

***THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HAS SPOKEN:  
LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT MATTERS  
(AND LEGISLATION FROM A BIG BILL)***

**COST 2026 Legislative Wrap-Up**

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**MAY 19, 2026**

- The 2026 session of the General Assembly adjourned on May 6, 2026, as this was a “brief” election year session.
- The General Assembly continued its trend of enacting more omnibus bills with vaguely related provisions.
- **ANYWAYS, away we go ...**

***Public Act 26-12:  
AN ACT CONCERNING  
WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT AND  
WORKING CONDITIONS  
IN THE STATE.***

- This Act contains diverse provisions, often addressing matters that did not pass in previous sessions of the General Assembly.
- It was signed by the Governor on May 12, 2026.
- Many of the provisions take effect on October 1, 2026.

# Enhanced Workers' Compensation

- This Act provides that teachers and health care employees shall receive enhanced workers' compensation benefits if unable to work due to being assaulted at work.
- If any teacher employed by (or a member of) a board of education, the State Board of Education, the Board of Regents of Higher Education or the Board of Trustees for the University of Connecticut 1) suffers any injury for which workers compensation benefits are provided 2) that results in total or partial incapacity to work 3) as a result of any **physical or negligent** assault upon while such person was acting in the discharge of their duties within the scope of their employment or under the direction of person's employer, such person shall be paid a weekly compensation equal to 100% of their average weekly earnings as of the date of the injury with no cap (unlike the usual 75% with a cap).
- Such weekly compensation shall additionally include payment for any 1) expenses reasonably incurred for medical or other services necessary as a result of such assault, or 2) lost wages due to an absence due to a court appearance in connection with such assault.

# Enhanced Workers' Compensation

- Any person covered by this provision who is absent from employment as a result of injury sustained during an assault or for a court appearance in connection with such assault shall continue to receive their full salary, while so absent, except that the amount of any workers' compensation award may be deducted from salary payments during such absence.
- The time of such absence shall not be charged against such person's sick leave, vacation time or personal leave days.
- Consistent with this enhanced benefit, this Act repeals current law (Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-236a) requiring the aforementioned educational entities to “protect and save harmless” their teachers, board members, or other employees whenever they were assaulted while performing their duties and suffers a financial loss or expenses.

- This Act amends a recent law regarding salary disclosure by requiring employers to disclose, ***in both public and internal postings*** for each job, promotion, transfer or other employment opportunity, the wage or wage range, and (**now/new**) a general description of the benefits, including, but not limited to, health benefits, retirement benefits, paid days off and tax reportable benefits, and other compensation to be offered.
- If an employer does not use a public or internal posting to advertise a job, promotion, transfer or other employment opportunity, then the employer would have to provide such wage/benefit information about the position: 1) upon the applicant's request; or 2) if not so requested, prior to any offer or discussion of compensation.
- Employers are required to provide this information to their employees 1) upon hiring, 2) a change in the employee's position with the employer, or 3) the employee's first request for a wage range.

- Furthermore, this Act revises the current law’s definition of “wage range” so as to constitute the range of wages for a position “**set in good faith**” by reference to an applicable pay scale, a previously determined wage range for the position, actual wages for the employees currently holding the position, actual wage range for employees currently holding comparable positions, or the employer’s budgeted amount for the position.
- This Act’s provisions would apply to remote positions held by out-of-state employees where they have to report to an in-state supervisor, office or work site.
- The Act eliminates a court’s ability to award punitive damages against employers in actions brought under the law for wage disclosure violation cases

- Effective October 1, 2026, this Act requires any employers with more than 100 employees to create a guide for employees on pay codes for overtime and commonly used pay differentials (e.g., shift differentials, on-call pay, hazard pay, call-back pay, holiday or weekend pay or geographical pay differentials).
- Such guide shall include at least ten pay codes and shall be posted on the employer's website in English, Spanish and the other most common languages spoken by the employees and would include contact information of the designated office or individual who will handle employee disputes regarding calculations of hours and pay differentials.
- An employer would be required to update such guide each time a new pay code for overtime or any pay differential is added by the employer. An employer is required to provide the website address to such guide upon hire and include the website address on each record of hours furnished to an employee; in the alternative, an employer could simply provide a written copy of the guide to an employee upon hire (or a third-party payroll services company could provide this).
- This Act does NOT require an employer to have a website (if it does not have one currently) or establish new pay codes just to satisfy this law.

- Effective October 1, 2026, the Act extends the law that generally prohibits requiring employees to sign an employment promissory note (i.e., an agreement that requires the employee to repay the employer if he or she does not stay at the job for a certain duration) to all employers (not just employers with 26 or more employees).
- The exceptions in this law remain as is (i.e., agreements to repay for advances, to pay for property sold or leased, for educational personnel to comply with sabbatical leave terms, or entered as a part of a collectively bargained program).

# Portal to Portal Workers' Comp Coverage: Public Works

- The Act extends (effective October 1, 2026) “portal-to-portal” workers’ compensation coverage (which currently applies to certain first responders) to public works department employees in circumstances when they:
  - 1) are subject to emergency calls while off duty by the terms of their employment,
  - 2) are responding to a direct order to appear at their work assignment when nonessential employees are excused from working, or
  - 3) have worked two or more mandatory overtime shifts on consecutive days.

- Effective July 1, 2026, this Act revises the Teacher Tenure Act's termination provisions, by
  - 1) revising the permitted ground of termination of “other due and sufficient cause” to “other due and sufficient reason”;
  - 2) providing that the standard of review for all reasons for termination shall be the same standard applied in other disciplinary actions under the terms of the teacher's collective bargaining agreement (which is generally “just cause”);
  - 3) mandating that any teacher termination proceeding for a **tenured teacher** be before an impartial hearing officer (and eliminating the ability of the parties to have the hearing be before the employing board of education),

- 4) making the decision of an impartial hearing officer in tenured teacher termination hearings binding on the parties (as opposed to consisting of findings with a recommendation), and
  - 5) allowing both the teacher and the employing board of education to appeal the hearing officer’s decision to the Superior Court, but such an appeal must be way of (and subject to the same standards as) an application to vacate an arbitration award, instead of an administrative appeal.
- The Act appears to continue to provide a non-tenured teacher terminated for reasons of “moral misconduct” or “disability as shown by competent medical evidence” with a right of appeal to the Superior Court, albeit still via an administrative appeal.

- The Act conforms the state’s collective bargaining law for public school teachers (the Teacher Negotiation Act) to a 2018 U.S. Supreme Court decision (*Janus v. AFSCME*) by removing provisions that require teachers who were covered by a collective bargaining agreement (CBA), but not dues paying members of the union, to pay other fees (“service fees”) instead of union dues
- The Act instead specifies that the parties may negotiate CBA provisions that **allow** the teachers to choose to have their dues and initiation fees (and service fees) paid through payroll deductions

- This Act requires the Commissioner of Education (in consultation with the Office of Workforce Strategy) by January 1, 2028 to create a two-year pilot program for educator externships for certified teacher in order to allow educators to participate in experiential learning with private sector employers to align classroom instruction with current industry standards and workforce needs.
- The Commissioner shall prioritize placement in such externship programs to educators 1) employed in “alliance school districts” or 2) who teach a topic related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics, manufacturing or health care.

# Paraeducators and Unemployment Compensation

- Effective July 1, 2026, this Act requires school districts, RESCs, charter school and endowed or incorporated academies to provide ten days prior to last day of the school year to notify Department of Education with respect to which of their paraeducators have (and do not have) a “reasonable assurance” of returning to work for the next academic term, along with information as to the manner such assurance was communicated.
- The Department of Labor is permitted to consider the information on these lists when making “reasonable assurance” for purposes of determining eligibility for unemployment compensation determinations, but specifies such information shall not be conclusive evidence of reasonable assurance in any case.
- The Act further defines and sets forth the relevant factors for determining such “reasonable assurance”.

# Volunteer Firefighters Killed in the Line of Duty and Health Insurance

- As required under existing law for “first responders,” the Act requires a “non-state” public employer that provided “partnership plan” coverage to an unpaid volunteer firefighter who is killed in the line of duty to continue to provide the coverage to the survivors who were covered under the plan when the firefighter died. The coverage must continue for one year after the death and may be renewed annually for up to five years. The employer must facilitate the coverage continuation and renewal.
- A non-state public employer that did not provide coverage under a partnership plan to an unpaid volunteer firefighter killed in the line of duty must apply for partnership plan coverage for, and at the request of, the survivors who were covered under the firefighter’s health care plan when he or she died.
- The Act also requires such employers to apply for partnership plan coverage for these survivors whether or not the first responder or unpaid volunteer firefighter was an employee of the employer at the time of death. It requires the employer that the responder or firefighter provided services to at the time of death to apply for coverage.
- Covered employers cannot require survivors of these survivors to pay for coverage under a partnership plan. The employer must cover the entire amount but will be reimbursed from the Fallen Hero Fund for the total cost.

# Volunteer Firefighters Killed in the Line of Duty and Health Insurance (More)

- The Act requires the Comptroller, with approval from the Attorney General and the Insurance Commissioner, to allow the surviving spouse and dependent children of a state marshal, correction officer, investigator, or unpaid volunteer firefighter to participate in the state employees' health insurance plan. This provision currently exists for police officers and paid firefighters.
- For survivors of correction officers, investigators, or firefighters to qualify, the 1) deceased must have died as the result of injuries received while acting within the scope of his or her employment, and not as the result of illness or natural causes, *and* 2) surviving spouse and dependent children must not be otherwise eligible for a group health insurance plan.
- For any of the qualifying covered dependents, the coverage ends by the end of the calendar year when the dependent 1) becomes covered under a group health insurance plan through their own employment, or 2) turns age 26, whichever occurs first.

- Commencing October 1, 2026, the Act allows any municipality that does **not** participate in the Connecticut Municipal Employees Retirement System (CMERS) to create a **deferred retirement option plan (DROP)** for employees who are eligible for a service retirement to participate in it.
- A DROP is an arrangement under which an employee continues working even though they are eligible to retire and receive pension benefits, but instead of having the continued compensation and additional years of service counted toward the pension benefit, the employer deposits funds into a separate DROP account during each year of the continued employment, which earns interest or investment earnings, and is paid to the employee upon retirement (instead of the increased pension amount).
- The DROP must include a fixed period for member participation, up to five years, and a specified interest rate credit for member accounts. All of its other provisions must be determined by the municipality, as long as the actuary that consults on the municipality's retirement plan certifies that the DROP's structure has no anticipated impact that would increase municipal contribution rates to its "regular" retirement plan.
- The municipality, within four years after creating the DROP, shall 1) have the plan evaluated by the consulting actuary and 2) review and assess the evaluation to determine the plan's cost. The municipality may then discontinue the plan.

- The Act requires (effective October 1, 2026) that the Commissioner of Labor post information on the Department of Labor (“DOL”) website information about the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”), including information on the definition of a disability and how it relates to reasonable accommodations in the workplace.
- The Act further requires 1) the information be in form available for downloading by an employer to display in its place of business (in both English and Spanish), and 2) employers to provide written notice of an employee’s rights to reasonable accommodations to new employees, existing employees within 120 days of the effective date of this Act, and employees who notify the employer of their disability (within 10 days of such notice).
- An employer can comply with these requirements by displaying the poster created by the DOL in a conspicuous and accessible place.

-The Act aligns the state's breastfeeding statute with a recently enacted federal law.

-Effective October 1, 2026, an employer shall provide **reasonable break time** for an employee to express breast milk for such employee's nursing child, or to breastfeed on site at her workplace, each time such employee has the need to express breast milk or breastfeed in addition to the employee's scheduled breaks (and removes the current state statute's tie-in to that activity taking place during a meal or break period).

- The Act requires 1) the Connecticut State Community College System and the Connecticut State University System to waive tuition for police officers, firefighters, and EMS personnel, and 2) the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority to develop and administer a mortgage assistance program for such first responders. The Comptroller will develop a compliance certification form for employers to fill out with respect to these programs. The Police Officer Standards and Training Council (for police), the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control (for firefighters), and Commissioner of DPH (for EMS personnel) shall establish eligibility requirements for these programs.
- The Act establishes a task force to study recruitment and retention issues for public safety personnel. By January 1, 2027, the task shall submit its report with findings and recommendations to the General Assembly's Public Safety Committee.
- The Act requires the Chief Workforce Officer to develop a plan to establish a police officer and firefighter career pipeline program and by January 1, 2027, submit a report on the plan to the General Assembly's Public Safety and Labor and Public Employees Committees.

- Effective October 1, 2026, this Act requires employers on projects subject to the prevailing wage mandates to maintain daily attendance records of the workers on a covered project and submit them weekly to the contracting agency, DECD, or developer overseeing the project.
- Such records shall be deemed to be public records subject to disclosure under the FOIA; failure to file these records shall be a Class C misdemeanor, subjecting the employer to a fine of up to \$500, up to three months' imprisonment, or both.

- With respect to covered construction contracts entered into on or after January 1, 2027, this Act makes the contractors jointly and severally liable for any unpaid wages owed to a subcontractor's employees.
- The Act expressly permits such contractors to protect themselves with respect to their subcontractors via contract provisions addressing a remedy for liability caused by the subcontractor's nonpayment of wages (including having such liability paid from retainage under the contract).
- The Act also authorizes an employee or employee organization to bring a civil action against the contractor and subcontractor with respect to such nonpayment; the employee is generally required to provide notice at least 30 days prior to bringing the action to the contractor of the alleged violation by the subcontractor.
- The Act specifies which types of construction contracts are covered by these new provisions. Expressly **not** covered by these provision are 1) public works or other contracts by the state, another state, or the federal government or 2) home improvement contracts to build, renovate, or rehabilitate (a) an owner-occupied residence or property where it is located or (b) one- or two-family dwelling units or properties unless there are more than 15 of them at one project site.

***PUBLIC ACT 26-68:  
AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO THE STATE  
BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2027,  
MAKING DEFICIENCY APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE  
FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2026, AUTHORIZING  
AND ADJUSTING BONDS OF THE STATE AND  
CONCERNING PROVISIONS RELATING TO REVENUE,  
SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AND OTHER ITEMS TO  
IMPLEMENT THE STATE BUDGET***

# “The Budget Implementer”

- Originally dubbed Senate Bill 1 (“An Act Concerning Affordability”), this bill turned into a 745-page behemoth “budget implementer.”
- Some of the provisions are not really budget related.
- As of late last night, it had not yet been signed by the Governor (but it is expected to be signed).

- This Act modifies (effective October 1, 2026) the definition of "hours worked" for purposes of the state's wage and hour laws to include the time an employee spends in **security screenings** required by an employer.
- This Act further establishes a task force to study heat safety, including examining 1) best practices to prevent employees' exposure to the risk of heat illness and 2) other states' laws and regulations on heat safety standards.
- The task force required to submit its report with findings and recommendations to the General Assembly's Labor and Public Employees Committee by January 1, 2027

# BONUS: Supplemental and Temporary Educational Aid Grants

- The General Assembly appropriated \$162 million for “supplemental” education grants to towns for 2026-2027, above and beyond ECS grants, along with \$10.9 million in “temporary aid” for certain programs.
- All aid shall be expended for **educational purposes only** *and shall be expended upon the authorization of the local or regional board of education.*
- Supplemental and temporary aid shall **not** be considered part of the budgeted appropriation for education for the town for purposes of calculating the minimum budget requirement (MBR) for the 2027-2028 fiscal year.
- Please note: \$152 million will be added to the ECS line item/account for the 2027-2028 fiscal year.

# What About This New Aid and “Supplanting” Local Funding?

- Originally, the bill provided that the supplemental and temporary grants could **not** be used to supplant local funding for educational purposes.
- At the last minute, the General Assembly passed “**Senate Amendment A**” to “**An Act Concerning Various Criminal Law Proposals**” (HB 5563) that removed this “non-supplanting” language.
- So, what does all of this mean?

# Section 178 of the Implementer (Original Language in SB 1)

- If a municipality or regional board of education has adopted a budget or levied taxes for the 2026-2027 fiscal year prior to the adoption of the state budget for 2026-2027 and such municipality or regional board of education receives pursuant to the state budget an amount of state aid more than the amount projected in the municipality's or regional board of education's adopted budget, such 1) municipality, by vote of its legislative body or, in a municipality where the legislative body is a town meeting, by vote of the board of selectmen, or 2) regional board of education, may (a) amend its budget, and (b) not later than July 1, 2026, adjust the tax levy and the amount of any remaining installments of such taxes.
- The amendment to such budget shall be in an amount not exceeding the increase in state aid to the municipality or regional board of education.
- However, with respect to the amended budget ...

# However, A New Guardrail from “Senate Amendment A”

- Such **amended** budget shall **not** reduce the amount provided by the municipality to the local or regional board of education for education purposes below the greater of
  - 1) the amount of local funding provided for such purpose under the adopted budget, or
  - 2) (a) the minimum budget requirement for the town for the 2026-2027 fiscal year, plus (b) the amount of funds paid to the municipality or regional board of education pursuant to the supplemental and temporary educational grants.



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