



General Assembly

February Session, 2026

Raised Bill No. 237

LCO No. 1625



Referred to Committee on TRANSPORTATION

Introduced by:
(TRA)

AN ACT CONCERNING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.

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

1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) Not later than July 1, 2026, the
2 Department of Transportation shall restore service on the Shore Line
3 East rail line to the same level of service that existed prior to the
4 reduction in service due to the COVID-19 public health emergency and
5 the civil preparedness emergency declared by the Governor on March
6 10, 2020.

7 Sec. 2. (*Effective from passage*) The Commissioner of Transportation
8 shall implement the following public transportation projects and
9 initiatives:

10 (1) Expanding the bus rapid transit system to include a route that
11 connects the city of Hartford to the village of Storrs with bus stations
12 located, at a minimum, in the town of East Hartford and the cities of
13 Manchester and Rockville;

14 (2) Increasing the frequency of buses on the bus rapid transit route
15 between the Naugatuck Valley region and the city of New Haven at

16 peak times; and

17 (3) Expanding the Danbury branch of the New Haven Line to include
18 the town of New Milford.

19 Sec. 3. Section 13b-38h of the general statutes is repealed and the
20 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

21 (a) The Department of Transportation shall provide for changes in
22 fares for mass transportation by land in accordance with the provisions
23 of this section and shall not be required to conform to the procedures in
24 chapter 54.

25 (b) Prior to adopting any [change] increase in fares for mass
26 transportation by land, the department shall (1) give notice of the
27 proposed fare [change] increase, its amount and the date and time it is
28 proposed to take effect by advertising, at least once, in one or more
29 newspapers having [general] circulation in all areas [of the state] that
30 [may] would be affected by such [change in fares] proposed fare
31 increase, and (2) in such notice, provide information on the date, time
32 and place a public hearing is to be held on such proposed [change] fare
33 increase. Such notice shall be provided at least fifteen days prior to such
34 public hearing. The department shall, at least fifteen days prior to such
35 public hearing, send a copy of such notice to the chairpersons and
36 ranking members of the joint standing committees of the General
37 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to transportation and
38 finance and to the Connecticut Public Transportation Council,
39 established under section 13b-212b. A public hearing on the proposed
40 fare [change] increase shall be held at such date, time and place as will
41 be convenient for public attendance.

42 (c) When the department is required to hold a public hearing
43 regarding a proposed major service change to commuter rail service in
44 accordance with the Federal Transit Administration Title VI Circular
45 4702.1B, as amended from time to time, the department shall, at least
46 fifteen days prior to such public hearing, provide notice of such public

47 hearing to the chairpersons and ranking members of the joint standing
48 committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
49 relating to transportation and finance and to the Connecticut Public
50 Transportation Council.

51 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) The Department of Education
52 shall administer a grant program to provide grants to local and regional
53 boards of education for the purchase of passes for the use of state-owned
54 or state-controlled bus public transportation services and distribution of
55 such passes, without cost, to students who are enrolled in grades nine
56 to twelve, inclusive, of a public school under the jurisdiction of such
57 local or regional board of education. Applications for grants shall be
58 filed with the department at such time and in such manner as the
59 department prescribes. The department may develop guidelines and
60 grant criteria as it deems necessary to administer such grant program.

61 (b) Each local or regional board of education receiving a grant award
62 under this section shall submit, at such time and in such form as the
63 department prescribes, any reports and financial statements required by
64 the department. If the department finds that any grant awarded
65 pursuant to this section is being used for purposes that are not in
66 conformity with the purposes of this section, the department may
67 require the repayment of the grant to the state.

68 (c) Not later than July 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, the
69 Department of Education shall submit a report, in accordance with the
70 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing
71 committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
72 relating to education and transportation. Such report shall include, but
73 need not be limited to, the amount of grants awarded during the prior
74 year and an assessment of the impact of the grant program on student
75 outcomes.

76 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) For the purposes of this
77 section, "veteran" means any person who was discharged or released

78 under conditions other than dishonorable from active service in the
79 armed forces and "armed forces" has the same meaning as provided in
80 section 27-103 of the general statutes.

81 (b) The Department of Veterans Affairs shall purchase passes for the
82 use of state-owned or state-controlled bus public transportation services
83 and distribute such passes, without cost, to veterans in the state.
84 Applications for such passes shall be filed with the department at such
85 time and in such manner as the department prescribes. The department
86 may develop guidelines and criteria as it deems necessary to distribute
87 such passes.

88 (c) Not later than July 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, the
89 Department of Veterans Affairs shall submit a report, in accordance
90 with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint
91 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of
92 matters relating to military and veterans' affairs and transportation.
93 Such report shall include, but need not be limited to, the amount of
94 passes purchased and distributed during the prior year and an
95 assessment of the impact of the distribution of such passes to veterans.

96 Sec. 6. (*Effective July 1, 2026*) The sum of three million dollars is
97 appropriated to the Department of Education from the General Fund,
98 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, for the grant program
99 established pursuant to section 4 of this act.

100 Sec. 7. (*Effective July 1, 2026*) The sum of one million dollars is
101 appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs from the General
102 Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, for the purchase and
103 distribution of passes for the use of state-owned or state-controlled bus
104 public transportation services pursuant to section 5 of this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section

Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	13b-38h
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 7	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To (1) restore service on Shore Line East, (2) implement certain public transportation projects and initiatives, (3) require the Department of Transportation to provide notice of proposed fare increases, instead of any fare change, for mass transportation by land, and (4) establish programs for the purchase of bus passes for distribution to high school students and veterans.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]