
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 501

AN ACT CONCERNING THE COMPLEX REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY AND WHEELCHAIR REPAIR ADVISORY COUNCIL.

SUMMARY

This bill requires wheelchair dealers to (1) provide data to the Complex Rehabilitation Technology and Wheelchair Repair Advisory Council; (2) report monthly, rather than annually, to the council and the Department of Social Services (DSS); and (3) provide a written notice to consumers on their right to timely repair.

The bill changes the council's membership and requires the Office of the Healthcare Advocate, rather than the Human Services Committee administrative staff, to serve as the council's administrative staff. The bill also requires appointed council members to serve two-year terms at the pleasure of the appointing authority.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

WHEELCHAIR DEALER REPORT AND NOTICE

Data Requests

An authorized wheelchair dealer is any company doing business in the state selling or leasing wheelchairs, including complex rehabilitation technology wheelchairs. The bill requires authorized wheelchair dealers to provide data the council requests, excluding data that is exempt from disclosure under the state's Freedom of Information Act, which exempts, among other things, trade secrets and certain commercial or financial information (CGS § 1-210).

Monthly Report

The bill requires authorized DSS-contracted wheelchair dealers to report monthly, rather than annually, on wheelchair repairs to the council and the DSS commissioner. By law, this report includes

information on minimum, maximum, and average times from when a repair is requested to when the dealer responds and makes the repair, among other things.

Consumer Notice

The bill requires authorized wheelchair dealers to notify consumers of their rights to timely repair, including repair at the consumer’s home if requested, and other rights under the law. Dealers must provide the notice (1) in writing when a consumer leases or buys a wheelchair, (2) in any mailings to the consumer, and (3) on the dealer’s website.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Under current law, the wheelchair membership council has eight appointed members and several ex-officio members. The bill requires one of the members appointed by the General Law Committee ranking members to be an authorized dealer, rather than a consumer who privately pays for complex rehabilitation technology.

The bill adds a member to the council by requiring the Human Services Committee chairpersons to appoint two consumers who use a complex rehabilitation technology wheelchair that is leased or repaired under the Medicaid program, rather than one.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 21 Nay 2 (03/19/2026)