

Planning and Development Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5289 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE PUBLICATION OF MUNICIPAL LEGAL NOTICES.

Vote Date: 3/6/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/27/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Planning and Development Committee

CO-SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Craig C. Fishbein, 90th Dist.

Rep. Tony J. Scott, 112th Dist.

Rep. Brandon Chafee, 33rd Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill requires municipalities to publish legal notices on their official municipal websites when a statute, charter, ordinance, or regulation requires notice to be published in a newspaper. The bill allows municipalities to publish the notice in either a daily or weekly newspaper in addition to the website posting, but newspaper publication would no longer be mandatory. It also requires the municipal clerk to retain a physical copy of each notice that is posted on the municipality's website for one year. The bill does not change the legally required timeframes for providing notice.

The bill aims to modernize public notice requirements by using municipal websites to improve accessibility and reduce the cost and administrative burden associated with mandatory newspaper publication while maintaining transparency for residents.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

None Expressed.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST), Executive Director, Betsy Gara: Supports this bill and argues that Connecticut should eliminate the requirement that towns publish legal notices in newspapers and instead allow them to post notices on municipal websites to reduce costs, avoid delays and modernize public access. She notes many towns struggle with the current requirement because local newspapers are disappearing and publishing notices can cost towns thousands of dollars each year.

Connecticut Realtors, Jim Heckman: Supports this bill and would require municipalities to publish legal notices on their Internet web sites.

Anonymous 74, a P&Z Administrator: Submitted general comments on the bill. They stated that rising newspaper publication costs create challenges for municipalities.

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM), Randall Collins, testified in support of the bill. CCM stated that the bill would allow municipalities to publish legal notices on their websites, providing a more cost-effective and efficient alternative to mandatory newspaper publication. CCM argued that current requirements are outdated, costly, and can create legal challenges due to vague circulation standards.

Connecticut Town Clerks Association (CTCA), Peter Smith and Antoinette “Chick” Spinelli, testified in support of the bill with recommended changes. They stated that the bill provides flexibility by allowing legal notices to be published in daily or weekly newspapers and on municipal websites. They recommended revising the bill so the agency issuing a notice, rather than the town clerk, is responsible for retaining the official record.

The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association (CCAPA), John Guszgowki, testified in support of the bill and had suggested improvements. CCAPA stated that allowing municipalities to publish legal notices online would reduce significant costs associated with newspaper publication and better reflect how residents receive information. They noted declining newspaper readership and recommended adding digital timestamping of online notices and ensuring notices are posted in an easily accessible location on municipal websites.

Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG), Francis Pickering, testified in support of the bill. He stated that allowing municipalities to publish legal notices online would modernize public notice requirements as newspaper circulation declines. He argued that online publication would improve accessibility, transparency, and efficiency, while reducing costs and delays. He also recommended allowing notices to be posted on statewide platforms such as CTsource or CTjobs to expand access, increase competition in procurement, and reduce administrative burdens on municipalities.

Principal Planner for the City of Norwalk, Bryan Baker, supports this bill. He stated that newspaper publication of legal notices is costly and burdensome and argued that posting notices on municipal websites would be more accessible and efficient.

President of the Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions (CACIWC), Alan Siniscalchi, testified in support of the bill. He stated that while newspapers remain useful for public notice, posting legal notices on municipal websites is a more accessible, efficient, and cost-effective method to inform residents about municipal actions and public hearings. He also emphasized that online notices should be easily accessible on municipal websites

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Executive Director of the Connecticut Daily Newspaper Association, Chris VanDeHoef testified in opposition to the bill. He argued that replacing newspaper publication with municipal website posting could reduce transparency and public access, noting that newspapers provide an independent, reliable public record and broader visibility for legal notices.

Reported by: Michael Hamann

Date: 3/17/26