

# Public Safety and Security Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No:** HB-5291 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES  
AND PUBLIC PROTECTION'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING VARIOUS

**Title:** STATUTES RELATING TO PUBLIC SAFETY.

**Vote Date:** 3/17/2026

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/3/2026

**File No.:**

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Public Safety and Security Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill was raised for the purposes of clarifying and expanding the role of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection in the state of Connecticut. This bill:

- Sets a timeline for the communication of a new fire chief or interim fire chief from the municipality to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection; giving better clarity to DESPP regarding retention issues and giving them the most up to date records for better communication
- Better clarifies admissible evidence used in prosecution cases for more accurate data collection and streamlining investigations by removing a mailing requirement for results
- Expands requirements for convicted felons to provide DNA samples and requiring DESPP to conduct a study on the data collected; standardizing the data collection of convicted felons across the state and establishing patterns regarding person-to-person characteristics through DNA
- Gives DESPP more oversight into the Police Officer Standards and Training Council by requiring that a deputy commissioner sit on the council
- Eliminates outdated data regarding staffing requirements within the DESPP which currently models staffing levels off of data from 2013
- Authorizes DESPP, in consultation with the Department of Education, to have more control over the use of bond money to be used to enhance school security through the school security infrastructure competitive grant program; allowing DESPP to faster address safety needs in schools
- Strengthens security measures taken when handling certain firework and pyrotechnic devices, allowing for safer use of these devices and displays

- Lessens the strain on departments who have reported backlogs on firearms that have been seized in certain cases, allowing departments to standardize timelines for destruction of weapons after a certain period of time has elapsed
- Streamlines the transition process for officers to waive training requirements for less lethal weapons which would otherwise bar them from other positions in different departments
- Closes a gap in training requirements for bondsmen to carry electronic defense weapons; promoting safe use and standardizing educational use of these devices across fields
- Eliminates barriers associated with cost for the Civil Air Patrol; easing restrictions to help bring the youth camps of the Civil Air Patrol back to Connecticut and continue offering the youth of Connecticut to learn military style leadership skills
- Standardizes and clarifies the definition of a “police patrol vehicle” across departments across departments

**SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:**

The substitute language in this bill addresses various changes submitted by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. The following revisions are made:

**Sections 2 & 3:**

The bill amends current statute, eliminating a requirement that blood or urine tests for defendants be delivered within a specific timeframe for the test to be deemed admissible as evidence in a trial.

**Section 4:**

Clarifying language is added stating that any person that fits the following criteria must submit a DNA sample to establish person to person specific characteristics no later than 6 months after sentencing or admission:

- Any person arrested for a serious felony with a previous felony conviction
- Any person convicted of and/or on parole from a criminal (both sexual and non-sexual violent crimes) offense against a minor or a felony
- Any person found not guilty by reason of mental disease or defect against a minor (both sexual and non-sexual violent crimes) in Connecticut or any other jurisdiction and is under the supervision of a Connecticut based agency

**Section 6:**

This section amends the Police Officer Standards and Training Council by replacing the State Police commanding officer with the State Police Deputy Commissioner as a member of the council.

**Section 7:**

This section removes the requirement under existing statute that the Commissioner of DESPP maintains a certain number of officers according to standards developed by the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee in 2013.

**Section 9 & 10:**

Sections 9 and 10 require DESPP to draft regulations for certificates of competency to handle certain fireworks and special effects displays. Conditions of these certificates include evidence of good moral character and competency, state and national background checks, and a fee of \$200. Section 9 also gives authority to the Commissioner to revoke a license at any time for any cause.

**Section 11:**

The substitute language allows firearms, deadly weapons, and ammunition held under a risk protection order to be destroyed after two years instead of one year and requires the DESPP commissioner or local police department to notify the owner in writing at least 90 days before they are destroyed.

#### **Section 12:**

This section allows the DESPP commissioner to waive training requirements on the use of less lethal weapons while on duty as a security officer for certain correction, parole, and police officers, and judicial marshals who present proof of completing equivalent training. It also allows DESPP to notify a security service employing an applicant of an incomplete application if the service submitted the application.

#### **Section 13:**

This section prohibits professional bondsmen, surety bail bond agents, and bail enforcement agents from carrying an electronic defense weapon unless they obtain a special permit from DESPP unless they show proof of having successfully completed an approved training course on safely using the weapon.

#### **Section 14:**

Allows the Connecticut Wing of the Civil Air Patrol to open, operate, and maintain a youth camp without an Office of Early Childhood license under the following conditions:

- If it does so on state-owned or -leased property and uses a facility operated exclusively by the Connecticut Military Department or U.S. Armed Forces
- Follows the guidelines of the “CAPP 79-10 Cadet Medication Management” Civil Air Patrol pamphlet during any overnight youth camp.

#### **Section 15:**

Redefines the definition of a “police patrol vehicle” to clarify that it does not include:

- Administrative vehicles with a body camera-wearing occupant
- Bicycles, motor scooters, all-terrain vehicles, electric personal assistive mobility devices, and animal control vehicles

### **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

[Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection \(DESPP\)](#), is in support of the bill and provides the following reasons for the bill in their testimony:

#### Section 1:

DESSP explains that this bill will create a statewide fire chief directory. They share that currently the state is not required to maintain updated contact information for fire chiefs. They noted the importance of having access to the chief due to the decline in firefighters since 2016. This bill, they say, will also allow for a more accurate understanding of the “fire service landscape” and allow for more communication throughout the state.

#### Section 2&3:

DESPP states that these sections of the bill will address challenges surrounding the Division of Scientific Services (DSS); they state that DSS mails chemical test results directly to defendants in operating under the influence cases, within twenty-four hours of the results being known. They say that currently there is an appropriate timeline for breath test results, but there are challenges when it comes to blood and urine toxicology analyses performed by DSS. The proposal clarifies that the twenty-four-hour mailing requirement applies only to breath test results and removes the mailing requirement for blood and urine toxicology reports.

Section 4&5:

These sections address the issues surrounding collecting of lawfully owned DNA under the Connecticut General Statutes. They say the proposal established a framework by requiring DNA collection within 30 days, to eliminate procedural ambiguity closing the gaps of inconsistent policies and delayed investigations.

Section 8:

DESPP states this section transfers full authority for the School Security Grant Program (SSGP) to the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security within DESPP. They say this change would allow for “streamline operations” by allowing the Division to directly submit requests based on program needs.

Section 9&10:

DESPP explains that this section would allow the Special Licensing and Firearms Unit(SLFU) within the DESPP to take fingerprints and put through a background check of fire work, explosives and special effects displays.

Section 11:

They state this section is in place to alleviate challenges associated with retention of firearms due to Risk Protective Order (RPO). DESPP notes there are currently issues with massive backlog and storage issues in police departments across the state. They say this proposal will possibly impact local and state law enforcement by establishing a clear process and timeline. They highlight that this proposal will balance individual rights and help to reduce financial and logistical burdens on police departments.

Section 12:

This section of the bill, they note, will make changes to allow for certain law enforcement and correctional workers to skip security guard training if applied within two years of leaving service. They state that under current practice only military members and veterans are officially allowed to skip this training.

Section 13:

DESPP highlights a gap in training requirements for electronic defense weapons. Under current law, according to DESPP, Bail Enforcement Agents (BEA) and bondsmen are permitted to carry and use electronic defense weapons without training and law enforcement officers and security guards are required to take training.

[The State of Connecticut Judicial Branch, External Affairs Division](#) provided comments on the bill. They stated that section 4 of the bill amended section 54-102g, this new proposal would require the collection of DNA within a 30 day period for the Judicial Branch’s Court Support Services Division (CSSD). They comment that this timeline would be difficult for the CSSD to implement and that they don’t have adequate resources to do so. They also requested that adult and juvenile probation officers be added to Section 12 of the bill.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

[Andrew Bloom, Fugitive Recovery Agency, President](#) is in support of the bill. As an owner of a bail bondsman agency, he applauded the committee for their work to help regulate practices of Bail Bonds and Bail Enforcement Agents.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None Expressed.

**Reported by:** Emma Rybacki, Clerk  
Megan Oros, Assist. Clerk

**Date:** 3/31/26