulators or alter ballots read by the tabulators. The bill additionally makes it a class D felony for an election official to give a third party any tabulator or tabulator part or appliance (unless authorized by SOTS).

§ 5 — ABSENTEE BALLOT DROP BOX TAMPERING

State law authorizes voters to cast their absentee ballots by depositing them in designated drop boxes during the absentee voting period. The bill establishes a new criminal penalty for certain acts related to these drop boxes. Specifically, it makes it a class D felony to knowingly do the following:

1. tamper with, alter, destroy, or unlawfully carry away a drop box;
2. change or destroy a ballot after it has been deposited;
3. fraudulently deposit additional ballots into a drop box with those lawfully deposited, before or after they have been counted, and falsely claiming the additional ballots were lawfully deposited, with the intent to interrupt or invalidate an election contest; or
4. fraudulently add a ballot to those retrieved from drop boxes during the counting or recanvassing of ballots, with the intent of affecting the election contest or to enter any ballot as evidence in election complaint hearings.

§ 6 — NOTIFICATION OF ELECTION-RELATED SUBPOENAS, WARRANTS, AND REQUESTS

The bill requires notification to certain state officials by all municipal officials and election workers that receive a subpoena, warrant, or other request for or to inspect any record or recording related to an election, primary, or referendum (including related to tabulators, ballot boxes, or

other devices used to conduct them) (hereinafter “election records”). This includes all requests made by any private or governmental entity, individual person, or official.

Municipal officials and election workers must give a copy of the request to the AG and SOTS within 36 hours of receiving it. Both the AG and SOTS must post notice on their respective websites on how these copies may be given to them. If SOTS directly receives the request, she must give the AG’s office a copy.

§ 7 — ATTORNEY GENERAL RELIEF FOR ELECTION INTERFERENCE

The bill authorizes the AG to seek preliminary or permanent injunctive, declaratory, or other appropriate equitable relief (hereinafter “relief”) to prevent or resolve interference in elections for presidential electors and congressional offices. He may do so by filing (1) a complaint alleging the interference with the Connecticut Supreme Court and (2) an attached certification that a copy of the complaint was sent by first-class mail or delivered to SOTS, the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC), and all other interested parties. (The bill does not specify how other interested parties are determined at this point in the complaint process).

If the AG makes the complaint (1) after the election, it must be brought within 14 days of the election or (2) before the election, the judge must quickly proceed to render judgment and provide notice to SOTS and SEEC of the scheduled hearing.

The court, once it has received the complaint, must order any injunctive or declaratory relief necessary to preserve or restore the current situation (including ordering election workers to retain custody of certain election records).

Further, if exigent circumstances are shown, the court may make an immediate ex parte order (an order without a hearing) granting relief it deems appropriate. If it does so, within 3-5 days of making the order, the court must hold a complaint hearing and provide 3-5 days’ notice of

the hearing's time and place to any affected candidates and election workers, SOTS, SEEC, and to any parties the judge deems proper.

The hearing must be conducted without unnecessary delay by the issuing judge and two other state supreme court judges designated by the chief court administrator. If sufficient cause is shown, the judges may order (1) SEEC to maintain custody of any election records and (2) permanent relief in connection with an election worker's or SEEC's custody of election records.

§ 8 — ATTORNEY GENERAL AUTHORITY TO BRING AN ACTION

Existing state law authorizes the AG to investigate, intervene in, and bring civil or administrative actions on behalf of the state seeking injunctive or declaratory relief, damages, and any other relief that may be available under law, whenever there is a practice or pattern of conduct that:

1. deprives persons of any rights, privileges, or immunities secured by the U.S. or Connecticut constitutions or laws (civil rights) or
2. interferes, or attempts to interfere by threats, intimidation, or coercion, with another persons' exercise or enjoyment of any rights, privileges, or immunities secured by the U.S. or Connecticut constitutions or laws.

The bill expands the AG's authority to take these actions on behalf of the state by also allowing him to do so when anyone has established a policy that deprives or interferes with another person's civil rights in the ways described above. It also specifies that interfering with another person's civil rights (or attempting to) includes doing so by physical obstruction.

BACKGROUND

Peace Officers

By law, the following people are designated peace officers: state and local police, Division of Criminal Justice inspectors, state marshals exercising statutory powers, judicial marshals performing their duties,

conservation or special conservation officers, constables who perform criminal law enforcement duties, appointed special police officers, adult probation officers, Department of Correction officials authorized to make arrests in a correctional institution or facility, investigators in the State Treasurer’s Office, certified Department of Motor Vehicles inspectors, U.S. marshals and deputy marshals, U.S. special agents authorized to enforce federal food and drug laws, and certified police officers of a law enforcement unit created and governed under a state-tribal memorandum (CGS § 53a-3(9)).

Related Bills

sSB 91, favorably reported by the Judiciary Committee, restricts taking people into custody based on a civil offense in state or municipal facilities and protected areas.

sSB 397, favorably reported by the Judiciary Committee, restricts taking people into custody for a civil offense in state or municipal facilities or protected areas and prohibits, with certain exceptions, wearing a facial covering or personal disguise when interacting with the public and performing law enforcement duties.

sSB 463, favorably reported by the Government Administration and Elections (GAE) Committee, has identical provisions.

sHB 5001, §§ 33-35, favorably reported by the Government Administration and Elections (GAE) Committee, has nearly identical provisions on (1) expanding certain election-related protections to assistant municipal clerks, (2) required notifications to certain state officials of election-related requests a municipal official or election worker receives, and (3) the AG’s authorization to address certain election inference claims.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 13 Nay 6 (03/20/2026)