
OLR Bill Analysis

SB 263

AN ACT CONCERNING WATER SAFETY AND SWIM INSTRUCTION.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), by May 1, 2027, and within available appropriations, to establish and administer an annual program for free swimming lessons during the summer to children under age 17 who meet certain criteria. To qualify, participants must live in a qualified census tract or be eligible for either the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) administered by the Department of Social Services, or the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) administered by the Department of Public Health.

The bill also allows DEEP to (1) contract with non-profit organizations that provide swimming lessons and water safety skills instruction for the program's swimming lessons and (2) accept public and private gifts, grants, and donations to create and administer the program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

BACKGROUND

Qualified Census Tract

A "qualified census tract" is any census tract, during a given year, where either (1) 50% or more of the households had an income less than 60% of the area median gross income or (2) the poverty rate is at least 25%. Qualified census tracts are designated by the U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (26 U.S.C. § 42(d)(5)(B)(ii); see CGS § 4-66c).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Change of Reference - APP
Yea 13 Nay 4 (03/03/2026)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable
Yea 51 Nay 0 (04/01/2026)