



COST LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP

BETSY GARA, COST

Budget Issues - Education

The Connecticut General Assembly approved a \$28.1 billion state budget which increases municipal aid by \$283 million, including a \$162.2 million increase in Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding.

SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATION FUNDING – The bill provides that the additional funds are not considered part of the town’s budgeted appropriation for education for purposes of calculating the town’s Minimum Budget Requirement. Provisions requiring that such funds cannot be used to supplant local education funding were deleted in HB-5563.

EDUCATION FOUNDATION LEVEL – Although the budget does not increase the foundation level under the ECS grant in statute, funding effectively increased the foundation level from \$11,525 to \$13,087 per student to provide additional funding for all school districts.

TUITION BILLING – The budget restores \$12 million in funding to reduce tuition costs for school districts sending students to attend RESC-operated magnet schools. It also provides an additional \$8.7 million for charter schools, \$2.75 million for magnet schools operated by local school districts, and \$800,000 for AgriScience programs.

DISTRICT RELIEF & COMPENSATORY USE LEARNING AID (DRACULA) GRANT – Ensures that all municipalities receive at least a 4% total increase over their FY 2027 ECS grant amounts.

FREE SCHOOL BREAKFAST & EXPANDED FREE LUNCH- The budget provides funding to support universal free school breakfast for all students and free lunch for students that qualify for reduced lunch.



Non-Education Municipal Aid

SUPPLEMENTAL MUNICIPAL AID- \$100 million in one-time funding for all municipalities for FY27

- The grant is calculated using the existing Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan grant formula which allocates funds to municipalities based on the amount of non-taxable property, population, and municipal wealth.
- Intended to help stabilize local finances and reduce local property tax burdens.
- Can be used for non-education or education expenditures.
- **\$\$ FOR SELECT MUNICIPALITIES** - 1) \$3 million to Waterbury, \$800,000 to Manchester and \$500,000 to Vernon and 2) \$800,000 to Montville & Ledyard under the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan.



Non-Education Municipal Aid

Maintains certain increases in funding included in the enacted capital budget for FY 26 and FY 27, including:

- **Town Aid Road** – The enacted budget increases funding from \$60 million to \$80 million, providing a proportional 33% increase for every municipality’s grant. SB-1 includes language allowing TAR \$ to be used for street sweepers, mowers and other equipment.
- **Local Capital Improvement Program** – Maintains level funding of \$45 million per year.
- **Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP)** – Maintains \$40 million for the program to assist small towns in funding economic and community development projects in their communities.
- **Local Bridge Program** – Maintains increased funding of \$20 million per year for DOT’s Local Bridge Program to assist municipalities in upgrading local bridges and culverts.

The background of the slide features a close-up, angled view of a budget spreadsheet. The spreadsheet contains various numerical values, some in bold, and a bar chart with several blue bars of varying heights. The overall color scheme is light blue and white.

State Budget Provisions

LOCAL BUDGET AND TAX ADJUSTMENTS DUE TO INCREASED AID– SB-1 authorizes municipalities and regional boards of education to amend their adopted budgets and adjust tax levies if they receive more state aid than projected.

MICROTRANSIT PROGRAMS - \$10.5 million to sustain microtransit programs like XtraMile, which many residents rely on for daily needs.

FREE BUS PASSES FOR STUDENTS & VETERANS - \$3.5 million

MUNICIPAL SPENDING CAP - HOLD HARMLESS – For FY 27, SB-1 allows municipalities to exceed the statutory spending cap without having their municipal revenue sharing grant amount reduced as a result.



Environment – Solid Waste

HB-5524 - THE STATE'S MATERIALS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM – Would have expanded the number of entities required to source-separate organic materials from the solid waste stream and prohibited the use of polystyrene containers by restaurants, the provision of single-use food service items unless requested by a consumer, and the distribution of certain single-use straws. *Died in the House.*

PA 26-148 (SB-457) - THE STATE'S BOTTLE BILL - The bill:

1. Prohibits collecting or charging a refund value on beverage containers not purchased in Connecticut and makes violations a class A or B misdemeanor or class D felony depending on the volume of containers
2. Requires the reduced handling fees for certain redemption centers imposed under PA 26-2 to be discontinued starting on July 1, 2027, or when the redemption center uses specified scanning technology to redeem beverage containers at its facility, whichever comes first, rather than requiring that they be discontinued starting July 1, 2027, only for redemption centers that use the technology. *Signed by the Governor.*



Environment – Solid Waste

TIRE STEWARDSHIP - HB-5157 requires retailers to participate in the tire stewardship program by July 1, 2027. *Died in the Senate.*

PAINT EPR – PA 26-107 (SB-147) expands the existing architectural paint EPR program and plan to include aerosol coating products and requires producers of those products to either participate in an approved paint stewardship plan that includes aerosol coatings by that plan's implementation date or be banned from selling those products in Connecticut. *Signed by the Governor.*

SOLID WASTE REDUCTION GRANTS – PA 26-68 (SB-1) modifies a DEEP grant program for solid waste facility renovations and equipment to instead support solid waste reduction strategies. *Signed by the Governor.*

NORTHWEST RESOURCE RECOVERY AUTHORITY – SA 26-6 (SB-521) conveys a parcel of state land to the Northwest Resource Recovery Authority for purposes of operating a public transfer station for municipal solid waste and recycling materials. *Signed by the Governor.*

BIOMASS FACILITIES – SB-422 Redefines "class I renewable energy source" to exclude all biomass facilities. *Died in the Senate.*

RESOURCE RECOVERY FACILITIES - PA 26-25 (SB-317) requires DEEP to convene a working group to study the need for and viability and impact of suspending, for a period not to exceed five consecutive fiscal years, the fee described in section 22a-232 of the general statutes for one or more resource recovery facilities in the state. Such examination may consider other means to meet any such identified need, including, but not limited to, the availability of state grant, tax abatement or financing programs. *Signed by the Governor.*

Environment – Permitting

PA 26-124 (HB-5153) expands DEEP's authority to issue general permits instead of individual permits.

To issue a general permit, DEEP must:

- (1) determine that the activity both separately and cumulatively causes minimal environmental effects, and
- (2) specify the determination in the general permit's public notice.

The general permitting does not apply to (1) solid waste activity already covered by an individual permit, (2) resources recovery facilities, (3) biomedical waste facilities, (4) solid waste disposal areas, or (5) municipal solid waste composting facilities. By law, permits issued for solid waste activities must be consistent with the requirements of the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. *Signed by the Governor.*

HB-5154 - which would have provided for the automatic renewal of certain solid waste facility permits if DEEP fails to act within 90 days – died in the House.

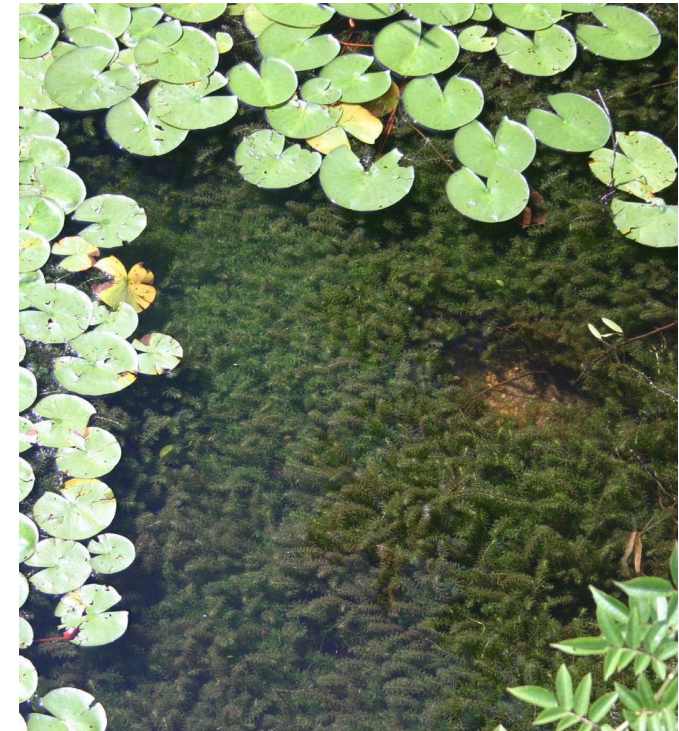


Environment – Water Quality

PA 26-65 (HB-5525) – HYDRILLA AND OTHER AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES - Outlines certain rapid response actions and associated timeframes to eradicate, contain, or control hydrilla or other aquatic invasive plant species.

It also requires the Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station's Office of Aquatic Invasive Species (OAIS), in consultation with DEEP, to develop a state rapid response plan for hydrilla. Under the bill, OAIS must set rapid response qualification criteria for (1) newly discovered aquatic invasive species and (2) hydrilla, including satellite populations, discovered within the last three years. OAIS must list qualifying species on the agency's website and notify DEEP when a new species is added. The bill also requires OAIS, in consultation with DEEP, to develop a publicly accessible statewide aquatic invasive species management plan.

PA 26-13 (HB-5514) – DISCLOSURE OF WELL TEST RESULTS - Allows health authorities to disclose private residential or semipublic well testing results to eligible parties without getting the DPH commissioner's approval and expands the allowable recipients to include certain nearby property owners.



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Environment

Open Space & Watershed Acquisition Program– PA 26-124 (HB-5153 includes provisions to improve the program by resolving administrative issues for conservation closings, allowing conservation language in deeds with DEEP easement protection, and helping projects close faster and more efficiently.

Riparian Areas – PA 26-61 (HB-5334) requires DEEP to use FY 27 funds to hire an employee to train inland wetland commissions on the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act, including preserving riparian areas.

SB-313 – WAKESURFING – Would have established a statewide regulation authorizing wakesurfing within 200 feet of the shore, except in Lake Waramaug. *Died in the Environment Committee but is expected to be considered in 2027.*

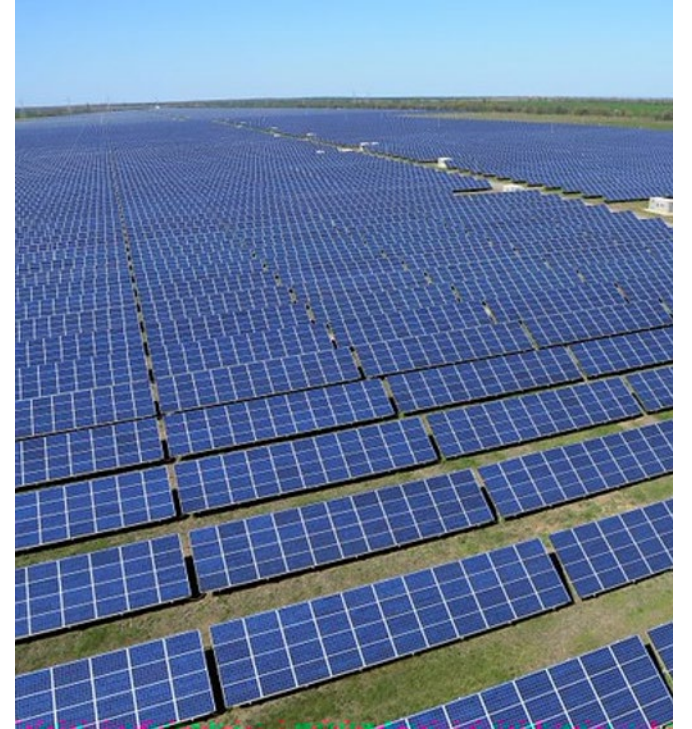


CT Siting Council Issues

PA 26-127 (HB-5340) includes provisions:

- 1) Prohibiting the CT Siting Council (CSC) until July 1, 2027, from approving solar facilities in certain municipalities that already have CSC-approved solar facilities on a certain proportion of their total land area;
- 2) Allowing the CSC to require applicants to provide emergency service training to local firefighters or other emergency services personnel;
- 3) Requiring the CSC to require applicants to designate an emergency contact person and post contact information at the facility;
- 4) Requiring DEEP to prepare a report recommending specific criteria for equitably distributing solar facility sites in the state including how the CSC can further minimize conflicts between solar development and other land use priorities, particularly in municipalities with greater concentrations of solar development and an assessment of the effectiveness of current laws aimed at protecting core forest and prime farmland resources in the solar facility siting process.

Signed by the Governor.



Solar Permitting

PA 26 -127 (HB-5340) requires the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to implement a smart solar permitting platform by July 1, 2028, to automatically review applications to build residential solar projects, alone or in combination with energy storage systems, and instantly release a building permit if the project complies with the state building code.

A smart solar permitting platform is (1) the web-based SolarAPP+ platform developed by the U.S. Department of Energy's National Laboratory of the Rockies or (2) a similar web-based platform the DAS commissioner selects.

The platform must review permit applications for residential solar PV systems that have a nameplate capacity of up to 25 kw and are installed on a single-family or multifamily home's roof.

Municipalities must allow applications to be submitted through the DAS platform or through an alternative automated solar permitting platform that equally satisfies the bill's requirements or report to DAS.

Municipalities that allow permits through the DAS platform must revise their permitting fees by January 1, 2029, to reflect any reduction in cost or resources to permit residential solar energy systems. Municipalities may coordinate with their regional councils of governments (COGs) to select and implement an alternative automated solar permitting platform, including issuing requests for proposals, invitations to bid, or other solicitations.





NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING

Following the adoption of the 2024 constitutional amendment, the General Assembly adopted PA 26-42 authorizing no-excuse absentee voting, allowing all eligible voters to cast absentee ballots, instead of just those with a valid reason.

The legislature also made various changes to the state's absentee balloting laws including (1) modifying the contents of absentee balloting sets, such as including a privacy sleeve; (2) establishing procedures for curing absentee ballots for voters that failed to sign theirs; (3) requiring the secretary of the state (SOTS) to adopt absentee ballot tracking software for voters to track their ballots; and (4) creating procedures for voters to automatically receive absentee ballot applications.

Signed by the Governor.

PROHIBITED ACTS NEAR ELECTION SITES

PA 26-42 and PA 26-76 generally prohibit law enforcement, and those that have authority over them, from knowingly being within 250 feet of election sites (such as early voting locations, polling places, or absentee ballot drop boxes), with several exceptions.

These exceptions include, among others, (1) when voting as allowed by state law; (2) if requested by the governor, SOTS, or moderator under specified circumstances; or (3) when authorized by a judicial warrant or order to conduct certain law enforcement activities (for example, arrests or detentions) and they notify SOTS and the attorney general at least 24 hours before.

The law also prohibits anyone from wearing a mask or other face covering within 250 feet of an election site, with certain exceptions. It also establishes criminal penalties for violations and disenfranchises individuals for certain violations.

Signed by the Governor.



Election Administration & Procedures

PA 26-1 makes several changes related to election administration, including:

- (1) Modifying early voting procedures, such as allowing early voting ballots to be counted and stored in tabulators;
- (2) Requiring certain entities to notify the Secretary of State's Office of election-related court actions (for example, claims involving the state's voting rights act); and
- (3) Limiting the voter registration information that is available under the state's Freedom of Information Act.

PA 26-42 explicitly allows the State Elections Enforcement Commission to investigate and resolve alleged violations of election regulations.

It also authorizes 17-year-olds who will be 18 by election day to use absentee voting and early voting for the upcoming election and adopts risk-limiting audits for state elections.



Housing/Planning & Development

Housing – What Passed

PA 26-7 (HB-5288) – UTILITY CONNECTIONS FOR ACCESSORY APARTMENTS – Public Act 21-29 required municipal zoning laws to approve Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) as of right unless the municipality opted out by January 1, 2023.

HB-5288 extends these ADU provisions to municipalities that exercise zoning authority under a special act.

Under existing law, municipalities cannot (1) consider an ADU to be a new residential use when calculating connection fees or capacity charges for utilities unless the ADU was built with a new single-family dwelling on the same lot or (2) require the installation of a new or separate utility connection directly to an ADU or impose a related connection fee or capacity charge.

The bill extends these provisions to cover investor-owned water companies.

It also replaces references to “accessory apartment” with “accessory dwelling unit” throughout the statutes.





Utility Charges

PA 26 -113 (SB-335) - AN ACT CONCERNING UTILITY CHARGES FOR RESIDENTIAL DWELLING UNITS - Prohibits residential rental agreements from requiring that tenants pay for utilities if there is no separate meter used to measure utilities delivered exclusively to their dwelling unit.

(Existing law also prohibits rental agreements from requiring that tenants pay a heat or utilities surcharge if these costs are otherwise included in the rental agreement.) *Status: Signed by the Governor.*



Public Act 25-1

Housing Reform Bill

PA 26-129 (HB-5521) makes changes to PA 25-1, the housing reform bill, by:

1) Clarifying that municipalities may adopt up to 2 traffic mitigation districts and require a minimum number of off-street motor vehicle parking spaces for a residential development that contains 16 or fewer units.

2) Sunsetting the Majority Leaders Roundtable effective June 30, 2026, which has been replaced by the Council on Housing Development.

Signed by the Governor.

PA 26-137 (SB-449) eliminates a municipal reporting requirement related to zoning regulations on family and group childcare homes. *Signed by the Governor.*



Reminder – Zoning Regulation Changes

Under PA 25-1, beginning July 1, 2026, zoning regulations must allow for transit-oriented middle housing with two to nine units on any lot zoned for commercial or mixed-use development by “summary review” and *may* allow for the same on residentially zoned lots.

Under the summary review process, a project can be approved if it complies with zoning regulations, similar to a single-family dwelling. If so, it does not require a public hearing, variance, special permit or exception, or any other discretionary zoning action, except for a determination that a site plan conforms with the applicable regulations.

The law provides that the project cannot substantially impact public health and safety.

Note, however, that the Act does not require the transit-oriented middle housing to be located in transit-oriented or transit-adjacent communities or districts.

Incentives, in the form of 8-30g points, are awarded under this provision.



Reminder – Minimum Parking Regulations

Many municipalities have zoning regulations with a schedule of off-street parking requirements that vary based on a proposed project's use (e.g., retail or housing) and size (e.g., square footage or number of bedrooms). Prior law generally specified that for dwellings, these requirements could not require more than one or two parking spaces per unit, depending on the number of bedrooms. But prior law also permitted a municipal opt-out of this limitation on parking space requirements.

General Rule for Developments With 16 or Fewer Units

Beginning July 1, 2026, PA 25-1, as amended by PA 26-129, prohibits the local zoning enforcement officer (ZEO) or planning, zoning, or combined planning and zoning commission from rejecting a proposed residential development with 16 or fewer units solely due to a failure to conform to a requirement for off-street parking unless the lack of parking will have a specific adverse impact on public health and safety that cannot be mitigated through approval conditions that have no substantial adverse impact on the project's viability.

Exception – The Act creates an exception to this prohibition for some projects in areas locally designated as conservation and traffic mitigation districts.



Reminder – Minimum Parking Regulations

Rule for Developments With at Least 17 Units

The act specifically allows municipalities to adopt parking requirements for residential developments with at least 17 units. However, these requirements are rebuttable by the proposed developer. Under the act, municipalities must allow developers to submit a parking needs assessment to the ZEO or commission with oversight. They must then condition the project's approval on the construction of the lesser of: 1. one space per dwelling of less than two bedrooms and two spaces per dwelling with at least two bedrooms or 2. the number of spaces recommended by the parking needs assessment.

Authority to Adopt Traffic Mitigation Districts

The act allows municipalities to adopt up to two conservation and traffic mitigation districts. In these districts, municipalities can impose minimum parking requirements on residential developments with up to 16 units, generally subject to the same requirements regarding parking needs assessments that apply to larger developments.

Big Labor Bill – Workers' Comp

Enhanced WC for Teachers and HC Workers- PA 26-12 provides that teachers and health care employees shall receive enhanced workers' compensation benefits if unable to work due to being assaulted at work.

Portal to Portal WC for Public Works Employees– PA 26-12 extends (effective October 1, 2026) “portal-to-portal” workers' compensation coverage to public works department employees under the following circumstances: 1) When subject to emergency calls while off duty by the terms of their employment, 2) When responding to a direct order to appear at their work assignment when nonessential employees are excused from working, or 3) If they have worked two or more mandatory overtime shifts on consecutive days.

Big Labor Bill

PARTNERSHIP PLAN COVERAGE FOR SURVIVORS OF VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS- Requires non-state public employers to provide partnership plan coverage to survivors of certain unpaid volunteer firefighters.

DEFERRED RETIREMENT OPTION PLAN FOR NON-CMERS MUNICIPALITIES - Allows municipalities that do not participate in CMERS to create a deferred retirement option plan for their employees.

PREVAILING WAGE - Requires employers on prevailing wage projects to keep daily attendance records of the workers on a covered project and submit them weekly to the agency overseeing the project; requires the labor commissioner, when determining the prevailing wages required on a public works project, to determine the portion that covers payments, contributions, and member benefits at the journeyman rate.

Big Labor Bill – First Responder Incentives

GRANT PROGRAM FOR JUNIOR FIREFIGHTER PROGRAMS - Creates a grant program for junior firefighter programs run by volunteer fire departments.

HEALTH INSURANCE FOR RETIRED POLICE AND FIREFIGHTERS - Requires the state comptroller to study health insurance coverage for retired police officers and firefighters in the state.

WORKING GROUP ON TAX INCENTIVES AND CREDITS FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS- Establishes a working group to review and make recommendations for tax incentives and credits for volunteer firefighters.

FIRST RESPONDER TUITION AND MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM- Requires CT State and CSCU to waive tuition for eligible police officers, firefighters, and EMS personnel (first responders); requires CHFA to develop and administer a mortgage assistance program for these first responders; requires POST, the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, and DPH to establish eligibility requirements for these programs.

PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TASK FORCE - Establishes a task force to study recruitment and retention issues for public safety personnel.

POLICE OFFICER AND FIREFIGHTER CAREER PIPELINE PROGRAM - Requires the chief workforce officer to develop a plan to establish a police officer and firefighter career pipeline program

Big Labor Bill

Wage Range & Postings— PA 26-12 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 a general description of the benefits, including health benefits, retirement benefits, paid days off and tax reportable benefits, and other compensation to be offered.

Breastfeeding in the Workplace— Effective October 1, 2026, employers must 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.

Teacher Terminations- Sets a standard of review for when a tenured public school teacher is terminated; changes who makes the final decision when a tenured teacher is under consideration for termination and requests a hearing; changes the court's review standards for appeals of tenured teacher termination decisions.

Reasonable Assurance of Returning to Work – Paraeducators - Requires school districts, before the end of regular school sessions, to notify DOL about which of their paraeducators have reasonable assurance of returning to work when school resumes.



Legal Notices Mandate Relief

HB-5289 – LEGAL NOTICES –
Would have allowed municipalities to post legal notices on their municipal websites or in a weekly newspaper rather than in a daily print newspaper.

Approved by the House, but the Senate recommitted the bill back to committee, effectively killing it for the session.

Need data on how much \$ towns are spending on legal notices!



Property Tax Issues

PA 26-68 (SB-1) – HOMESTEAD PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION – Amends the existing law to provide a **local option** property tax exemption of \$50,000 of the assessed value of owner-occupied single-family dwellings. *Signed by the Governor.*

PA 26-114 (SB-362) – MOTOR VEHICLE TAXES - Makes general changes to current municipal property tax assessments, including revaluation procedures and appeal timelines. The substitute language also specifies that motor vehicles that are 20 or more years old shall be assessed at the lesser of \$500 or 10% of MSRP (or \$500 or 15% of MSRP in municipalities that have opted for the alternative depreciation schedule). *Signed by the Governor.*

SB-363 - COMMERCIAL VACANCY ASSESSMENTS IN CERTAIN DISTRICTS. Allows municipalities to impose a commercial vacancy assessment on vacant commercial property located in districts designated by the municipality. *Died in the Senate.*

Property Tax Issues

PA 26-134 (HB-5442) – UNIFORM CAPACITY TAX - Corrects a flaw in legislation adopted in 2025 establishing a Uniform Capacity Tax (UCT) on certain solar photovoltaic (PV) systems. Public Act 25-173, which was intended to provide greater certainty to both municipalities and solar developers regarding tax obligations, inadvertently exempted all solar personal property from the property tax beginning with the 2025 grand list. *Signed by the Governor.*

PA 26-68 (SB-1) – TAX ABATEMENT FOR DOMESTIC PARTNERS – Authorizes towns to extend a property tax abatement for surviving spouses of certain first responders who die in the performance of duty to the domestic partners of such first responders. *Signed by the Governor.*

PA 490 PROGRAM – PA 26-137 (SB-449) requires the OPM to collaborate with state agencies to identify state property that qualifies as PA 490 land and have local assessors classify and value it that way for purposes of making the grand list. *Signed by the Governor.*



Public Safety – Civil Rights Violations

PA 26 -14 (SB-397) - Creates a cause of action against an individual, including a federal, state, or local officer or employee, for alleged civil rights violations. Intended to enact a state version of United States Code 1983.

Prohibits peace officers engaged in law enforcement activities from wearing a facial covering or personal disguise when interacting with the public and performing their duties unless doing so is for health or safety or other specified reasons.

Peace officers include state, local, and federal law enforcement officers, state marshals, constables, conservation officers, parole officers, etc.

Generally, requires peace officers to be clearly identified by their badge and name tag when making a planned, authorized arrest, or interacting with the public in an official capacity.

Signed by the Governor.



Public Safety - Federal Agents

PA 26-14 prohibits peace officers without a judicial warrant from detaining, arresting, or taking someone into custody based on a civil offense in a state or municipal facility or a “protected area” like a school, hospital, or house of worship. It also:

- Changes when the state’s inspector general must investigate a peace officer’s use of physical force on someone that results in the person’s death or the death of a person in custody.
- Subject to several exceptions, makes federal law enforcement agencies liable when their officers interfere with someone taking a photo or video of them or another officer performing their duties.
- Extends to all peace officers the existing prohibition on hiring police officers who (a) were dismissed for malfeasance or serious misconduct or (b) resigned or retired during an investigation for this conduct.

Although the bill was signed into law, the U.S. DOJ is challenging the law in federal court, claiming it violates the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution and endangers federal officers.

Public Safety

Automated License Plate Readers– PA 26-14 (SB-397) sets various conditions and restrictions on how law enforcement agencies and other public agencies may use ALPR systems or associated data, including limits on (1) when they can use these systems or data or share the data and (2) how long they can keep the data. *Signed by the Governor.*

Increased Fines for Violating Certain Motor Vehicle Equipment Requirements – PA 26-63 (HB-5464) increases the fine, from \$150 per offense to \$300 per offense, for violating certain requirements under existing law related to motor vehicle mechanical equipment, primarily involving mufflers and exhaust pipes. *Signed by the Governor.*

Cannabis – PA 26-8 (HB-5350) makes various unrelated changes to laws on cannabis, hemp, and THC-infused beverages, including broadening the circumstances under which a municipality may prohibit a business from operating because it poses an “immediate threat to public health and safety”; allows law enforcement officers to summarily close a business and seal the premises upon court order. *Signed by the Governor.*



Public Safety - Fire Protection

PA 26 -144 (HB-5460) expands existing, and creates new, fire protection programs and requirements:

- 1) By July 1, 2027, requires entities responsible for fire protection services within one or more geographic areas of a municipality to register with that municipality, which must register this information with the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS);
- 2) Requires municipalities to establish local fire protection plans beginning July 1, 2027, and review these plans every five years starting on July 1, 2032;
- 3) Requires the state fire administrator to review and rate these plans at least once every five years after the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control develops review standards;
- 4) Requires the commission to recommend minimum standards for firefighter safety and emergency response protocols;

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Public Safety - Fire Protection



- 5) Allows the commission to (a) require municipalities submit local fire protection plans and related revisions to the state fire administrator, (b) establish, in coordination with the state fire administrator, a standard protocol for reviewing these plans, (c) require fire protection entities to submit operational data, and (d) specify the form and manner of these submission;
- 6) Generally, requires all municipalities to exercise their authority to provide fire protection if fire protection services in a municipality are discontinued or disrupted;
- 7) Establishes a Connecticut Fire program to be overseen by the state fire administrator to create a framework for the state to assist municipalities and fire authorities;
- 8) Establishes a Connecticut Fire grant program to incentivize regionalized services and resource sharing;
- 9) Establishes a working group to develop the Connecticut Fire program.

Firefighter Cancer Relief Fund

PA 26 -68 (SB-1) includes provisions requiring certain telephone and telecommunication companies to report and remit the monthly five cent firefighters cancer relief account fee when they file a sales and use tax return; requires the DRS commissioner to deposit fees into the firefighters' cancer relief account. *Signed by the Governor.*

PA 26 -144 (HB-5460) requires the comptroller, in coordination with DESPP, to study the feasibility of centralizing within one state agency access to all public benefits for firefighters, including claims for the firefighters' cancer relief account, the Fallen Hero Fund, and injury disability, and workers' compensation claims. This access must at least include the state agency (1) making eligibility determinations, (2) receiving applications, and (3) disseminating information about those benefits. By July 1, 2027, the comptroller must report the study results to the Public Safety and Security Committee. *Signed by the Governor.*

PA 26 -83 (SB-349) makes changes to the state treasurer's reporting requirements on programs that provide benefits to firefighters with cancer. *Signed by the Governor.*

Transportation

Zero-Emission School Buses – PA 26-63 (HB-5464) lowers the zero-emission school bus requirement from 100 % to 90 % by 2040. It also eliminates a requirement for Environmental Justice Communities to procure full zero-emission fleets by 2030 and instead requires school districts within Distressed Municipalities to have 50 % of their fleets be zero-emission by 2035. The bill also allows DOT to begin purchasing diesel transit buses although DOT is still required to have at least 30 % zero-emission buses beginning in 2030.

Dynamic Part-Time Lanes (Flex Lanes) - Authorizes the state to temporarily designate any highway lane or shoulder as a “flex lane” for certain uses and sets restrictions on motor vehicle operation in a designated flex lane; allows (1) DOT to establish a program to enforce these restrictions with automated flex lane control systems and (2) municipalities meeting certain requirements to participate in this program. It also sets various requirements and procedures for control system operation, violation enforcement, and data collection and retention.

DOT Encampment Removals - Establishes a notice requirement applicable to DOT’s (or their agents’ or contractors’) removal of certain encampments located on a state highway right-of-way; requires the DOT and DMHAS commissioners to study and make recommendations on best practices and standards related to these encampments. *Signed by the Governor.*



Ambulance Services

PA 26-88 (SB-429) increases Medicaid reimbursement for ambulance services by adjusting the out-of-district mileage calculation for such services.

Will help address growing concerns regarding costs associated with providing emergency medical services (EMS) in communities throughout Connecticut.

Signed by the Governor.



Municipal Camp Safety

Public Act 26-25 specifies that the existing mandated reporter requirement for youth camp staff applies to camps operated by a municipal agency. By law, people in many designated occupations or professions who have contact with children are mandated reporters with a legal duty to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.

Current law designates all paid youth camp staff (including a director or assistant director) age 21 or older as mandated reporters, but it does not specify if this applies to both licensed and license-exempt municipal camps. The bill expressly states that it does. *Effective October 1, 2026.*

The bill also requires the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), in consultation with three state-wide organizations, to develop a report with details about each municipal youth camp in the state and submit it to the Committee on Children by January 1, 2027.



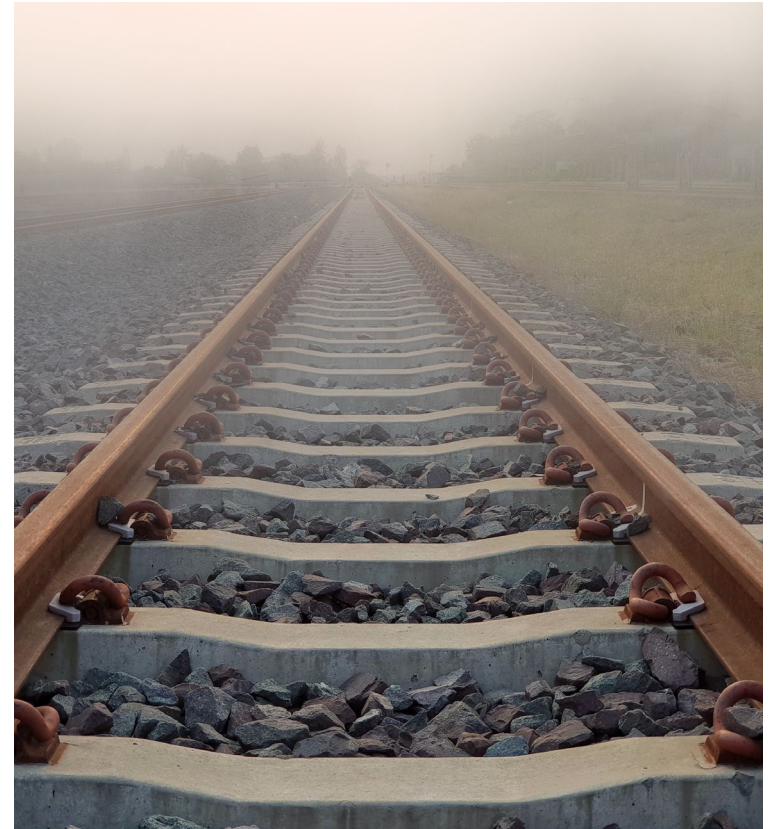
Transportation

FREE & REDUCED BUS PASSES – PA 26-21 (SB-9) establishes programs for free and reduced bus passes for students and veterans.

SHORE LINE EAST – PA 26-21 requires DOT to (a) make available \$4 million of its FY 27 rail operations appropriation from the Special Transportation Fund (STF) the Shore Line East rail line in FY 27 and (b) spend \$3 million of this funding in FY 27 to increase service on this line.

MICROTRANSIT SERVICES – PA 26-21 extends, from two to three years, the length of DOT's microtransit pilot program (for multi-passenger vehicles that use a digital network or software to offer fixed or dynamic routes) and delaying the date by which DOT must report on the program to 2028.

Signed by the Governor.





Questions? Please contact COST at 860-841-7350.