

Judiciary Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-509 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING ADDRESS VERIFICATION REFORMS FOR
Title: REGISTRANTS.

Vote Date: 3/24/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/20/2026

File No.: 596

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Judiciary Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill corrects clerical errors introduced by past legislation, clarifies existing components of the current statute, and provides updates to the registration process aimed to correct unjust prosecutions that are clogging the courts through modernization of the process and by providing more direction to both law enforcement and those on the registry. Currently, individuals on Connecticut's sex offense registry are required by state law to confirm their address by returning a letter mailed by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) every three months. The signed letter must be received by DESPP within 10 days. If the address verification letter is not received within 10 days, the individual is determined to be "non-compliant," and notice is provided to the local police. In Connecticut, "failure to verify" is a strict liability Class D felony, punishable by up to 5 years in prison and/or the extension of the term of probation. This results in convictions of individuals who are living in a registered address but whose paperwork is simply lost or late. Enforcement is inconsistent, solely determined by the local police department. Some who are non-compliant are never arrested, others are arrested years after they became noncompliant.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language changes, in Sections 3, 4, and 5, the requirement to dismiss any charges to a requirement to enter a nolle.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Natasha Pierre, Esq, State Victim Advocate, Office of the Victim Advocate: Natasha Pierre opposes this legislation because it proposes to reduce the penalty for the failure to

register or verify registration information in a timely manner from a D felony to a C misdemeanor. She stated that the sex offender registry was established as a tool for public safety and law enforcement and registrants are well informed of the consequences for failing to comply. She questioned why the penalty for violating a court order to register would be reduced when the State's Attorneys already have prosecutorial options for addressing any case that may have unusual circumstances.

John DelBarba, Assistant Legal Counsel, Office of Chief Public Defender: John DelBarba supports this legislation because it will allow for a much more reasonable timeframe for persons to comply with the law. He furthered that should there be an arrest of persons subject to this bill, it provides a reasonable process of returning such persons to compliance not later than twenty business days following arraignment. If compliance is achieved within that timeframe, a court shall dismiss the charges if such person has no prior violations.

Ronnell Higgins, Commissioner, Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP): Commissioner Higgins opposes this legislation because he has several concerns regarding its implementation and potential impact. He explained that DESPP currently utilizes an automated system that generates two address verification letters. If the first is not returned, a second is mailed on the twenty-first day; if the first is "return to sender" but the second letter is signed and returned, the violation is withdrawn due to mailing issues. He insisted that DESPP makes every effort to ensure registrants are given the opportunity to comply. He further stated that reducing the penalty for failing to comply is a conflict with federal requirements and could place federal funding at risk as the federal government requires stringent verification processes and further actions that increase the state's level of noncompliance could jeopardize the resources necessary to maintain and operate the registry. Should funding be eliminated or reduced, the state would have to cover the costs of daily operations. Finally, the Commissioner had concerns with Section 7, which addresses notification to municipal and state police when an individual is removed from the registry. He stated that they would support allowing notification to be provided to local police departments by email.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Amber Vlangas, Executive Director of Restorative Action Alliance: Amber Vlangas supports this legislation because it is a meaningful step toward improving clarity and modernizing the verification process. It includes important provisions such as an affirmative defense, more proportional consequences for noncompliance and clearer definitions, including what constitutes a "business day". She believes that a system that distinguishes between intentional noncompliance and everyday human errors is more fair, more proportional, and better aligned with the goals of accountability.

Kathleen Flaherty, Esq., Executive Director, CT Legal Rights Project, Inc: Kathleen Flaherty supports this legislation because it is a common-sense, practical response to challenges to an address verification system that is dependent on the US Postal Service. She believes that revising the process to reduce the charge to a misdemeanor, extending the timeframe for responding to reflect the reality of mail delivery, and adding an affirmative defense when a letter is not returned through no fault of the individual would increase compliance and reduce the burden on the courts.

Jennifer Jasenski, Board Member, One Standard of Justice (OSJ): Jennifer Jasenski supports the legislation because the strict liability for address verification must be changed to provide more time to comply. The current law criminalizes individuals that are homeless or residing in a shelter, as well as other various housing situations that have no address to receive the verification letter. The bill reasonably allows for an affirmative defense when the lateness of the verification letter is due to uncontrollable circumstances.

Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, ACLU-CT: Jess Zaccagnino supports this legislation because it will increase the number of days to return the verification letter; add the ability to request a second letter if lost, clarify that the five-business day grace period is a true grace period and lower the charge from a felony to a misdemeanor.

Richard Adgers, OSJ: Richard Adgers supports this legislation because a piece of paper can destroy a family, and this should not be. He was escorted off his college campus for warrants that were no longer valid. He furthered that through no fault of his own, this not only disrupted his life but cost him in attorney fees.

Jovon Humphries: Jovon Humphries supports this legislation because he believes it is an important step in making the verification process more realistic for people who are trying to comply with the law while facing unstable housing situations. Her husband is currently living in a homeless shelter and required to verify his address every 90 days. The system assumes that a person has a stable address where mail arrives reliably, but receiving mail in a shelter is not always reliable and reflects the reality of unstable housing.

Victor Jarvis: Victor Jarvis supports this legislation because the 90-day verification letter system assumes that mail delivery is always reliable when it is not. Mr. Jarvis shared his story of his verification letter being delivered to the wrong address. He requests the legislature consider reforms that allow secure online verification, in-person confirmation, or documented proof of delivery. He believes that a person's freedom should not depend on whether a piece of mail was delivered to the correct address.

Dale Kukucka: Dale Kukucka supports this legislation because it seeks to modernize and improve Connecticut's address verification procedures for registered individuals. He believes that registrants should be allowed to provide verification electronically or via telephone. He believes relying entirely on the postal system can create unnecessary risk of technical violations for those that are doing everything that the law requires.

Phil O (OSJ): Phil O. supports this legislation because he believes that the verification process should be revised to alleviate undue stress of registrants when they change their address.

Don O: Don O supports this legislation because the system cannot continue to rely on the postal system. He shared that he was arrested for failure to register due to having moved frequently over a few months. After he and his family became homeless, they moved from one motel to another before finally securing permanent residency. He shared his personal experience of being arrested, losing his employment, and facing eviction. The Superior Court judge dismissed his case on the basis that this was the state's clerical errors.

Ronald B (OSJ): Ronald B. supports this legislation because he believes that the current system is unfair. Relying on the postal system to deliver a verification letter in the allotted 10-day mandated period could lead to his arrest on a class D felony for a situation beyond his control. He shared that failure to receive the letter in a timely manner causes undue stress.

Kate Cervoni: Kate Cervoni supports this legislation because it seeks to fix one of the most unworkable and punitive aspects of the current law, which is the 90-day address verification requirement. It seeks to correct a process that is currently unrealistic, unfair, and out of step with modern mail delivery standards. It ensures that individuals who are trying to comply have a reasonable opportunity to do so. She believes that it makes the system more humane, more rational, and more conducive to successful reentry into society.

William Hill: William Hill supports this legislation because it will take into consideration the delay in mail, which not only affects the supporters of this bill, but everyone who uses the postal service. He believes there needs to be a fair system.

Erin B (OSJ): She supports this bill because it would eliminate the risk of a felony charge due to a clerical error beyond the control of the registrant. She believes extending the return deadline from 10 to 30 business days and the reduction of the sentence to a misdemeanor for failure to register is not leniency; it's a recognition of the fact that individual citizens should not have to live under the shadow of a potential felony conviction because of a flawed administrative system or clerical mishap.

Jeri Soter: Jeri Soter supports this legislation because it seeks to address and modify the current letter verification system that is not working. She shared her story of the circumstances that led to her husband's arrest and charged with a felony for failure to register.

Marilyn Vache: Marilyn Vache supports this legislation because it will make the necessary reforms of the system, such as increasing the number of days to comply. She believes that a Class D felony and the lack of an affirmative defense are disproportionate with other states' laws. She states that court cases are expensive for CT to prosecute and do not prevent re-offenses.

Carrie W: She supports this legislation because it increases the number of days to return verification letters from 10 to 30 days and adds the ability to request a second letter, if the first is lost. She believes that individuals should not be penalized when situations are completely out of their control.

Marion Pierce: She simply states that she is a strong supporter of the bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Jacqueline Olsen

Date: 3/30/2026