

MAJOR ISSUES

2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION



OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH

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860-240-8400 | www.cga.ct.gov/olr

Notice to Readers

Every year, the Office of Legislative Research (OLR) identifies and provides brief descriptions of important issues the General Assembly may face in the upcoming session. This report does not represent staff suggestions or recommendations. The office identifies issues based on interim studies; research requests; non-confidential discussions with legislators, other legislative participants, and executive branch agencies; as well as our general subject matter knowledge. We also consult with the Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA) and the Legislative Commissioners' Office (LCO) when selecting issues. The report is organized according to the committee that has primary jurisdiction over an issue. Because more than one committee may consider aspects of the same issue, descriptions may overlap. Where appropriate, we provide links to OLR reports and other documents that contain additional information.

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Aging

Private Equity and Long-Term Care Facilities

During the 2026 legislative session, the legislature may continue to discuss the role of private equity in the ownership and operation of long-term care facilities, particularly nursing homes, and policy options to address potential negative impacts. Last session, the legislature considered, but did not pass, proposals that would have (1) prohibited private equity companies and real estate investment trusts (REITs) from acquiring or increasing their ownership interest, operational control, or financial control in a nursing home ([sSB 1332](#)) and (2) required that nursing homes be free of new ownership interests by private equity companies or REITs in order to be eligible for Medicaid reimbursement ([sSB 1480](#)). The legislature may consider similar proposals again this session.

Related Reading:

- OLR Bill Analysis for [sSB 1332](#) (2025)

Appropriations

Current Fiscal Year

OFA projects a General Fund surplus of \$95.2 million in FY 26. This surplus is \$213.7 million lower than originally budgeted. The decline is primarily due to deficiencies in several areas, most prominently State Employee Benefits (\$82.8 million) and Medicaid (\$80 million). Revenues are largely flat as compared to the adopted budget.

Future Fiscal Years

OFA projects positive General Fund balances in FY 27 (\$312.4 million), FY 28 (\$62.6 million), FY 29 (\$21.7 million), and FY 30 (\$101.9 million). In the out years, expenditure growth (3.0% annualized) is projected to slightly outpace revenue growth (2.8% annualized).

Budget Reserve Fund

The Budget Reserve Fund (BRF) has reached its statutory cap (18% of net General Fund appropriations) and is anticipated to remain at the cap through the projected period (FY 26–FY 30). State law requires that the General Fund operating surplus and any revenue exceeding the volatility cap be deposited into the BRF, dedicated to reducing long-term debt, or both. The volatility deposit is projected to average \$1.2 billion annually for FY 26 through FY 30, and nearly all these revenues will be dedicated to reducing long-term debt in the State Employees Retirement System and

Teachers' Retirement System. The transfers to the retirement systems result in reductions to required out year expenditures in those accounts (which are also impacted by other factors).

Related Reading:

- OFA, [Fiscal Accountability Report FY 26 – FY 30](#) (presentation) (2025)

Banking

Merchant Cash Advances

In 2023, the legislature enacted a law requiring certain entities offering merchant cash advances to be registered with the Department of Banking (DOB) and give applicants information about the financing, disbursement, payment, and repayment amounts; estimated term; finance charge and any other fees and charges; and collateral requirements ([PA 23-201](#), codified at [CGS § 36a-861, et seq.](#)). A merchant cash advance is a type of commercial financing in which a business is provided capital in exchange for a percentage of future revenue or sales. It is an alternative to traditional financing.

The Banking Committee may revisit these disclosures during the 2026 session and consider whether additional disclosures are needed.

Related Reading:

- DOB, [Guidance Regarding Public Act 23-201](#) (2024)
- OLR PA Summary for [PA 23-201](#) (2023)
- Congressional Research Service, [Consumer-Style Protections for Small Businesses: Issues and Options for Congress](#) (2024)

Children

Improving DCF Child Welfare Oversight

In the upcoming session, the legislature may consider ways to improve and better monitor the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) child safety and welfare functions in response to (1) recent child abuse cases that received public attention and (2) an agency performance audit. Recently, two high profile child abuse cases have focused attention on DCF's practices, including one involving an 11-year-old found dead in New Britain (it was later [discovered](#) that another child had impersonated her during an early 2025 DCF wellness check conducted via Zoom).

Additionally, the State Auditors of Public Accounts released a [performance audit](#) of DCF's response to children missing from care, which found that more than 600 children (under age 18) accounted for 3,736 missing-from-care episodes during the examined three-year period. The term "missing from care" includes runaways and those absent without official leave (Two children were still actively missing from care when DCF provided the data to the auditors). The audit made findings and recommendations, including that DCF should assess common risk factors and develop a plan with benchmarks to reduce the number of missing from care incidents.

Related Reading:

- Auditors of Public Accounts, Performance Audit, [Department of Children and Families' Response to Children Missing from Care](#)

Municipal Youth Camps

This session, the legislature may propose policies regarding municipal youth camp licensure, continuing work from last session.

Last year, the legislature considered [sSB 6](#), which would have required municipal youth camps (those serving children ages 3 to 16) to be licensed by the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), therefore subjecting them to the existing licensure requirements for non-municipal youth camps. These requirements are related to immunizations, medication administration, inspections and investigations, staff criminal background checks, and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. The bill would have allowed OEC to take disciplinary actions against municipal youth camps but prohibited OEC from requiring these camps to retain an on-call physician or advanced practice registered nurse (as private camps must). The Senate passed sSB 6, but the House did not take it up for a vote. This year, the legislature may choose to consider similar municipal youth camp licensure policies.

Related Reading:

- OLR Bill Analysis for [sSB 6](#), §§ 5-7 (File No. 199, as amended by Senate "A" and "C") (2025)

Commerce

Research and Development (R&D) Tax Credit for Pass-Through Entities (PTEs)

During the 2025 session, the legislature considered [HB 7008](#), which would have allowed the members or owners of PTEs (e.g., S Corporations, partnerships, and limited liability companies) to

claim a tax credit for the PTE's R&D expenses. Current law allows only C-corporations to claim the R&D tax credit against the corporation business tax, for which PTEs generally are not liable. A similar bill, [sSB 157](#), was also considered in 2024. As the legislature explores ways to grow Connecticut's economy and attract more businesses to the state, the General Assembly may choose to consider similar proposals.

Related Reading:

- OLR Bill Analysis for [HB 7008](#) (2025)
- OLR Report [2025-R-0015](#), *Guide to Connecticut's Business Tax Credits*

Education

Education Grant Funding

In recent years the legislature has enacted a number of changes to education grant programs, including replacing grants for interdistrict magnet schools and regional agricultural science and technology centers (i.e. "vo-ag centers") with new choice program grants ([PA 24-81](#)). This program uses student need weightings to provide additional funding for students eligible for free or reduced-priced meals or designated as English language learners.

Last session, the legislature created a new (1) per-student special education grant that provides more funding for school districts with a greater number of special education students ([PA 25-67](#)) and (2) competitive grant program to support in-district and regional special education programs and services for students ([PA 25-93](#)). This year, the legislature may consider providing more funding for various education grants, enhancing student need weightings, or making the grants more broadly applicable.

Related Reading:

- OLR Report, [Acts Affecting Education](#) (2025)

Smart Devices in Schools

The use of smart devices in schools has come under increased scrutiny as research continues to show adverse impacts of social media on student learning and mental health. In August 2024, the State Board of Education (SBE) released a policy statement recommending that school districts adopt policies restricting cell phone use in schools. Last session, the legislature considered, and the House passed, a bill ([HB 7009](#), § 5) that would have required each school district to adopt a

policy on smart devices using the guidance in SBE’s policy statement. This session, the legislature may consider similar proposals. It may also consider a statewide “bell-to-bell” policy banning smart device use, similar to policies adopted by several other states in recent years, including New York, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Related Reading:

- SBE’s Position Statement and Policy Guidance, “[Personal Technology Use In Connecticut Schools: Impact of Social Media and the Use of Cell Phones on Student Learning and Mental Health](#)”
- OLR Bill Analysis for [HB 7009](#) (File No. 926, as amended by House “A”) (2025)

Energy and Technology

New PURA Commissioners

This session, four new Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) commissioners are expected to come before the Legislative and Executive Nominations Committee, signaling a reset at the five-commissioner agency charged with regulating investor-owned utilities. Broader energy themes that may be discussed include energy affordability, energy supply, and water issues. The legislature may also consider addressing safety concerns at solar facilities in response to a [recent fire that broke out](#) earlier this year at an East Windsor facility.

Related Reading:

- OLR Report [2025-R-0163](#), *Barriers to Increasing Connecticut’s Natural Gas Supply*
- OLR Report [2025-R-0164](#), *Data Center Energy Impacts and State Responses*

Environment

Black Bears

According to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), Connecticut’s resident black bear population is increasing and expanding geographically. Concerns about conflicts between humans and bears have resulted in several legislative proposals in past years, such as (1) authorizing a hunting season (several bills), (2) directing DEEP to create a black bear management plan ([sHB 7051](#)), and (3) allowing the governor to direct DEEP to adopt regulations for bear hunting if a DEEP assessment finds bear conflicts pose a public safety threat ([sSB 1523](#)). The legislature may consider similar proposals in 2026.

Related Reading:

- OLR Report [2024-R-0165](#), *Connecticut's Black Bear Population*
- OLR Public Act Summary for [PA 23-77](#)

Riparian Areas

Last session, [SA 25-12](#) established a working group to identify how to protect vegetative riparian buffers in the state. (Vegetative riparian buffers are strips of vegetation alongside bodies of water that protect the water from negative outside influences, such as runoff, and provides various habitat benefits). The working group met regularly over the past several months to discuss the scope and content of future legislation. The working group will soon present its final report to the Environment Committee, which may consider legislation based on the group's findings and recommendations.

Related Reading:

- OLR Report [2025-R-115](#), *Wetlands Buffer Zones in New England*
- [Vegetated Riparian Buffers Working Group](#)

Solid Waste Management

Last session, the legislature established a framework for statewide stewardship programs to begin managing the collection and recycling of certain batteries ([PA 25-34](#)). The legislature also considered various other proposals related to solid waste management, including bills that would have (1) directed DEEP to report on the viability and need for a consumer packaging extended producer responsibility program ([sHB 6917](#)); (2) directed DEEP, in consultation with PURA, to study the need to establish extended producer responsibility programs for solar panels and wind turbine blades ([SB 1281](#)); and (3) expanded the existing tire stewardship program to include retailers ([sHB 5017](#)). The legislature may consider similar proposals for solid waste management in 2026.

Related Reading:

- OLR Public Act Summary for [PA 25-34](#)

Finance, Revenue and Bonding

Connecticut's Response to Federal Tax Changes

[P.L. 119-21](#), also known as HR 1 or the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act,” includes numerous federal tax changes affecting people and businesses in Connecticut. Among other things, the act:

- makes a number of individual tax changes, such as (1) extending the marginal income tax rates first enacted under the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA); (2) increasing the standard deduction for taxpayers who do not itemize their deductions; (3) increasing the deduction for state and local taxes paid for income-eligible taxpayers that do itemize their deductions; (4) extending and enhancing the TCJA's changes to the child tax credit; and (5) enacting new deductions for tip income, qualified overtime pay, and certain car loan interest;
- extends and modifies several of the TCJA's business tax provisions, including provisions on (1) bonus depreciation, (2) full expensing of qualifying research and experimental expenditures, (3) enhanced deductions for business interest, and (4) special depreciation allowances for qualified production property;
- increases the lifetime estate and gift tax exclusion amount; and
- restricts new or increased health provider taxes used to finance state Medicaid programs.

In 2026, Connecticut lawmakers may consider how these federal changes affect the state's tax structure and economy. They may also consider decoupling from certain federal tax provisions amended under PL 119-21 that are projected to impact the state's revenue collections because of the linkages between the federal and state tax codes.

Related Reading:

- Congressional Research Service (CRS), [Tax Provisions in P.L. 119-21, the FY2025 Reconciliation Law](#) (2025)
- CRS, [Health Provisions in P.L. 119-21, the FY2025 Reconciliation Law](#) (2025)
- Department of Health & Human Services' Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, [Section 71115 and 71117 of Working Families Tax Cuts Legislation on Provider Taxes](#) (2025)
- Office of the State Comptroller, [Special Examination on H.R. 1: One Big Beautiful Bill Act](#) (2025)

Targeted Tax Cuts

This coming session, the legislature may consider using surplus revenue to fund targeted tax relief programs, including [reported proposals](#) to establish (1) a state-level child tax credit or deduction and (2) an enhanced property tax credit against the state income tax. In considering these tax cut proposals, the legislature is likely to renew the debate over the state’s “fiscal guardrails” that, among other things, direct surplus revenue to paying down the state’s unfunded pension liabilities.

Related Reading:

- OLR Report 2025-R-0142, [OLR Backgrounder: Connecticut’s Fiscal Guardrails](#)
- OFA, [Fiscal Accountability Report FY 26-FY 30](#) (2025)
- Office of Policy and Management, [Fiscal Accountability Report Fiscal Years 2026-2030](#) (2025)

General Law

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

With questions surrounding artificial intelligence (AI) regulation, including uncertainty about the effects that a recent federal executive order may have on states, the General Assembly may consider various proposals related to AI. These proposals could include, among other things, (1) requiring businesses to make certain disclosures when consumers are interacting with AI, (2) prohibiting use of certain deceptive AI-generated media in elections, (3) creating a regulatory “sandbox” (i.e. program to allow testing with reduced requirements), and (4) conducting various studies on the feasibility of incorporating AI in different areas.

Related Reading:

- OLR Report [2024-R-0191](#), *Artificial Intelligence (AI)*
- OLR Bill Analysis for [sSB 2](#) (File No. 603, as amended by Senate “A” and “B”) (2025)
- National Conference of State Legislatures, [Artificial Intelligence Policy Toolkit](#) (2025)
- [AI Executive Order](#)

Hemp

Following the adoption of the federal 2018 Agriculture Improvement Act ([P.L. 115-334](#)), states were permitted to, among other things, regulate hemp below a certain THC threshold by removing it from

the marijuana definition. As a result, Connecticut currently allows and regulates various hemp-derived products such as THC-infused beverages and moderate-THC hemp products. As part of legislation ending the federal government shutdown in Fall 2025, Congress narrowed this hemp carveout beginning November 12, 2026. This session, the legislature may consider proposals to allow these products on an intrastate basis.

Related Reading:

- CRS, [Changes to the Federal Definition of Hemp: Legal Considerations Under the Controlled Substances Act](#) (2025)

Government Administration and Elections

Early Voting Administration

In 2023, the legislature adopted early voting legislation allowing voters to cast their ballots in person before election day. In the 2024 presidential election, over 740,000 Connecticut voters used early voting to cast their ballot in the 14-day period before election day. This session, the legislature may adjust policies concerning early voting administration in response to experiences with its implementation and use in recent elections.

Related Reading:

- OLR Report [2023-R-0125](#), *Connecticut's Early Voting Law*
- OLR Report [2023-R-0018](#), *Early Voting*

No-Excuse Absentee Voting

In 2024, Connecticut voters approved a constitutional amendment to remove the restrictions that limited the reasons voters could use absentee voting. However, state statute still limits absentee voting due to (1) active service with the armed forces of the United States, (2) absence from their city or town, (3) sickness or physical disability, (4) their religious beliefs prohibiting secular activity on that day, or (5) service as an election official at a polling place other than their own. This year, the legislature may consider modifying or eliminating these statutory limitations, in order to expand the use of absentee voting.

Related Reading:

- OLR Report [2024-R-0145](#), *Ballot Question and Explanatory Text for 2024 Proposed Constitutional Amendment on Absentee Voting*

- OLR Report [2024-R-0112](#), *Absentee Voting Process and Voter Identification Requirements*

Government Oversight

Auditors of Public Accounts Audits

The Auditors of Public Accounts (APA) is a nonpartisan legislative agency that conducts audits of state and quasi-public agencies. As part of these audits, the APA includes recommendations for compliance with state law, improving agency operations, and best practices for achieving an agency's directives. Last year, the Government Oversight Committee held several hearings based on these audits and worked to address the identified issues. This year, the committee is likely to continue this work and introduce new legislation based on recent APA audits.

Related Reading:

- OLR Report [2025-R-0026](#), *Auditors of Public Accounts Audits Since 2023*
- OLR Report [2025-R-0063](#), *Auditors of Public Accounts Audits Q1 of 2025*
- OLR Report [2025-R-0090](#), *Auditors of Public Accounts Audits Q2 of 2025*
- OLR Report [2025-R-0130](#), *Auditors of Public Accounts Audits Q3 of 2025*

Higher Education and Employment Advancement

Career Pipelines and Workforce Development

With the state's aging workforce, certain trades and jobs face a growing shortage of workers. The legislature may consider additional strategies to promote these trades and occupations to students throughout secondary education and postsecondary opportunities, including through pipelines that connect the two. The legislature may also consider expanding opportunities and incentives for job training and career advancement, such as through industry partnerships, work-based learning, and apprenticeship programs.

Initiatives to Improve College Affordability

This session, the legislature will likely consider initiatives to address college affordability for Connecticut students and build on previous legislation.

Last year, the legislature considered but did not pass [sSB 5](#) which would have, among other things, increased the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship need-based award amount to the maximum of the

range currently permitted for the award (\$4,500). This session, the legislature may consider similar proposals regarding the Willis Scholarship.

Additionally, the legislature passed [SA 25-10](#) which established a task force to (1) examine existing scholarship programs in the state; (2) research students' unmet needs; and (3) specify strategies to expand promise programs (which provide financial support, generally "last-dollar" or full tuition scholarships, to local students for higher education). The task force is expected to present its final report to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee soon, and the committee may consider legislation based on the group's findings and recommendations this session.

During a September 2025 informational forum, the committee discussed the impacts of federal legislation on Connecticut student loan borrowers, including the effects of eliminating the federal Graduate PLUS loan program. The legislature may consider proposals related to student loans, including proposals to expand the role of the Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA) in providing loans to graduate students.

Related Reading:

- CRS, [Amendments to the Higher Education Act Made by P.L. 119-21, the FY2025 Budget Reconciliation Law](#) (2026)

Housing

Addressing Increasing Homelessness

According to Connecticut's 2025 Point-In-Time Count data, the number of people experiencing homelessness in the state has continued to increase (up 9.53% from the 2024 count; see below). This session, the legislature may consider proposals to (1) provide additional funding for innovative rehousing programs; (2) review policies related to preventing homelessness, including those aimed at keeping renters in stable housing; and (3) align the provision of certain homelessness services with applicable federal funding requirements.

Relatedly, the legislature may once again consider bills generally aimed at preventing municipalities from infringing on the ability of people experiencing homelessness to use public spaces without discrimination based on their housing status (e.g., [sHB 7033](#) (2025), which was reported favorably by the Housing Committee).

Related Reading:

- [2025 Connecticut Annual Point-In-Time Count](#)

- OLR Bill Analysis for [sHB 7033](#) (2025)

Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure

In November 2025, the legislature passed a comprehensive law that, among other things, aims to: (1) deepen municipalities' understanding of their local affordable housing needs; (2) encourage planning on a regional scale; and (3) incentivize municipalities to change their land use regulations to accommodate housing development ([PA 25-1, November Special Session](#)). As municipalities begin to plan for increasing their housing stock and implementing land use reforms, the legislature might focus on ways to modify the Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure ([CGS § 8-30g](#)) to reward these municipal efforts. Changes to § 8-30g could, for example, address regional differences in overall housing inventory and the availability of developable land.

More broadly, the legislature may consider modifying the § 8-30g exemption threshold. (The recent legislation discussed above requires the majority leaders' roundtable on affordable housing to study this issue and report to the Housing Committee by February 1, 2026.)

Related Reading:

- OLR Issue Brief [2024-R-0147](#), CGS § 8-30g: *The Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure*
- OLR Bill Analysis for [HB 8002](#) (2025)

Human Services

Medicaid

This session, the legislature may consider bills to plan for and implement changes to HUSKY, the state's Medicaid program, in response to new federal Medicaid requirements included in HR 1.

Among other changes, which take effect between 2026 and 2028, Connecticut must generally (1) implement work requirements as a condition for Medicaid eligibility; (2) verify Medicaid eligibility every six months rather than annually as under current law; (3) reduce eligibility for certain non-citizens who are eligible under current law; and (4) implement cost sharing (e.g., co-pays) for certain services.

Legislators may consider ways to mitigate coverage loss and increased costs for Medicaid enrollees under these new requirements. Additionally, as the Department of Social Services (DSS), which administers HUSKY, prepares for these changes to take effect, the legislature may consider ways to

respond to potential administrative and funding needs. While navigating these changes, legislators may also continue a discussion on Medicaid rates.

Related Reading:

- OLR Report [2024-R-0174](#), *Medicaid Eligibility*
- DSS, [Federal Budget Reconciliation Bill – Impact to Beneficiaries](#)
- Connecticut Medicaid Rate Study [Phase 1](#) and [Phase 2](#)

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

This session, the legislature may consider bills related to the state’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in response to new federal requirements included in HR 1.

Among other things, HR 1 requires states to (1) expand work requirements for SNAP eligibility and eliminate certain work requirement exemptions, including those for veterans and people experiencing homelessness, and (2) reduce eligibility for certain non-citizens. Additionally, HR 1 reduces federal funding for SNAP, shifts some of the cost of providing SNAP benefits to states, and imposes penalties on states with high error rates. Legislators may consider ways to mitigate the number of Connecticut residents who will lose SNAP benefits under these new rules, as well as respond to any resulting increase in funding or administrative needs at DSS, Connecticut’s SNAP administrator.

In the 2025 November Special Session, the General Assembly passed legislation aimed at reducing SNAP error rates by creating a new standard deduction for calculating self-employment earnings when determining SNAP eligibility. In the upcoming session, legislators may consider additional ways to reduce error rates to avoid incurring penalties under HR 1.

Related Reading:

- OLR Bill Analysis for [HB 8004](#) (as amended by House “A”), § 10
- DSS, [HR1 or the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” Impact to Beneficiaries - Update](#)

Insurance and Real Estate

Association Health Plans

This session, the legislature may take up the issue of expanding access to more affordable insurance coverage through multiple employer welfare arrangements (MEWAs) or Association Health Plans (AHP).

In practice, a MEWA generally allows smaller businesses to join together to offer health insurance and other benefits to each business's employees and their dependents depending on whether the companies form a bona fide association that offers an AHP. Connecticut considered authorizing and regulating AHPs during the 2023 session in a bill that would have required self-funded MEWAs to be licensed with the Insurance Department. It also would have required both self-funded and fully insured MEWAs to (1) meet minimum federal Affordable Care Act standards (i.e. essential benefits), (2) cover all state-mandated benefits, (3) not exclude preexisting conditions coverage, and (4) have a minimum 60% actuarial value ([sHB 6710](#)).

Given the impending health insurance affordability issue, the legislature could consider similar proposals again in 2026.

Related Reading:

- OLR Report [2023-R-0076](#), *State Regulation of MEWAs*
- OLR Report [2023-R-0140](#), *MEWAs and Association Health Plans in Connecticut*
- OLR Bill Analysis for [sHB 6710](#) (2023)

Pharmacists Compensation Working Group Recommendations

As part of the 2025 public act implementing the bipartisan drug task force recommendations, the legislature created the Pharmacists' Compensation Working Group to study and make legislative recommendations on pharmacists' compensation for providing services such as vaccine administration, HIV- or influenza-related testing, and prescriptions for federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved contraceptive devices or products ([PA 25-167](#), § 7).

During the 2026 session, the legislature may consider recommendations from this working group that would, among other things, (1) allow pharmacists to bill commercial insurers for the types of services listed above and (2) set parity requirements for insurers who cover these services if provided by another health care provider.

Related Reading:

- OLR Report [2025-R-0121](#), *Connecticut Law on Pharmacists' Provider Designation and Commercial Insurers' Compensation for Services*
- OLR Report [2025-R-0122](#), *State Laws Allowing Pharmacists to Bill Commercial Insurers for Certain Services*
- OLR PA Summary for [PA 25-167](#)

Judiciary

Correctional Facilities' Conditions

Last session, the legislature passed several acts with provisions on the conditions at the state's correctional facilities. Among other things, these acts expanded the Office of the Correction Ombuds' (OCO) authority to investigate complaints and get information ([PA 25-161](#)) and require the Department of Correction (DOC) commissioner to ensure that each correctional facility is staffed at a level that protects everyone in the facility, including visitors ([PA 25-168](#), § 268).

A recent OCO report discussed conditions in certain correctional facilities during this summer's extreme heat periods and, among other things, recommended that DOC set statutory or regulatory maximum and minimum temperature thresholds for correctional facilities. The correctional officers' union has also expressed concern for its members due to violent incidents and drug exposure at the state's facilities. The legislature may consider these recommendations and concerns during the 2026 session.

Related Reading:

- OCO, [Heat Mitigation Report](#) (2025)
- OLR PA Summary for [PA 25-161](#)
- OLR PA Summary for [PA 25-168](#)

Hate Crimes

By law, the state's Hate Crimes Advisory Council, among other things, makes recommendations for legislation to combat hate crimes and address victim restitution and remedies ([CGS § 51-279f](#)).

The legislature considered a council recommendation last session to revise and consolidate the hate crimes statutes, but it did not become law. Among other things, the 2025 legislation would have (1) combined the various classes protected against crimes motivated by bias into one

protected social category for hate crimes, (2) labeled certain crimes or discriminatory acts motivated by bigotry or bias as specific hate crimes, (3) required the judge to indicate on the record when a crime was sentenced as a hate crime, (4) enhanced the penalty for certain crimes if designated a hate crime, and (5) extended the state attorney general's authority to bring action in any hate crime ([sHB 6872](#)).

In 2026, the legislature may consider these and other recommendations for changes to the hate crimes laws addressing things such as victim restitution, remedies for damages, and additional alternative sentencing programs.

Related Reading:

- OLR Report [2024-R-0043](#), *Connecticut Hate Crime Laws*
- Connecticut Hate Crimes Advisory Council, [2024 Annual Report](#)
- OLR Bill Analysis for [sHB 6872](#) (2025)

Labor and Public Employees

Striking Workers

Last session, the General Assembly considered ways to help workers while on strike. One bill would have made striking workers eligible for unemployment benefits after being on strike for 14 consecutive days, but it was [vetoed by the governor](#) ([PA 25-64](#)). [HB 6904](#) included the same provisions as this bill. The legislature may revisit the issue again this year.

Related Reading:

- OLR Public Act Summary for [PA 25-64](#) (Vetoed)
- OLR Report, [2025 Veto Package](#)

Warehouse Workers

In 2025, the legislature considered a bill that would have created protections for warehouse workers by limiting the extent to which certain warehouse distribution centers could require their employees to meet production quotas ([HB 6907](#)). It would have generally applied to employers that employed at least (1) 100 employees at a single warehouse distribution center in the state or (2) 1,000 employees in total at multiple warehouse distribution centers in the state that are owned and operated by the same business entity. That year's [SB 8](#) (File 177) and [SB 1254](#) (File 180)

included similar provisions to this bill. The legislature may consider similar legislation in the upcoming session.

Related Reading:

- OLR Bill Analysis for [HB 6907](#) (as amended by House “A”) (2025)

Planning and Development

Municipal Financial Stress and Taxpayer Burden

Municipalities across the state continue to [face fiscal stress](#) as their capacity to generate property tax revenue cannot keep pace with the rising cost of providing local services. At the same time, rising property taxes are straining many property owners’ finances. This session, the legislature may again consider proposals geared toward supplementing municipal revenue streams or providing tax relief to certain property owners, like those living on fixed incomes and veterans. It may also look to take steps to encourage municipalities to cut costs by (1) collaborating on activities and delivering services regionally, such as through a [council of governments](#), or (2) using technology to deliver certain services, like legal notices.

Related Reading:

- OLR Report [2026-R-0021](#), *Grants for Regionalizing Municipal Services*
- OFA’s Municipal Aid [website](#)
- Connecticut Conference of Municipalities’ Municipal Finance Essentials: [The Property Tax \(2025\)](#)

Public Health

Private Equity and Other Health Care Transactions

In recent years, there has been increasing discussion and debate related to health care business transactions and how they impact health care costs, quality, and access. For example, policymakers have considered (1) the role of private equity firms in health care, (2) the extent to which the state’s certificate of need (CON) program is accomplishing its goals of avoiding unnecessary duplication and preserving health care access, and (3) the overall impact of health care consolidation.

In 2025, the legislature enacted certain related changes, such as (1) creating a separate emergency CON process for bankruptcy-related hospital ownership transfers ([PA 25-2](#), § 1) and (2) authorizing bonding to facilitate UConn Health’s planned acquisition of Waterbury Hospital ([PA 25-](#)

[2. November Special Session](#)). Additionally, the legislature considered various other proposals that would have (1) added new or expanded existing notice requirements for various types of transactions; (2) prohibited private equity companies and real estate investment trusts from acquiring or increasing any ownership interest in, or exercising operational or financial control over, hospitals or health systems; and (3) made various other changes to the CON program, such as requiring CON approval if a private equity company acquires a controlling interest in a health care entity (see [sSB 1507](#), [SB 1539](#), [sHB 6873](#), and [HB 7050](#)). The legislature is likely to consider similar proposals during the 2026 session.

Related Reading:

- OLR Bill Analyses for [sSB 1507](#), [SB 1539](#), [sHB 6873](#), and [HB 7050](#) (2025) (note that some parts of [HB 7050](#) passed in similar form in [PA 25-168](#), §§ 275 & 276)

Responses to Federal Public Health Policy Changes

Like several other states, Connecticut is taking certain steps related to changes in public health policy and related funding at the federal level. Last session, the legislature enacted a law that, among other things, allowed the Department of Public Health (DPH) to create an [advisory committee](#) on matters related to federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and FDA recommendations ([PA 25-168](#), § 170). Additionally, Connecticut recently joined the [Northeast Public Health Collaborative](#), a voluntary coalition of public health agencies in 10 states established in response to federal policy changes, in order to share expertise and resources, improve coordination, and promote evidence-based public health.

During the 2026 session, the legislature will likely consider proposals based on the work and recommendations of the collaborative and DPH advisory committee on various topics, such as immunization guidelines, infectious disease management, local health department services, changes in federal public health funding, data collection, and emergency preparedness.

Related Reading:

- OLR PA Summary for [PA 25-168](#) (2025)

Public Safety and Security

Police Officer and Firefighter Retention and Recruitment

Over the past few years, the Public Safety and Security Committee has considered proposals to help retain and recruit police officers. Some of these proposals were incorporated into [PA 25-174](#),

including (1) requiring the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) and the Police Officer Standards and Training Council to create a report with recommendations on awarding bonuses to new and existing officers, and (2) requiring DESPP to investigate ways to develop and enhance programs addressing police officer mental health.

In 2025, the committee also voted out a bill ([sHB 7199](#)) that would have provided incentive and retention benefits to firefighters, including (1) requiring the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority to develop and administer a mortgage assistance program for uniformed members of paid or volunteer fire departments, and (2) giving certain tuition waivers at selected state and community colleges for eligible service or for certain programs offered in coordination with the state fire school.

This session, the committee may again consider ways to enhance the retention and recruitment of public safety personnel.

Related Reading:

- OLR Public Act Summary for [PA 25-174](#)
- OLR Bill Analysis for [sHB 7199](#) (2025)

Transportation

Towing

Last session, the legislature passed a significant towing reform act that, among other things, (1) set additional restrictions on towing from private property, (2) separated private property trespass towing rates from police-ordered towing rates and created new processes for setting them, and (3) established additional consumer protections. It also created a working group to study the process for disposing of unclaimed towed vehicles, requiring it to report back to the legislature by February 1, 2026. The group must consider, among other things, alternative methods for vehicle disposal that balance towing companies' interest in managing their storage sites and motor vehicle owners' interests ([PA 25-55](#)).

This upcoming session, the legislature may consider findings and recommendations from the working group and further modify the process through which towing companies dispose of unclaimed vehicles. It may also consider recommendations from the [Police-Ordered Towing Council](#) established under the 2025 act on insurance company complaints to the Department of Motor Vehicles and charging for towing services requested by police and other officials.

Related Reading:

- OLR Public Act Summary for [PA 25-55](#)

Traffic Safety

In recent years, the legislature has increased its focus on traffic safety to address Connecticut's concerning post-pandemic trends in driver and pedestrian fatalities, impaired driving incidents, and speeding, among other things. In 2025, Connecticut hospitals reported an increase in injuries treated in emergency departments that were involving e-bikes, e-scooters, and other electric two- and three-wheeled vehicles. While Connecticut experienced a reduction in total traffic-related deaths in 2025, it saw an increase in cyclist deaths with total traffic deaths remaining above pre-pandemic levels.

This session, the legislature is likely to continue working to improve traffic safety in the state. It may consider proposals to (1) strengthen impaired driving laws (e.g., reducing the blood alcohol content limit to 0.05% or authorizing oral fluid testing); (2) further regulate e-bikes and e-scooters (e.g., by requiring registration and insurance); (3) expand the use of automated enforcement; or (4) strengthen distracted driving laws.

Related Reading:

- OLR Report [2025-R-0128](#), *State Motor Scooter Registration and Licensing Requirements*
- OLR Public Act Summary for [PA 25-159](#), §§ 35-59
- OLR Report [2022-R-0249](#), *Drug-Impaired Driving Laws*

Veterans' and Military Affairs

Higher Education for Veterans

Last session, the General Assembly passed an act expanding the higher education tuition waiver program for eligible National Guard members and veterans with wartime service to cover (1) higher education extension fees and (2) tuition at Charter Oak State College ([PA 25-95](#)). During the 2026 session, the legislature may explore covering additional higher education fees under the program.

Related Reading:

- OLR Public Act Summary for [PA 25-95](#), §§ 9-13

Property Tax Relief

Under existing law, veterans and servicemembers may receive several property tax exemptions based on factors such as the veteran's service or disability rating. Municipalities also have the option of offering additional exemptions. This session, the legislature may consider further addressing property tax exemptions for veterans.

Related Reading:

- OLR Report [2025-R-0129](#), *Property Tax Exemption for Veterans With a 100% P&T Disability Rating*
- OLR Report [2025-R-0130](#), *Veterans Property Tax Exemptions by Town: State-Mandated Exemptions*
- OLR Report [2025-R-0131](#), *Municipal-Option Property Tax Exemptions for Veterans*
- OLR Public Act Summary for [PA 25-2](#), §§ 4-6
- OLR Public Act Summary for [PA 25-168](#), §§ 233-242