



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 490

February Session, 2026

Substitute Senate Bill No. 501

Senate, April 7, 2026

The Committee on Human Services reported through SEN. LESSER of the 9th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE COMPLEX REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY AND WHEELCHAIR REPAIR ADVISORY COUNCIL.

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

1 Section 1. Section 42-339 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

3 (a) There is established a complex rehabilitation technology and
4 wheelchair repair advisory council to monitor repairs of wheelchairs,
5 including complex rehabilitation technology wheelchairs, as defined in
6 section 42-337, and to make recommendations concerning improving
7 repair times.

8 (b) The advisory council shall consist of the following members:

9 (1) [Two] Three appointed by the House and Senate chairpersons of
10 the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
11 cognizance of matters relating to human services, [one of whom is a
12 consumer who uses] two of whom are consumers who use a complex

13 rehabilitation technology wheelchair purchased, leased or repaired
14 under the Medicaid program, and one of whom is a representative of
15 the state advocacy system for persons with disabilities, established
16 pursuant to section 46a-10b;

17 (2) Two appointed by the House and Senate ranking members of the
18 joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of
19 matters relating to human services, one of whom is a consumer who
20 uses a complex rehabilitation technology wheelchair purchased, leased
21 or repaired under a private health insurance policy, and one of whom is
22 an authorized wheelchair dealer, as defined in section 42-337;

23 (3) Two appointed by the House and Senate chairpersons of the joint
24 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of
25 matters relating to general law, each of whom is a representative of an
26 organization that represents persons with physical disabilities;

27 (4) Two appointed by the House and Senate ranking members of the
28 joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of
29 matters relating to general law, [each] one of whom is a consumer who
30 privately pays for complex rehabilitation technology wheelchairs and
31 one of whom is an authorized wheelchair dealer, as defined in section
32 42-337;

33 (5) The Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services, or the
34 commissioner's designee;

35 (6) The Insurance Commissioner, or the commissioner's designee;

36 (7) The Commissioner of Social Services, or the commissioner's
37 designee;

38 (8) The Healthcare Advocate, or the Healthcare Advocate's designee;
39 and

40 (9) The Commissioner of Consumer Protection, or the commissioner's
41 designee.

42 (c) Any member of the advisory council appointed under subdivision
43 (1), (2), (3) or (4) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member of the
44 General Assembly and shall serve two-year terms at the pleasure of the
45 appointing authority.

46 (d) All initial appointments to the advisory council shall be made not
47 later than August 1, 2024. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing
48 authority. The advisory council shall meet at least monthly.

49 (e) The Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services, or the
50 commissioner's designee, and a member of the advisory council chosen
51 by a majority of members of the advisory council, shall serve as
52 chairpersons. Such chairpersons shall schedule the first meeting of the
53 advisory council not later than September 1, 2024.

54 (f) The administrative staff of the [joint standing committee of the
55 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human
56 services] Office of the Healthcare Advocate shall serve as administrative
57 staff of the advisory council.

58 (g) Not later than January 1, 2025, and annually thereafter, the
59 advisory council shall submit a report on its findings and
60 recommendations to the joint standing committees of the General
61 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to aging, general law,
62 human services and insurance, in accordance with the provisions of
63 section 11-4a.

64 Sec. 2. Section 42-338 of the general statutes is repealed and the
65 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

66 (a) An authorized wheelchair dealer shall timely repair a wheelchair,
67 including a complex rehabilitation technology wheelchair, sold or
68 leased by such dealer in the state. An authorized wheelchair dealer who
69 sells or leases a complex rehabilitation technology wheelchair in the
70 state shall provide timely repair of such wheelchair at a consumer's
71 home upon request.

72 (b) An authorized wheelchair dealer shall maintain an electronic mail

73 address and a phone line for consumer repair requests that are
74 accessible each business day and capable of receiving and recording
75 messages. The authorized wheelchair dealer shall (1) respond to a
76 request for wheelchair repair not later than one business day after the
77 date of request, and (2) order parts for a repair not later than three
78 business days after assessing the need for the repair or after receiving
79 prior authorization from an insurer for the repair.

80 (c) On and after July 1, 2024, the Office of the Healthcare Advocate,
81 in consultation with the Department of Consumer Protection, shall
82 maintain a phone number and electronic mail address to be posted
83 conspicuously on the Internet web sites of the Office of the Healthcare
84 Advocate and the department, to receive and record complaints
85 regarding timely repair issues. Not later than January 1, 2025, and
86 annually thereafter, the Healthcare Advocate shall submit a report to the
87 joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance
88 of matters relating to general law, human services and insurance
89 regarding the complaints received and recorded pursuant to this
90 subsection.

91 (d) Not later than December 31, 2024, and [annually] monthly
92 thereafter, an authorized wheelchair dealer that contracts with the
93 Department of Social Services to sell or lease wheelchairs to Medicaid
94 recipients shall submit a report to the Commissioner of Social Services
95 and the advisory council established pursuant to section 42-339, as
96 amended by this act, regarding repair of such wheelchairs. The report
97 shall include, but need not be limited to, minimum, maximum and
98 average times from the date and time of a repair request for the
99 authorized wheelchair dealer to (1) respond; (2) conduct a repair
100 assessment (A) in the home or other community location, (B) remotely,
101 or (C) at a repair facility; (3) request any necessary prior authorization
102 from the Department of Social Services and receive a decision from the
103 department on such request; (4) order any wheelchair parts needed; (5)
104 receive delivery of any needed repair parts; and (6) complete repairs (A)
105 in the home or other community location, (B) remotely, or (C) at a repair
106 facility.

107 (e) An authorized wheelchair dealer shall notify a consumer of such
 108 consumer's rights to timely repair, including a repair at the consumer's
 109 home upon the consumer's request, and other rights pursuant to this
 110 section in writing at the time of purchase or lease by the consumer of a
 111 wheelchair from the authorized wheelchair dealer and on such dealer's
 112 Internet web site and any mailings to the consumer. Except for data
 113 exempted from disclosure pursuant to section 1-210, an authorized
 114 wheelchair dealer shall provide data requested by the council
 115 established pursuant to section 42-339, as amended by this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2026	42-339
Sec. 2	July 1, 2026	42-338

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 1(b)(1), the underlined language was redrafted for clarity.

HS *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:** None**Municipal Impact:** None**Explanation**

The bill makes various changes to certain requirements concerning wheelchair dealers and the advisory council, resulting in no fiscal impact to the state.

OLR Bill Analysis**sSB 501*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE COMPLEX REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY AND WHEELCHAIR REPAIR ADVISORY COUNCIL.*****SUMMARY**

This bill requires wheelchair dealers to (1) provide data to the Complex Rehabilitation Technology and Wheelchair Repair Advisory Council; (2) report monthly, rather than annually, to the council and the Department of Social Services (DSS); and (3) provide a written notice to consumers on their right to timely repair.

The bill changes the council's membership and requires the Office of the Healthcare Advocate, rather than the Human Services Committee administrative staff, to serve as the council's administrative staff. The bill also requires appointed council members to serve two-year terms at the pleasure of the appointing authority.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

WHEELCHAIR DEALER REPORT AND NOTICE***Data Requests***

An authorized wheelchair dealer is any company doing business in the state selling or leasing wheelchairs, including complex rehabilitation technology wheelchairs. The bill requires authorized wheelchair dealers to provide data the council requests, excluding data that is exempt from disclosure under the state's Freedom of Information Act, which exempts, among other things, trade secrets and certain commercial or financial information (CGS § 1-210).

Monthly Report

The bill requires authorized DSS-contracted wheelchair dealers to report monthly, rather than annually, on wheelchair repairs to the

council and the DSS commissioner. By law, this report includes information on minimum, maximum, and average times from when a repair is requested to when the dealer responds and makes the repair, among other things.

Consumer Notice

The bill requires authorized wheelchair dealers to notify consumers of their rights to timely repair, including repair at the consumer’s home if requested, and other rights under the law. Dealers must provide the notice (1) in writing when a consumer leases or buys a wheelchair, (2) in any mailings to the consumer, and (3) on the dealer’s website.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Under current law, the wheelchair membership council has eight appointed members and several ex-officio members. The bill requires one of the members appointed by the General Law Committee ranking members to be an authorized dealer, rather than a consumer who privately pays for complex rehabilitation technology.

The bill adds a member to the council by requiring the Human Services Committee chairpersons to appoint two consumers who use a complex rehabilitation technology wheelchair that is leased or repaired under the Medicaid program, rather than one.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 21 Nay 2 (03/19/2026)