



General Assembly

February Session, 2026

**Raised Bill No. 5463**

LCO No. 2006



Referred to Committee on TRANSPORTATION

Introduced by:  
(TRA)

**AN ACT CONCERNING HIGHWAY SAFETY.**

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

1 Section 1. Section 14-296aa of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

3 (a) For purposes of this section: [ , the following terms have the  
4 following meanings:

5 (1) "Mobile telephone" means a cellular, analog, wireless or digital  
6 telephone capable of sending or receiving telephone communications  
7 without an access line for service.

8 (2) "Using" or "use" means holding a hand-held mobile telephone to,  
9 or in the immediate proximity of, the user's ear.

10 (3) "Hand-held mobile telephone" means a mobile telephone with  
11 which a user engages in a call using at least one hand.

12 (4) "Hands-free accessory" means an attachment, add-on, built-in  
13 feature, or addition to a mobile telephone, whether or not permanently

14 installed in a motor vehicle, that, when used, allows the vehicle operator  
15 to maintain both hands on the steering wheel.

16 (5) "Hands-free mobile telephone" means a hand-held mobile  
17 telephone that has an internal feature or function, or that is equipped  
18 with an attachment or addition, whether or not permanently part of  
19 such hand-held mobile telephone, by which a user engages in a call  
20 without the use of either hand, whether or not the use of either hand is  
21 necessary to activate, deactivate or initiate a function of such telephone.

22 (6) "Engage in a call" means talking into or listening on a hand-held  
23 mobile telephone, but does not include holding a hand-held mobile  
24 telephone to activate, deactivate or initiate a function of such telephone.

25 (7) "Immediate proximity" means the distance that permits the  
26 operator of a hand-held mobile telephone to hear telecommunications  
27 transmitted over such hand-held mobile telephone, but does not require  
28 physical contact with such operator's ear.]

29 (1) "Hands-free mode" means the operation of a mobile electronic  
30 device by which a user engages in a voice communication or receives  
31 audio without touching or holding such device, except to activate,  
32 deactivate or initiate with a single touch or swipe of a user's hand.

33 [(8)] (2) "Mobile electronic device" means any hand-held or other  
34 portable electronic equipment capable of providing data  
35 communication between two or more persons, including, but not  
36 limited to, a mobile telephone, a text messaging device, a paging device,  
37 a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is  
38 capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, [or] equipment  
39 on which digital photographs are taken or transmitted, equipment to  
40 display a video or moving image or any combination thereof. [, but]  
41 "Mobile electronic device" does not include any audio equipment or any  
42 equipment installed in a motor vehicle for the purpose of providing  
43 navigation, emergency assistance to the operator of such motor vehicle  
44 or video entertainment to the passengers in the rear seats of such motor  
45 vehicle.

46 [(9)] (3) "Operating a motor vehicle" means operating a motor vehicle  
47 on any highway, [as defined in section 14-1,] including being  
48 temporarily stationary due to traffic, road conditions or a traffic control  
49 sign or signal, but not including being parked on the side or shoulder of  
50 any highway where such vehicle is safely able to remain stationary.

51 (4) "Highway", "commercial motor vehicle" and "authorized  
52 emergency vehicle" have the same meanings as provided in section 14-  
53 1, as amended by this act.

54 (b) (1) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection and  
55 subsections (c) and (d) of this section, no person shall operate a motor  
56 vehicle upon a highway [, as defined in section 14-1, while using a hand-  
57 held mobile telephone to engage in a call or while using] while (A)  
58 holding or supporting a mobile electronic device [. An operator of a  
59 motor vehicle who types, sends or reads a text message with a hand-  
60 held mobile telephone or mobile electronic device while operating a  
61 motor vehicle shall be in violation of this section, except that if] with any  
62 part of such person's body, (B) using a mobile electronic device, unless  
63 such device is being used in a hands-free mode, (C) reading, viewing or  
64 typing a text message or other nonvoice message or communication on  
65 a mobile electronic device, or (D) a video or moving image on a mobile  
66 electronic device or an installed screen or other device of a similar nature  
67 is visible to such person while seated in the normal operating position,  
68 unless such moving image is a map generated by a navigation system  
69 or application on such device or screen and such device or screen is  
70 mounted on or affixed to the motor vehicle's windshield, dashboard or  
71 center console in a manner that does not impede the operation of the  
72 motor vehicle. If such operator is driving a commercial motor vehicle,  
73 [as defined in section 14-1,] such operator shall be charged with a  
74 violation of subsection (e) of this section.

75 [(2) An operator of a motor vehicle who holds a hand-held mobile  
76 telephone to, or in the immediate proximity of, his or her ear while  
77 operating a motor vehicle is presumed to be engaging in a call within  
78 the meaning of this section. The presumption established by this

79 subdivision is rebuttable by evidence tending to show that the operator  
80 was not engaged in a call.]

81 [(3)] (2) The provisions of this subsection shall not be construed as  
82 authorizing the seizure or forfeiture of [a hand-held mobile telephone  
83 or] a mobile electronic device, unless otherwise provided by law.

84 [(4) Subdivision] (3) The provisions of subdivision (1) of this  
85 subsection shall not apply to: (A) [The use of a hand-held mobile  
86 telephone] Holding or using a mobile electronic device for the sole  
87 purpose of communicating with any of the following regarding an  
88 emergency situation: An emergency response operator; a hospital,  
89 physician's office or health clinic; an ambulance company; a fire  
90 department; or a police department, [or] (B) any of the following  
91 persons while in the performance of their official duties and within the  
92 scope of their employment: A peace officer, as defined in subdivision (9)  
93 of section 53a-3, a firefighter or an operator of an ambulance or  
94 authorized emergency vehicle [, as defined in section 14-1,] or a member  
95 of the armed forces of the United States, as defined in section 27-103,  
96 while operating a military vehicle, or (C) [the use of] using a hand-held  
97 radio by a person with an amateur radio station license issued by the  
98 Federal Communications Commission in emergency situations for  
99 emergency purposes only. [, or (D) the use of a hands-free mobile  
100 telephone.]

101 (c) No [person shall use a hand-held mobile telephone or other  
102 electronic device, including those with hands-free accessories, or a  
103 mobile electronic device, while operating] school bus operator shall  
104 operate a school bus that is carrying passengers [, except that this  
105 subsection shall not apply when such person: (1) Places an emergency  
106 call to school officials; (2)] while using a mobile electronic device,  
107 including when such device is in hands-free mode, unless such school  
108 bus operator: (1) Holds or uses a hand-held mobile telephone as  
109 [provided in] permitted under subparagraph (A) of subdivision [(4)] (3)  
110 of subsection (b) of this section; [(3)] (2) uses a [hand-held mobile  
111 telephone or] mobile electronic device in a manner similar to a two-way

112 radio to allow real-time communication with a school official, an  
113 emergency response operator, a hospital, physician's office or health  
114 clinic, an ambulance company, a fire department or a police department;  
115 or ~~[(4)] (3)~~ uses a mobile electronic device with a video display, provided  
116 such device (A) is used as a global positioning system or to provide  
117 navigation, (B) is securely attached inside the school bus near such  
118 ~~[person] operator~~, and (C) has been approved for such use by the  
119 Department of Motor Vehicles.

120 (d) No person under eighteen years of age shall [use any hand-held  
121 mobile telephone, including one with a hands-free accessory, or]  
122 operate a motor vehicle upon a highway while using a mobile electronic  
123 device, [while operating a motor vehicle on a public highway] including  
124 when such device is in hands-free mode, except as [provided in]  
125 permitted under subparagraph (A) of subdivision ~~[(4)] (3)~~ of subsection  
126 (b) of this section.

127 (e) No person shall [use a hand-held mobile telephone or other  
128 electronic device or type, read or send text or a text message with or  
129 from a mobile telephone or mobile electronic device while operating a  
130 commercial motor vehicle, as defined in section 14-1, except for the  
131 purpose of communicating with any of the following regarding an  
132 emergency situation: An emergency response operator; a hospital;  
133 physician's office or health clinic; an ambulance company; a fire  
134 department or a police department] operate a commercial motor vehicle  
135 in violation of the provisions of subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this  
136 section, except as permitted under subparagraph (A) of subdivision (3)  
137 of subsection (b) of this section.

138 (f) Except as provided in subsections (b) to (e), inclusive, of this  
139 section, no person shall (1) engage in any activity not related to the  
140 actual operation of a motor vehicle in a manner that interferes with the  
141 safe operation of such vehicle on any highway, [as defined in section 14-  
142 1] or (2) fail to maintain a proper lookout while operating a motor  
143 vehicle.

144 (g) Any law enforcement officer who issues a summons for a  
145 violation of this section shall record on such summons the specific  
146 nature of any distracted driving behavior observed by such officer.

147 (h) Any person who violates this section shall be fined two hundred  
148 dollars for a first violation, three hundred seventy-five dollars for a  
149 second violation and six hundred twenty-five dollars for a third or  
150 subsequent violation.

151 (i) An operator of a motor vehicle who commits a moving violation,  
152 as defined in subsection (a) of section 14-111g, while engaged in any  
153 activity prohibited by this section shall be fined in accordance with  
154 subsection (h) of this section, in addition to any penalty or fine imposed  
155 for the moving violation.

156 (j) The state shall remit to a municipality twenty-five per cent of the  
157 fine amount received for a violation of this section with respect to each  
158 summons issued by such municipality. Each clerk of the Superior Court  
159 or the Chief Court Administrator, or any other official of the Superior  
160 Court designated by the Chief Court Administrator, shall, on or before  
161 the thirtieth day of January, April, July and October in each year, certify  
162 to the Comptroller the amount due for the previous quarter under this  
163 subsection to each municipality served by the office of the clerk or  
164 official.

165 (k) A record of any violation of this section shall appear on the  
166 driving history record or motor vehicle record, as defined in section 14-  
167 10, of any person who commits such violation, and the record of such  
168 violation shall be available to any motor vehicle insurer in accordance  
169 with the provisions of section 14-10.

170 (l) No person shall be subject to the prosecution for a violation of the  
171 provisions of this section and subsection (a) of section 14-222, as  
172 amended by this act, because of the same offense.

173 Sec. 2. Section 14-222 of the 2026 supplement to the general statutes  
174 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*

175 *October 1, 2026*):

176 (a) (1) No person shall operate any motor vehicle upon any public  
177 highway of the state, or any road of any specially chartered municipal  
178 association or of any district organized under the provisions of chapter  
179 105, a purpose of which is the construction and maintenance of roads  
180 and sidewalks, or in any parking area for ten cars or more or upon any  
181 private road on which a speed limit has been established in accordance  
182 with the provisions of section 14-218a or section 14-307a or upon any  
183 school property recklessly, having regard to the width, traffic and use  
184 of such highway, road, school property or parking area, the intersection  
185 of streets and the weather conditions. The operation of a motor vehicle  
186 upon any such highway, road or parking area for ten cars or more at  
187 such a rate of speed as to endanger the life of any person other than the  
188 operator of such motor vehicle, or the operation, downgrade, upon any  
189 highway, of any motor vehicle with a commercial registration with the  
190 clutch or gears disengaged, or the operation knowingly of a motor  
191 vehicle with defective mechanism, shall constitute a violation of the  
192 provisions of this subsection. The operation of a motor vehicle upon any  
193 such highway, road or parking area for ten cars or more at a rate of  
194 speed greater than eighty-five miles per hour but not greater than one  
195 hundred miles per hour shall constitute a violation of the provisions of  
196 this subsection. The operation of a motor vehicle in a highway work  
197 zone, as defined in section 14-212d, while engaged in any activity  
198 prohibited by section 14-296aa, as amended by this act, shall constitute  
199 a violation of the provisions of this section.

200 (2) Any person who violates any provision of subdivision (1) of this  
201 subsection shall be fined not less than one hundred dollars nor more  
202 than three hundred dollars or imprisoned not more than thirty days or  
203 be both fined and imprisoned for the first offense and for each  
204 subsequent offense shall be fined not more than six hundred dollars or  
205 imprisoned not more than one year or be both fined and imprisoned.

206 (b) (1) No person shall operate any motor vehicle upon any public  
207 highway of the state, or any road of any specially chartered municipal

208 association or of any district organized under the provisions of chapter  
209 105, a purpose of which is the construction and maintenance of roads  
210 and sidewalks, or in any parking area for ten cars or more or upon any  
211 private road on which a speed limit has been established in accordance  
212 with the provisions of section 14-218a or 14-307a or upon any school  
213 property at a rate of speed greater than one hundred miles per hour.

214 (2) Any person who violates subdivision (1) of this subsection shall  
215 be fined not less than two hundred dollars nor more than six hundred  
216 dollars or imprisoned not more than thirty days or be both fined and  
217 imprisoned for the first offense and for each subsequent offense shall be  
218 fined not more than one thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than  
219 one year or be both fined and imprisoned.

220 (3) Any police officer who arrests a person for a violation of  
221 subdivision (1) of this subsection, who has previously been convicted of  
222 a violation of subdivision (1) of this subsection, shall cause the motor  
223 vehicle such person was operating at the time of the current offense to  
224 be impounded for a period of forty-eight hours after such arrest. The  
225 owner of such motor vehicle may reclaim such motor vehicle after the  
226 expiration of such forty-eight-hour period upon payment of all towing  
227 and storage costs.

228 (c) No person shall be subject to prosecution because of the same  
229 offense for a violation of both (1) subsection (a) or (b) of this section, and  
230 (2) subsection (a) of section 14-219.

231 Sec. 3. Subdivision (3) of subsection (e) of section 14-36 of the 2026  
232 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is  
233 substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

234 (3) Before granting a license to any applicant who has not previously  
235 held a Connecticut motor vehicle operator's license, or whose  
236 Connecticut motor vehicle operator's license expired more than two  
237 years prior to the application date, the commissioner shall require the  
238 applicant to demonstrate personally to the commissioner, a deputy, a  
239 motor vehicle inspector or an agent of the commissioner, in such manner

240 as the commissioner directs, that the applicant is a proper person to  
241 operate motor vehicles of the class for which such applicant has applied,  
242 has sufficient knowledge of the mechanism of the motor vehicles to  
243 ensure their safe operation by him or her and has satisfactory  
244 knowledge of the laws concerning motor vehicles and the rules of the  
245 road. The knowledge test of an applicant for a class D motor vehicle  
246 operator's license shall include a question concerning highway work  
247 zone safety and the responsibilities of an operator of a motor vehicle  
248 under section 14-212d. Each such knowledge test shall include not less  
249 than one question concerning distracted driving, the use of mobile  
250 [telephones and] electronic devices by motor vehicle operators or the  
251 responsibilities of motor vehicle operators under section 14-296aa, as  
252 amended by this act. If any such applicant has held a license from a state,  
253 territory or possession of the United States where a similar examination  
254 is required, the commissioner may waive part or all of the examination.  
255 If any such applicant is (A) a veteran who applies not later than two  
256 years after the date of discharge from the military and who, prior to such  
257 discharge, held a military operator's license for motor vehicles of the  
258 same class as that for which such applicant has applied, or (B) a member  
259 of the armed forces or the National Guard who currently holds a  
260 military operator's license for motor vehicles of the same class as that for  
261 which such applicant has applied, the commissioner shall waive all of  
262 the examination, except in the case of a commercial motor vehicle  
263 license, the commissioner shall waive the driving skills test for such  
264 applicant and may, in such commissioner's discretion, waive the  
265 knowledge test for such application, provided such applicant meets the  
266 conditions set forth in 49 CFR 383.77, as amended from time to time. For  
267 the purposes of this subsection, "veteran" and "armed forces" have the  
268 same meanings as provided in section 27-103. When the commissioner  
269 is satisfied as to the ability and competency of any applicant, the  
270 commissioner may issue to such applicant a license, either unlimited or  
271 containing such limitations as the commissioner deems advisable, and  
272 specifying the class of motor vehicles which the licensee is eligible to  
273 operate.

274 Sec. 4. Subdivision (88) of section 14-1 of the 2026 supplement to the  
275 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
276 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

277 (88) "Serious traffic violation" means a conviction of any of the  
278 following offenses: (A) Excessive speeding, involving a single offense in  
279 which the speed is fifteen miles per hour or more above the posted  
280 speed limit, in violation of section 14-218a or 14-219; (B) reckless driving  
281 in violation of section 14-222, as amended by this act; (C) following too  
282 closely in violation of section 14-240 or 14-240a; (D) improper or erratic  
283 lane changes, in violation of section 14-236; (E) using a [hand-held  
284 mobile telephone or other electronic device or typing, reading or  
285 sending text or a text message with or from a mobile telephone or]  
286 mobile electronic device in violation of subsection (e) of section 14-  
287 296aa, as amended by this act, while operating a commercial motor  
288 vehicle; (F) driving a commercial motor vehicle without a valid  
289 commercial driver's license in violation of section 14-36a or 14-44a; (G)  
290 failure to carry a commercial driver's license in violation of section 14-  
291 44a; (H) failure to have the proper class of license or endorsement, or  
292 violation of a license restriction in violation of section 14-44a; or (I) a  
293 violation of any provision of chapter 248, by an operator who holds a  
294 commercial driver's license or learner's permit that results in the death  
295 of another person;

296 Sec. 5. Subdivision (15) of subsection (a) of section 42-110x of the 2026  
297 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is  
298 substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

299 (15) "Video game console" (A) means any computing device,  
300 including, but not limited to, any console machine, handheld console  
301 device or similar device or system, that is primarily used by consumers  
302 to play video games, (B) includes, but is not limited to, the components  
303 and peripherals of any computing device described in subparagraph (A)  
304 of this subdivision, and (C) does not include any (i) general or all-  
305 purpose computing device, (ii) desktop, laptop or tablet computer, or  
306 (iii) [hand-held] mobile telephone, [ as defined in section 14-296aa.]

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	14-296aa
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	14-222
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	14-36(e)(3)
Sec. 4	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	14-1(88)
Sec. 5	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	42-110x(a)(15)

**TRA**      *Joint Favorable*