

Commerce Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-305 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING TOURISM.

Vote Date: 3/17/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/3/2026

File No.: 291

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Commerce Committee

CO - SPONSORS OF BILL:

[Rep. Kerry S. Wood, 29th Dist.](#)

[Rep. John Santanella, 58th Dist.](#)

[Rep. Savet Constantine, 42nd Dist.](#)

REASONS FOR BILL:

To further bolster the state of Connecticut's tourism industry, tourism exists as a significant aspect of the state's economy, this bill exists to accomplish this through enhancing year-round activity and evaluating investments. This bill will focus on this by establishing a working group to study and improve statewide marketing and tourism.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Department of Economic and Community Development, Commissioner, Daniel O'Keefe](#)

submits testimony in support of this bill, expressing that statewide marketing and tourism efforts are necessary to continue to drive tourism in Connecticut. O'Keefe emphasizes that tourism exists as a significant source of revenue for the state and is responsible for not only, a plethora of job opportunities but also impacts the business and companies interested in relocating or expanding to Connecticut. This bill presents an opportunity to strengthen tourism overall by examining a variety of different factors that typically impact it such as investments, partner participation and the effectiveness of existing strategies.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Connecticut Lodging Association, Executive Director, Ginny Kozlowski](#) writes in support of S.B. 305 citing, the significant positive impact tourism has had on Connecticut's economy and a recognized need for a coordinated, data informed strategy to continue to grow this industry within the state.

[Connecticut Humanities, Executive Director, Jason Mancini](#) submitted testimony in support of this bill and requests that this bill specifically ensure that the working group include representation from Connecticut arts and culture organizations. Mancini highlights that the arts, specifically organizations such as Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Mystic Seaport Museum, Yale University Art Gallery, and The Mark Twain House & Museum all serve as anchor locations and drivers of tourism, with many visitors also patronizing nearby establishments afterwards.

[Connecticut Convention and Sports Bureau, President, Bob Murdock](#) supports this bill. Murdock highlights that the mission of Connecticut convention and Sports Bureau (CTMEETINGS) is to attract conventions, meetings, and sports events to Connecticut in turn creating economic growth for the state. As a result of this CTMEETINGS is heavily reliant on the tourism industry and maintains that legislative support of tourism and hospitality related industries are economic benefits for the state of Connecticut.

[Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, Haley Stafford](#) writes in support of this bill. This chamber exists to advocate for businesses and economic development and provide overall resources to ensure businesses and residents can thrive economically in Connecticut. It's recognized that this working group has the chance to strengthen the story of the state Connecticut in order to establish an increase in tourism.

[Connecticut Lodging Association \(CLA\), Board President, Meri Wick](#) submitted testimony in support of this bill expressing, that it is a constructive step forward for not only the tourism sector but the overall state of Connecticut. Wick highlights, that this industry employs over 65,000 Connecticut residents and supports tens of thousands of jobs across the state fueling the economic activity in large and small communities.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Enumaah Dadzie, Assistant Clerk

Date: 3/27/26