
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 5523

Emergency Certification

AN ACT CONCERNING ALLOCATIONS OF FEDERAL AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDS AND PROVISIONS RELATED TO GENERAL GOVERNMENT, HUMAN SERVICES, EDUCATION AND THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2025.

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[§§ 25-30 — ASSETS OF STATE HUMANE INSTITUTION RESIDENTS](#)

Prohibits DAS from recovering from a deceased person's estate charges for care in a state humane institution except under certain circumstances; requires DAS to release any liens filed for recovery of such charges.

§§ 31-33 — COST OF INCARCERATION

Regarding the state's claim for an individual's incarceration costs, generally (1) terminates claims associated with crimes on his or her erased criminal record and prohibits the reimbursement of claims paid before July 1, 2024; (2) exempts up to \$50,000 from the lien the state may place on an inmate's inheritance; and (3) specifies that any property the probate court deems an asset must be used to pay the state's claim against the estate of certain inmates

§ 34 — DESPP MISSING PERSONS CLEARINGHOUSE

Limits the requirement that the DESPP missing persons information clearinghouse include information on missing people with IDD to those who are adults

§ 35 — HOSPITAL PILOT FOR ASD SERVICES

Narrows the type of hospital DSS must select for a two-year pilot program on ASD to one in Hartford County with an established program

§ 36 — HUMAN SERVICES CAREER PIPELINE

Removes the July 1, 2024, deadline to establish the career pipeline program and requires CWO to report on its plan for the program by that date; requires CWO to establish the pipeline program within available appropriations

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§§ 40-43 — PASSPORT TO THE PARKS

Increases the Passport to the Parks motor vehicle registration fee; provides funding for Batterson Park and Thames River Heritage Park; requires DEEP to enter into memorandums of agreement for the (1) operation and funding of Batterson Park and (2) funding of Thames River Heritage Park

§ 44 — UCONN HEALTH CENTER EMPLOYEE FRINGE BENEFITS

Requires the comptroller to use up to \$4.5 million of funds appropriated for State Comptroller-Fringe Benefits to fund a portion of the fringe benefits for UCHC employees

§§ 45 & 46 — EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS ON INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE TOWARDS PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM PEOPLE

Requires DPH to develop educational materials on intimate partner violence toward pregnant and postpartum people; requires DPH to distribute the educational materials to certain health care providers and facilities to give to patients; transfers, from the Maternal Mortality Review Committee to DPH, responsibility for developing educational materials on certain other topics

§§ 47 & 48 — XL CENTER

Specifies that the XL Center includes the adjoining garage, for purposes of CRDA's agreements with contractors to manage and operate and reconstruct and renovate the center; exempts from the sales and use tax any purchase or lease needed to operate the center while CRDA or the contractor owns, leases, or operates it; increases the maximum amount that the state, CRDA, or both must contribute to the center's renovation

§ 49 — NEEDS ASSESSMENT ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Contains identical provisions as in § 18; see above for analysis

§ 50 — ROBERTA B. WILLIS SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING

Makes several changes to a 2023-enacted allocation of Roberta B. Willis scholarship program funds, including that all ARPA funds allocated for the program be disbursed, rather than used, by December 31, 2024, and requires OHE to reserve up to \$15 million from the program's FY 25 appropriation for disbursement during FY 26

§ 51 — CONNECTICUT PORT AUTHORITY REPORT

Requires CPA, by January 1, 2025, to begin quarterly reporting to the Transportation and Appropriations committees on a staffing plan to handle its needs and its efforts for certain activities and programs

§ 52 — THE TRANSFORMING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Expands the Transforming Children's Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee's membership by adding two representatives from the federally recognized Indian Tribes in the state; extends, by two years, the committee's reporting deadlines

§ 53 — 2024-25 ACADEMIC YEAR CHANGES TO THE ROBERTA B. WILLIS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Prohibits the OHE from requiring that Roberta B. Willis scholarship program need-based grants be reduced based on a student's initial qualifications as determined from his or her FAFSA and pauses the requirement that the program's need and merit-based grants be awarded in a higher amount than its need-based grants

§§ 54 & 55 — CONNECTICUT HYDROGEN AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE PURCHASE PROGRAM (CHEAPR)

Modifies the CHEAPR rebate amount for residents of environmental justice communities from up to 100% more than the standard rebate to at least 200% more than the standard rebate; requires certain proceeds from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to be used for the CHEAPR program (rather than the CHEAPR account) and other programs that support DEEP's engagement with environmental justice communities

§ 56 — DISTRESSED MUNICIPALITY DESIGNATION

Extends, from five years to 10, the time period for which certain municipalities are deemed to be distressed municipalities after being removed from the annual list published by DECD

§§ 57-59 — CIGARETTE DEALER LICENSES AND RENEWALS

Requires cigarette dealer's license applicants to post certain notices at their businesses and provides a remonstrance process; allows municipalities to adopt ordinances to require these dealers to notify the chief law enforcement official of license renewals and allows the

official to comment; requires DRS to consider these comments and report certain statistics on these notifications to the legislature

§ 60 — UNION AVENUE DETENTION CENTER

Starting in 2026, requires that the Union Avenue detention center in New Haven be under the jurisdiction of an OPM-determined state agency rather than that of the local police

§§ 61-63 — MEDICAID COVERAGE FOR SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH SERVICES

Requires DSS to amend the Medicaid state plan to expand coverage for health care services provided to eligible students (1) by or on behalf of an LEA and (2) in school nurse's offices; establishes an interagency coalition to coordinate and make recommendations to maximize federal funding for Medicaid-eligible health care services in public schools

§ 64 — PHASING OUT MED CONNECT INCOME AND ASSET LIMITS

Phases out income and asset eligibility limits in the Med Connect program and eliminates them by July 1, 2029

§§ 65 & 68 — BUREAU OF SERVICES FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF, DEAFBLIND OR HARD OF HEARING

Establishes the bureau within ADS and requires the department to hire a bureau director; requires state agencies to appoint an employee to serve as a point of contact for concerns related to people who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing

§§ 66, 67, 69 & 71 — ADVISORY BOARD FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF, DEAFBLIND OR HARD OF HEARING

Renames the board, changes its membership, and expands its duties and reporting requirements

§§ 70 & 72 — ADS SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAFBLIND

Expands ADS responsibilities to include providing services for people who are deafblind, generally conforming to current practice

§ 73 — METHADONE MAINTENANCE RATE INCREASE

Requires DSS to increase Medicaid rates, within available appropriations, for chemical maintenance providers who currently receive the lowest weekly reimbursement rate

§ 74 — MEDICAID AMBULANCE RATES

Requires DSS to increase FY 25 ambulance rates within available appropriations, including increasing the mileage rate for ambulance transportation covered under Medicaid by \$1.18 and providing mileage reimbursement for in-town trips

§ 75 — PACT PROGRAM

Expands the PACT Program's eligibility to include transition program students; increases the program's minimum award amounts; names the awards the "Mary Ann Handley Grant"; requires BOR's upcoming semesterly reports on certain program metrics by November 1, 2024, and March 1, 2025

§ 76 — DEADLINE EXTENSION TO SUBMIT RECOMMENDATIONS ON CREATING A NEW SOLID WASTE-RELATED ENTITY

Extends, until July 1, 2025, the deadline for OPM to give the Environment and Energy and Technology committees recommendations on the feasibility and advisability of creating a new solid waste-related quasi-public state agency, waste authority, or other entity

§ 77 — SMALL TOWN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (STEAP)

Increases, from \$500,000 to \$1 million, the maximum STEAP grant amount municipalities can receive per fiscal year

§ 78 — VACATION AND PERSONAL DAYS DURING WORKING TEST PERIODS

Gives full-time permanent state employees paid vacation days and personal days during their initial working test periods

§ 79 — STATE AGENCY DEPUTY DUAL EMPLOYMENT

Eliminates a provision that prohibits certain state agency deputies from having other employment

§§ 80 & 81 — JUDICIAL RETIREMENT SYSTEM AMORTIZATION

Changes the method for determining the state's contribution for JRS unfunded liability from a 40-year amortization to a 15-year layered amortization, which effectively extends the contributions for an additional seven years; requires the state retirement commission to revise the JRS actuarial valuation using the new amortization method

§§ 82-85 — CONNECTICUT MUNICIPAL REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Requires MRDA to provide members, by request, assistance on developing project criteria and regulations to increase housing production; authorizes it to establish criteria to evaluate its projects' potential impacts; and eliminates a requirement that members appoint a local development board

§ 86 — INVESTMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL "GIFTS"

Allows the IAC's public members to receive travel expenses, lodging, food, beverages, and other benefits customarily provided in the course of employment

§ 87 — REPEAL OF STUDENT LOAN REIMBURSEMENT AND RELATED PROGRAMS

Repeals several student loan reimbursement, scholarship, and related programs

§ 88 — REPEAL OF MULTILINGUAL LEARNER EDUCATOR INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Repeals the Multilingual Learner Educator Incentive Program

§ 89 — CONNECTICUT PORT AUTHORITY QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT REVIEW

Eliminates the requirement that DAS and OPM review and comment on the Port Authority's quarterly report before it is submitted to the Transportation Committee

§§ 90, 91 & 137-242 — HEALTH STRATEGY AND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSIONERS

Renames the title of OHS's and OHE's executive heads as "commissioners" rather than "executive directors"

§ 92 — TOBACCO AND HEALTH TRUST FUND TRANSFER

Suspends the annual \$12 million disbursement from the Tobacco Settlement Fund to the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund for FY 25 and redirects it to the General Fund

§§ 93 & 94 — DSS PHARMACY APPROVALS

Increases, from two to 24 hours, how much time DSS has to grant or deny pharmacy requests for prior authorization or dispensing name brand drug products before they are deemed approved

§§ 95-97 — BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH TRUST FUND

Eliminates the Biomedical Research Trust Fund and requires the state comptroller to transfer its remaining balance to the General Fund

§ 98 — EMS REGIONAL COORDINATOR POSITIONS TO CLASSIFIED SERVICE

Requires DAS to transition EMS regional coordinators and assistant regional coordinators to classified service

§ 99 — INFORMATION REQUESTS TO ORIGINATING AGENCIES

Requires requests for certain information to be directed to the state agency where the information originated

§ 100 — AGREEMENTS OR SOLICITATIONS TO LOCATE UNCLAIMED PROPERTY

Expands requirements and processes regarding agreements and solicitations to locate unclaimed property

§§ 101-104 — COPAYMENT-ONLY HEALTH PLANS

Exempts copayment-only health plans from the insurance law's copayment limitations for certain in-network imaging services and physical and occupational therapy services

§ 105 — PRESUMPTIVE MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY FOR HOMECARE

Eliminates Section 10 of sHB 5001, as amended by House Amendment "A" and replaces it with generally similar provisions; requires the DSS commissioner to establish a presumptive Medicaid eligibility system for people applying to the Medicaid-funded portion of CHCPE; and requires the state to pay for up to 90 days of home care applicants determined to be presumptively Medicaid eligible

§ 106 — MEN'S HEALTH PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

Requires the DPH commissioner to create a campaign promoting community-based screening and education for common diseases affecting high-risk male populations

§ 107 — HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY BOARD

Establishes the Higher Education Financial Sustainability Advisory Board, designates its members, assigns the board powers and duties, and requires public higher education institutions and the UConn Health Center to submit certain information to the board at the chairpersons' request

§ 108 — EDUCATION MANDATE REVIEW ADVISORY COUNCIL

Modifies criteria for two of the council's 10 appointees

§ 109 — POPULATION CENSUS USED FOR MUNICIPAL GRANTS

For FY 25, requires OPM to use DPH's 2021 population estimates to calculate municipal grants

§ 110 — BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION EXPANSION

Expands BOR to include the OPM secretary as an ex-officio, nonvoting member

§ 111 — TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS DURING CODIFICATION

Requires the Legislative Commissioners' Office to make necessary technical, grammatical, and punctuation changes when codifying the bill

§§ 112-121 — REVISIONS TO MAGNET SCHOOL AND VO-AG CENTER FUNDING PROGRAMS; CREATION OF NEW CHOICE PROGRAM GRANT

Makes significant changes to education funding grant programs for (1) interdistrict magnet schools, and (2) regional agricultural science and technology centers (i.e., "vo-ag centers"); eliminates, for FY 25, the existing magnet school and vo-ag center grants, and replaces them with new grants under the choice program

§ 121 — SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING AMOUNTS FOR ECS, CHARTER SCHOOL, MAGNET SCHOOL, OPEN CHOICE, AND VO-AG CENTER GRANTS

Requires SDE to apportion the \$150 million appropriated for FY 25 for "Education Finance Reform" in specific amounts for (1) supplemental funds for the following grants: ECS, charter schools, interdistrict magnet schools, Open Choice Program, and agriscience and technology centers, and (2) grants for specific projects, programs, towns, and agencies

§ 122 — PLAN TO CONVERT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION INTO AN ADVISORY BOARD

Requires the education commissioner to develop a plan to convert SBE into an advisory board and make the education commissioner the department head

§ 123 — ASSET AND CAPACITY MAPPING FOR NONPROFITS

Requires UConn's School of Public Policy to conduct a study and comprehensive asset and capacity mapping for nonprofit organizations to support information-sharing and collaboration between nonprofits and communities; requires the school to provide an interim report and a final report to the Education Committee

§ 124 — EXPANDS ECS REGIONAL BONUS TO INCLUDE TRIBES

Creates an ECS bonus for towns with students who reside in tribal reservations

§ 125 — SDE DISTRIBUTION OF PARAEDUCATOR FUNDING

Sets a September 1, 2024, deadline for SDE to distribute to school boards the FY 23 amount allocated to the department from ARPA funding for paraeducator professional development

§§ 126 & 128 — PARAEDUCATOR HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAMS

Extends by one year an HSA subsidy program for paraeducators and expands it to cover high deductible health plans for Medicare-eligible paraeducators; requires the comptroller to establish a one-year premium subsidy program for school boards that provide paraeducators with certain health plans; requires the comptroller and SDE commissioner

to enter into an MOU related to these programs; and repeals a program providing stipends to paraeducators to purchase a qualified health plan through Access Health CT

§ 127 — SERC FUNDING ALLOCATION

Requires, rather than allows, the SDE commissioner to allocate funds to the State Education Resource Center

§§ 129-132 — PUBLIC HEARING EXEMPTION FOR CERTAIN ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORIZATIONS

For certain transportation capital projects, establishes an exemption from the requirement to have a public hearing when there is a petition signed by 25 people on an application for a (1) structures, dredging, and fill permit; (2) tidal or inland wetland activity permit; or (3) certification to conduct certain work in a floodplain

§§ 133-136 — STATE EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE FOR BOARDS OF DIRECTORS OF CERTAIN QUASI-PUBLIC AGENCIES

Allows members of the boards of directors of SERC, CLC, CPA, and CAA to join the state employee health insurance plan if they meet certain criteria and requirements

§§ 243-249 — DEFICIENCY APPROPRIATIONS

Please refer to the fiscal note for a summary of these sections

§§ 1-16 & 19-21 — ARPA ALLOCATION ADJUSTMENTS AND BUDGET PROVISIONS

Adjusts ARPA allocations and makes various other budget-related changes; please refer to the fiscal note for a summary of these sections

§ 17 — DOC VOCATIONAL VILLAGE PROGRAM

Requires the DOC commissioner to prepare and equip the department and its post-secondary education partners to use allocated funding under the vocational village program for programs that produce economic and other benefits, including inmate employment opportunities

By law, the Department of Correction (DOC), in consultation with the Department of Economic and Community Development, administers a vocational village program to provide skilled trades training to inmates, including opportunities to earn nationally recognized industry certifications and credentials. The Office of Policy and Management (OPM) must allocate funds to DOC for the program from the federal funds the state has received from certain laws, including the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

The bill requires the DOC commissioner to prepare and equip the department and its post-secondary education partners to use this allocated funding for programs that produce economic and other

benefits, including employment opportunities for inmates.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 18 — NEEDS ASSESSMENT ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Requires OPM's Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division, in consultation with DOC, to do a needs assessment of the facilities, materials, and staffing required to deliver postsecondary education programs in correctional facilities

The bill requires OPM's Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division, in consultation with the Department of Correction (DOC), to do a needs assessment of the facilities, materials, and staffing required to deliver postsecondary education programs in correctional facilities. The assessment must include at least the following:

1. feedback solicitation from higher education institutions that provide postsecondary education programs in correctional facilities to understand current needs;
2. an analysis of DOC's policies on incarcerated individuals' postsecondary education;
3. an estimate of the level of unmet demand for this type of education;
4. an inventory of (a) correctional facilities (including classrooms, multi-purpose rooms, libraries, and study rooms), (b) staffing, and (c) materials currently available for education delivery (including education technology and internet access);
5. recommendations for and a cost analysis of improving facilities, staffing, and materials to meet the unmet demand;
6. a survey of (a) students of postsecondary education programs in correctional facilities; (b) former students of these programs, in consultation with regional reentry programs; and (c) any person or group the division deems necessary; and
7. a listing of any other barriers to the effective delivery of these education programs.

The bill requires the OPM secretary to report on the needs assessment to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee by January 1, 2025.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 22 — STUDENT LOAN REIMBURSEMENT PILOT PROGRAM

Modifies eligibility requirements for the OHE Student Loan Reimbursement Pilot Program, including (1) expanding the program to students who have attended and graduated with an associate degree, (2) requiring the OHE executive director to establish hardship waiver qualifications and forms, and (3) requires specific documentation from participants as part of their annual reporting requirements

PA 23-204, § 174, requires the Office of Higher Education (OHE) executive director, by January 1, 2025, to establish a student loan reimbursement pilot program to annually reimburse eligible people for up to \$5,000 of their student loan payments, within available appropriations, for up to four years per participant. This bill expands the program and adjusts its eligibility requirements.

Program Expansion

Under current law, OHE may allow anyone to participate in the program who has a student loan and who, among other things, attended and graduated with a bachelor's degree from an in-state college (public or private). The bill expands the program to those who have attended and graduated with an associate degree.

Eligibility Requirements

The bill requires each program participant to annually submit to OHE, in a manner the executive director prescribes, a statement from a student loan servicer that includes the amounts for the outstanding loan balance for each student loan and the total of the year-to-date payments made on each student loan, rather than student loan payment receipts as required under current law.

The law also requires participants to (1) be state residents as defined under state law and (2) have been so for at least five years. The bill specifies the OHE executive director determines if applicants meet this residency requirement.

Hardship Waiver

The bill no longer requires OHE to require a student to leave a college or university in good academic standing before graduation to be eligible to participate in the program. It instead allows the OHE executive director to grant a hardship waiver as part of the program eligibility requirements.

The bill requires the OHE executive director, by January 1, 2025, to post on the office's website (1) hardship waiver qualifications and (2) required application forms for the student loan reimbursement program and hardship waiver. The application must include an option for a person to disclose their demographic information.

Volunteer Requirement

Existing law requires program participant to volunteer at a nonprofit for at least 50 unpaid hours. The bill requires the nonprofit to be registered with the Department of Consumer Protection or a municipal government.

Under the bill, a program participant must annually submit to OHE, in a manner the executive director prescribes, a notarized form documenting the number of volunteer hours the program participant completed that is signed by the participant's supervisor or other nonprofit or municipal employee for which the participant volunteered.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§§ 23 & 24 — SEWERAGE GRANT PROGRAM FOR HARTFORD RESIDENTS

Primarily (1) caps at \$50,000 the grant amount each applicant may receive under the fund for repairs to real property and personal property used for business purposes; (2) generally, beginning May 1, 2025, limits eligibility for assistance to those who requested an assessment from the MDC's sewer back-up prevention program by April 30, 2025; and (3) establishes procedures for judge trial referees, rather than the comptroller, to hear appeals of the Hartford Sewerage System Repair and Improvement Fund administrator's decisions about an applicant's eligibility or grant amount

By law, the Hartford Sewerage System Repair and Improvement Fund must be used for specified purposes, including a program to provide grants to eligible Hartford residents and property owners to

compensate them for damage caused by flooding since 2021 (see *Background – Hartford Sewerage System Repair and Improvement Fund Program*).

As described below, the bill does the following:

1. caps grant amounts for damages to certain types of property;
2. generally limits grant eligibility to individuals who requested a sewer back up assessment by a specified date;
3. designates judge trial referees, rather than the comptroller, as the hearing authority for applicants' appeals of decisions about their eligibility or grant amounts; and
4. modifies who may conduct assessments of applicants' damages.

The bill additionally authorizes the administrator to make grant payments directly to a contractor or vendor an applicant hired to make repairs and also makes minor and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

Grant Amount Cap

The bill caps at \$50,000 the grant amount each applicant may receive for costs incurred for repairs to real property and damage to personal property that was used for business purposes when the damage occurred.

Eligibility Requirement

Beginning May 1, 2025, to be eligible for financial assistance for real property repairs under the bill, new applicants generally must have requested an assessment from the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) sewer backup prevention program by April 30, 2025. (This program provides free technical assistance, on-site plumbing surveys, and other assistance to help customers avoid sewer backups into their homes.)

Under the bill, an applicant who did not request this sewer backup

assessment may still be eligible for assistance if the grant program administrator determines, in accordance with criteria the comptroller approves, that the applicant was prevented from doing so due to extenuating circumstances. Otherwise, the administrator must, in consultation with MDC, verify that applicants requested an assessment by the specified date.

Appeals

By law, a grant program applicant may appeal the administrator's decision on the applicant's program eligibility or the grant amount awarded to him or her. Under current law, the applicant may appeal to the comptroller, who may hire an administrator to conduct these appeals. Under the bill, these appeals must instead be heard by a judge trial referee the chief court administrator assigns.

The bill specifies that the applicant has the burden of showing that he or she is eligible for the grant program and payment for real property repairs or damaged personal property. The judge trial referee may consider evidence (e.g., testimony and reports) presented by the applicant, program administrator, or other interested party.

If the applicant shows his or her eligibility, by a preponderance of the evidence, the judge trial referee must award the applicant the grant amount he or she is owed under the law. The judge trial referee must issue a decision within 60 days after the hearing ends, and as under current law, the decision is final.

Inspectors

Under existing law, inspectors must evaluate damage to each eligible applicant's property and provide a report on it to the administrator. The bill specifies that these inspectors must be licensed home inspectors or insurance adjusters. It allows the comptroller to contract with these inspectors (rather than allowing inspectors employed by MDC to serve this function).

Background — Hartford Sewerage System Repair and Improvement Fund Program

By law, the Hartford Sewerage System Repair and Improvement Fund program must provide grants to (1) give financial assistance to eligible owners of real property in Hartford to pay for necessary repairs from flood damage caused on or after January 1, 2021, and (2) reimburse residents for costs associated with damage to personal property due to flooding occurring on or after that date.

§§ 25-30 — ASSETS OF STATE HUMANE INSTITUTION RESIDENTS

Prohibits DAS from recovering from a deceased person's estate charges for care in a state humane institution except under certain circumstances; requires DAS to release any liens filed for recovery of such charges.

Beginning July 1, 2024, this bill prohibits the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) commissioner from recovering from a deceased person's estate charges for the aid, care, or treatment the person received in a state humane institution except in the following circumstances:

1. recovery of the charges is required under federal law or
2. if the billing rate for care in the institution was set using fraudulent information, DAS may recover the difference between the amount billed and paid and the amount that would have been billed if not for fraud.

The bill requires the DAS commissioner to release any liens filed for recovery of charges prohibited under the bill. However, it does not authorize the commissioner to return to any person or estate payments recovered before July 1, 2024, for charges related to care in a state humane institution.

The bill also makes related technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

Background — State Humane Institutions

A "state humane institution" is a state mental hospital, community mental health center, treatment facility for children and adolescents, or any other facility or program administered by the departments of Children and Families, Developmental Services, or Mental Health and

Addiction Services.

§§ 31-33 — COST OF INCARCERATION

Regarding the state's claim for an individual's incarceration costs, generally (1) terminates claims associated with crimes on his or her erased criminal record and prohibits the reimbursement of claims paid before July 1, 2024; (2) exempts up to \$50,000 from the lien the state may place on an inmate's inheritance; and (3) specifies that any property the probate court deems an asset must be used to pay the state's claim against the estate of certain inmates

The law requires the DOC commissioner to charge an inmate for the cost of his or her incarceration. The bill makes the following changes to the mechanisms through which the commissioner may recover the incarceration costs under current law:

1. terminates the state's claims for incarceration costs that it incurred during time the inmate was serving for crimes that were later erased from his or her criminal record (as described below) and specifies that these inmates are not entitled to reimbursement for state claims paid before July 1, 2024;
2. exempts up to \$50,000 from the lien the state may place on an inmate's inheritance, except in cases where the inmate was incarcerated for a capitol felony; murder with special circumstances; felony murder; 1st and 2nd degree sexual assault; 1st degree aggravated sexual assault; or 1st degree aggravated sexual assault of a minor; and
3. specifies that any property the probate court deems an asset must be used to pay the state's claim against the estate of a former inmate who dies within 20 years after his or her release.

By law, record erasure eligibility is generally as follows: (1) misdemeanors are subject to erasure seven years after the person's most recent conviction and (2) felonies are subject to erasure 10 years after the most recent conviction. The periods are calculated from the date the court entered the person's most recent conviction for any crime (with an exception for certain drug possession crimes). These erasure provisions generally apply to (1) classified or unclassified misdemeanors; (2) class D or E felonies; and (3) unclassified felonies with up to five-year prison

terms. Existing law, unchanged by the bill, specifically makes several of these crimes ineligible for this erasure (e.g., family violence crimes and nonviolent or violent sexual offenses requiring sex offender registration).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 34 — DESPP MISSING PERSONS CLEARINGHOUSE

Limits the requirement that the DESPP missing persons information clearinghouse include information on missing people with IDD to those who are adults

By law, the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) administers a missing persons information clearinghouse that holds information to help law enforcement agencies locate those (1) ages 65 or older, (2) ages 18 or older with a mental impairment, or (3) with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The bill modifies the current requirement that the clearinghouse include information on missing people with IDD by limiting it to those who are at least age 18. It also makes a conforming change.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 35 — HOSPITAL PILOT FOR ASD SERVICES

Narrows the type of hospital DSS must select for a two-year pilot program on ASD to one in Hartford County with an established program

Current law requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) to establish a two-year pilot program in partnership with a hospital to provide nonresidential outpatient day services for people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The bill specifically requires DSS to partner with a free-standing, long-term acute care hospital in Hartford County with an established, specialized interdisciplinary program for younger children and adolescents with an ASD diagnosis. By law and under the bill, DSS must select a hospital by September 1, 2024, and the hospital must start providing services under the pilot by October 1, 2024.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 36 — HUMAN SERVICES CAREER PIPELINE

Removes the July 1, 2024, deadline to establish the career pipeline program and requires CWO to report on its plan for the program by that date; requires CWO to establish the pipeline program within available appropriations

Current law requires the chief workforce officer (CWO) to establish the Human Services Career Pipeline by July 1, 2024. The bill makes this requirement within available appropriations and eliminates the deadline. By law, the career pipeline must (1) ensure enough trained providers are available to serve elderly people and people with intellectual or IDD, physical disabilities, cognitive impairment, or mental illness and (2) include training and certification in specified areas and incentives to retain workers in the human services sector after the program ends.

By law, the CWO must develop a plan for the career pipeline program that includes (1) a strategy to increase the number of state residents pursuing careers in human services, (2) recommended salary and working conditions needed to retain an adequate number of human services providers to serve state residents, (3) estimated funding needed to support the program. The bill requires the CWO to report on the plan by July 1, 2024, to the Aging, Appropriations, Higher Education and Employment Advancement, Human Services, Labor, and Public Health committees. The report must include the CWO's recommendations for establishing the career pipeline and estimated funding needed to implement it.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 37 — LOCAL VOLUNTARY PUBLIC SAFETY REGISTRATION SYSTEM

Eliminates the local voluntary public safety registration system for children with IDD and the requirement that PSAP emergency dispatchers search this system's database when dispatching emergency services to a residential address

The bill eliminates the 2023-enacted local voluntary public safety registration system for children with IDD, including autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairments, and nonverbal learning disorders, as well as related provisions (CGS § 7-294qq). It correspondingly eliminates the requirement that, starting July 15, 2024, each emergency dispatcher employed by a public safety answering point (PSAP), when

practicable, search the system when dispatching emergency services to a residential address (CGS § 28-25c).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 38 & 39 — HUSKY A AND HUSKY C INCOME LIMITS

Lowers the income limit for HUSKY A parents and caretaker relatives from 155% of FPL to 133% of FPL; reduces the scheduled October 1 HUSKY C eligibility expansion by calculating income before, rather than after, any authorized disregards

The bill reduces the income limit for HUSKY A parents and caretaker relatives from 155% of the Federal Poverty Limit (FPL) to 133% of FPL. (In 2024, 155% of FPL for a family of three is \$40,021 annually and 133% of FPL for a family of three is \$34,340 annually.)

Last year's budget implementing act expanded eligibility for HUSKY C by increasing the income limit to 105% of FPL, after any authorized income disregards, beginning October 1, 2024. The bill repeals this and instead sets the same income limit, beginning on the same date, but calculates it before any authorized income disregards. This effectively reduces the scheduled eligibility expansion by requiring applicants to have income under the limit before applying disregards that lower the amount of counted income. HUSKY C provides Medicaid coverage to people who are age 65 or older, blind, or living with a disability (CGS § 17b-290(15)).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2024, except the provision repeal is effective upon passage.

§§ 40-43 — PASSPORT TO THE PARKS

Increases the Passport to the Parks motor vehicle registration fee; provides funding for Batterson Park and Thames River Heritage Park; requires DEEP to enter into memorandums of agreement for the (1) operation and funding of Batterson Park and (2) funding of Thames River Heritage Park

Fee Increase

The bill increases the Passport to the Parks fee that people registering vehicles in the state must pay. Under current law, the fee is \$15 for a triennial registration, \$10 for a biennial registration, and \$5 for an annual registration. (Annual registrations are only available to those age 65 or over.) The bill increases the fee to \$24 for a triennial registration, \$16 for

a biennial registration, and \$8 for an annual registration. By law, collected fees must be deposited in the Passport to the Parks account (see *Background – Passport to the Parks Account*).

Account Purposes Expanded

The bill expands the purposes for which money in the Passport to the Parks account must be spent. It requires the account to fund the (1) care, maintenance, and operation of Batterson Park and (2) Thames River Heritage Park.

Batterson Park is a municipal park owned by Hartford and located in Farmington and New Britain. Thames River Heritage Park consists of numerous historic sites along the Thames River. The heritage park's foundation operates water taxis to sites in New London and Groton.

Memorandums of Agreement

The bill requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), Hartford, and Riverfront Recapture to enter into a memorandum of agreement about Batterson Park's care, maintenance, and operation. Riverfront Recapture is a nonprofit organization that manages, maintains, and operates four riverfront parks and their connected riverwalks and trails.

Under the bill, the agreement may authorize (1) Riverfront Recapture's agents and employees to enter, maintain, and operate Batterson Park and (2) DEEP to give Riverfront Recapture a grant each fiscal year from the Passport to the Parks account for these purposes.

Additionally, the bill requires DEEP to enter into a memorandum of agreement with the Thames River Heritage Park Foundation to fund the heritage park. (Presumably, the funding will come from the Passport to the Parks account.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024, except the memorandums of agreement requirements take effect upon passage and the Passport to the Parks fee increase takes effect July 1, 2025.

Background — Passport to the Parks Account

Under existing law, the Passport to the Parks account is a separate, nonlapsing General Fund account. It must be used to (1) pay for the care, maintenance, operation, and improvement of state parks and campgrounds; (2) fund soil and water conservation districts and environmental review teams; and (3) pay the Council on Environmental Quality's expenses. In addition, the law requires DEEP to pay \$100,000 each fiscal year to each of the following entities from the account:

1. Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District,
2. Eastern Conservation District,
3. North Central Conservation District,
4. Northwest Conservation District,
5. Southwest Conservation District,
6. Connecticut Environmental Review Team, and
7. Connecticut Council on Water and Soil Conservation.

§ 44 — UCONN HEALTH CENTER EMPLOYEE FRINGE BENEFITS

Requires the comptroller to use up to \$4.5 million of funds appropriated for State Comptroller-Fringe Benefits to fund a portion of the fringe benefits for UCHC employees

For FY 24 and each fiscal year after it, the bill requires the comptroller to use up to \$4.5 million of the resources appropriated for State Comptroller-Fringe Benefits to fund the fringe benefit cost differential between the average rate for fringe benefits of private hospitals in the state and the fringe benefit rate for University of Connecticut Health Center (UCHC) employees. Under the bill, the "fringe benefit cost differential" is the difference between the (1) state fringe benefit rate calculated on UCHC payroll and (2) average member fringe benefit rate of all of Connecticut acute care hospitals as contained in the annual reports submitted to the Office of Health Strategy's (OHS) Health Systems Planning Unit as required by law.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§§ 45 & 46 — EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS ON INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE TOWARDS PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM PEOPLE

Requires DPH to develop educational materials on intimate partner violence toward pregnant and postpartum people; requires DPH to distribute the educational materials to certain health care providers and facilities to give to patients; transfers, from the Maternal Mortality Review Committee to DPH, responsibility for developing educational materials on certain other topics

The bill requires the Department of Public Health (DPH), by January 1, 2025, to develop educational materials on intimate partner violence toward pregnant and postpartum people. In doing so, the department must consult with organizations that advocate on behalf of domestic violence victims.

Under the bill, DPH must distribute the educational materials (1) in print to each birthing hospital and birth center in the state and (2) electronically to obstetricians and other health care providers who practice obstetrics. It correspondingly requires these facilities and providers to give the educational materials to their pregnant and postpartum patients.

The bill also transfers, from the state’s Maternal Mortality Review Committee to DPH, the responsibility for developing educational materials on the following topics required under current law:

1. the health and safety of pregnant and postpartum persons with mental health disorders, including perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, for DPH to distribute to the state’s birthing hospitals;
2. evidenced-based screening tools for screening patients for intimate partner violence, peripartum mood disorders, and substance use disorder for DPH to distribute to obstetricians and other health care providers who practice obstetrics; and
3. indicators of intimate partner violence for DPH to distribute to (1) hospitals for emergency department health care providers and social workers to use and (2) obstetricians and other health care providers who practice obstetrics.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 47 & 48 — XL CENTER

Specifies that the XL Center includes the adjoining garage, for purposes of CRDA's agreements with contractors to manage and operate and reconstruct and renovate the center; exempts from the sales and use tax any purchase or lease needed to operate the center while CRDA or the contractor owns, leases, or operates it; increases the maximum amount that the state, CRDA, or both must contribute to the center's renovation

Existing law allows the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) to enter into two separate agreements concerning the XL Center's (1) management and operation and (2) reconstruction and renovation. The bill specifies that for purposes of these projects, agreements, and related requirements (e.g., for the management and operation agreement, allocating net profits and losses between the contractor and CRDA), the XL Center includes the adjoining CRDA-owned garage on Church Street, in addition to the civic center and coliseum complex as existing law provides.

With respect to operations, existing law allows CRDA, by December 31, 2025, to enter into an agreement with the contractor that is managing and operating the XL Center on July 1, 2023, to continue doing so. The bill exempts from the sales and use taxes any purchase or lease necessary for operating the XL Center while it is owned, leased, or operated by CRDA or the contractor.

For the reconstruction and renovation, existing law allows CRDA to enter into one or more agreements by December 31, 2025, for a project to renovate and reconstruct the XL Center. The bill increases, from \$80 million to \$125 million, the maximum amount of funding that CRDA, the state, or both together, must contribute under the agreement toward the cost of any renovation or reconstruction occurring after January 1, 2023. By law, the contractor must contribute at least \$20 million.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 49 — NEEDS ASSESSMENT ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Contains identical provisions as in § 18; see above for analysis

§ 50 — ROBERTA B. WILLIS SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING

Makes several changes to a 2023-enacted allocation of Roberta B. Willis scholarship program funds, including that all ARPA funds allocated for the program be disbursed,

rather than used, by December 31, 2024, and requires OHE to reserve up to \$15 million from the program's FY 25 appropriation for disbursement during FY 26

The bill makes several changes to a 2023-enacted allocation of Roberta B. Willis scholarship program funds. PA 23-208 required OHE to use the funds appropriated or allocated for the program for FY 24 to make its awards for the need and merit-based grants and allocate funds for the need-based and Charter Oak grants for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 academic years. Additionally, it required all ARPA funds allocated for the program to be used by December 31, 2024.

The bill instead requires OHE to disburse the funds appropriated or allocated for the program for FYs 24 and 25 to make its awards for the need and merit-based grants and allocate funds for the need-based and Charter Oak grants according to a plan developed by the office. It also requires that all ARPA funds allocated for the program be disbursed, rather than used, by December 31, 2024.

Additionally, the bill requires OHE to reserve up to \$15 million from the amount appropriated for the program for FY 25 for disbursement during FY 26.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 51 — CONNECTICUT PORT AUTHORITY REPORT

Requires CPA, by January 1, 2025, to begin quarterly reporting to the Transportation and Appropriations committees on a staffing plan to handle its needs and its efforts for certain activities and programs

The bill requires the Connecticut Port Authority (CPA), by January 1, 2025, and then quarterly, to submit a report to the Transportation and Appropriations committees that describes its (1) work to support grants under the Small Harbor Improvement Projects Program (SHIPP), (2) dredging activities and the dredging needs of harbors in the state, and (3) marketing activities for maritime communities. The report must also include a staffing plan to handle CPA's needs.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Background — SHIPP

SHIPP is a competitive grant program, established and administered

by CPA, that provides funds for harbor improvement projects unrelated to the deep water ports in Bridgeport, New Haven, and New London. Harbor improvement projects generally must be within, near, or on an active navigational channel and include dredging, marina repair, boat ramp facilities improvement, harbor management plans, and feasibility studies. SHIPP is funded with state general obligation bonds.

§ 52 — THE TRANSFORMING CHILDREN’S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Expands the Transforming Children’s Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee’s membership by adding two representatives from the federally recognized Indian Tribes in the state; extends, by two years, the committee’s reporting deadlines

By law, the Transforming Children’s Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee must evaluate the availability and efficacy of prevention, early intervention, and behavioral health treatment services and options for children from birth to age 18. The bill expands the committee’s membership by adding two members jointly appointed by the Appropriations Committee chairpersons, each of whom must be a representative of one of the two federally recognized Indian tribes in the state (i.e., the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan tribes).

Under current law, among other things, the committee must, by (1) December 1, 2023, report to the Appropriations, Children, Human Services, and Public Health committees and OPM on specific subjects (e.g., recommendations on any statutory or budgetary changes concerning the behavioral health system); and (2) December 1, 2024, report on the progress of the strategic plan it must develop to integrate its recommendations. The bill extends these deadlines to December 1, 2025, and December 1, 2026, respectively.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 53 — 2024-25 ACADEMIC YEAR CHANGES TO THE ROBERTA B. WILLIS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Prohibits the OHE from requiring that Roberta B. Willis scholarship program need-based grants be reduced based on a student’s initial qualifications as determined from his or her FAFSA and pauses the requirement that the program’s need and merit-based grants be awarded in a higher amount than its need-based grants

This bill prohibits the Office of Higher Education (OHE), for the

academic year beginning July 1, 2024, from requiring higher education institutions participating in the Roberta B. Willis scholarship program to reduce the amount of a need-based grant awarded under the program to an eligible student based on the initial qualifications determined from the student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), even if the U.S. Department of Education subsequently revises the qualifications. The bill relatedly requires OHE to deem participating higher education institutions to be in compliance with the state law governing the program if the initial qualifications qualified an eligible student for the need-based grant that the student was awarded.

Additionally, the bill pauses, for the academic year beginning July 1, 2024, the requirement that Roberta B. Willis scholarship program's need and merit-based grants be awarded in a higher amount than its need-based grants.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§§ 54 & 55 — CONNECTICUT HYDROGEN AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE PURCHASE PROGRAM (CHEAPR)

Modifies the CHEAPR rebate amount for residents of environmental justice communities from up to 100% more than the standard rebate to at least 200% more than the standard rebate; requires certain proceeds from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to be used for the CHEAPR program (rather than the CHEAPR account) and other programs that support DEEP's engagement with environmental justice communities

Rebate Amount

By law, the CHEAPR program gives rebates and vouchers to residents, municipalities, businesses, nonprofits, and tribal entities that buy new or used battery electric vehicles, plug-in hybrid vehicles, and fuel cell electric vehicles. CHEAPR rebate or voucher amounts are set administratively by DEEP, subject to certain statutory parameters, including a requirement to provide a higher rebate to residents of environmental justice communities. Current law requires the rebate or voucher amount for residents of environmental justice communities be up to 100% more than a standard rebate (see *Background – Environmental Justice Communities*). The bill increases the amount to at least 200% greater than the standard amount.

Funding From Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)

Current law diverts a portion of RGGI (see *Background – RGGI*) proceeds to the CHEAPR account, which is used to fund CHEAPR and certain activities related to the zero-emission school bus program. The bill instead requires that this funding be diverted to DEEP to fund the CHEAPR program and other programs established to support the department’s engagement with environmental justice communities.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Background — Environmental Justice Communities

By law, an “environmental justice community” is (a) any U.S. census block group, as determined by the most recent census, for which at least 30% of the population consists of low-income people who are not institutionalized and have an income below 200% of the federal poverty level or (b) a distressed municipality (CGS § 22a-20a).

Background — RGGI

RGGI is a regional interstate “cap and trade” program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The program subjects the region’s power plants to a declining cap on the amount of carbon dioxide they may emit and requires them to purchase emission allowances at quarterly auctions. Those that exceed the cap may buy credits from those that do not. Auction sales proceeds fund energy efficiency and renewal programs.

§ 56 — DISTRESSED MUNICIPALITY DESIGNATION

Extends, from five years to 10, the time period for which certain municipalities are deemed to be distressed municipalities after being removed from the annual list published by DECD

By law, distressed municipalities are those that the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) determines have the highest levels of fiscal and economic distress. He annually designates 25 municipalities as distressed using statistical indicators that measure municipal fiscal capacity (e.g., tax base, residents’ personal income, and, indirectly, the residents’ need for public services).

Under current law, a municipality removed from the list of distressed municipalities in a given year does not immediately lose its designation

but is instead deemed to be a distressed municipality for an additional five years. The bill extends this period to 10 years for municipalities whose populations exceed 100,000 at the time they were removed from the annual list, based on the most recent U.S. census. Under current law and the bill, the municipality may reject the extension by a vote of its legislative body no more than three months after being notified by the DECD commissioner that it was removed from the list.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2024

§§ 57-59 — CIGARETTE DEALER LICENSES AND RENEWALS

Requires cigarette dealer's license applicants to post certain notices at their businesses and provides a remonstrance process; allows municipalities to adopt ordinances to require these dealers to notify the chief law enforcement official of license renewals and allows the official to comment; requires DRS to consider these comments and report certain statistics on these notifications to the legislature

The bill (1) requires applicants for a Department of Revenue Services (DRS) cigarette dealer's license to notify the town and post certain notices at their businesses about their license applications, and (2) provides a process for 10 or more people to object to an initial or renewal applicant's suitability or the proposed place of business. Similar provisions apply under existing law for liquor permits.

The bill also allows municipalities to adopt ordinances requiring anyone applying to renew a cigarette dealer's license to simultaneously give written notice of the application to the chief law enforcement official or his or her designee in the municipality where the business is located. (By law, municipalities may already do this for those applying to renew a liquor permit that allows on-premises serving or consumption.) The bill (1) allows the official or designee to send written comments on the application to the DRS commissioner within 15 days after receiving the notice and (2) requires the DRS commissioner to consider the comments before renewing the license.

Lastly, the bill requires the DRS commissioner to report, by January 1, 2026, to the Finance, Revenue and Bonding; Planning and Development; and Public Safety and Security committees on:

1. the number and copies of written comments submitted;

2. a summary of actions DRS took in granting or denying any cigarette dealer's license renewal applications for which written comments were submitted; and
3. the commissioner's conclusions and recommendations, after consulting with chief law enforcement officials or their designees, about this notice (i.e., comment) requirement.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2024

Notice of Application for Cigarette Dealer's License

Under the bill, DRS is prohibited from issuing an initial license to an applicant until the applicant complies with the following notice provision.

The bill requires a cigarette dealer license applicant, after filing the application with DRS, to give notice of the application to the clerk of the municipality where the business is to be located. The notice must contain the applicant's name and residential address and the place of business for which the license is to be issued. Upon receiving the notice, the clerk must post and maintain the notice on the municipality's website for at least two weeks.

By the day following the date an applicant provides the notice, the applicant must affix a copy of the notice, in legible condition, on the outer door of the proposed business location. When a license application is filed for an unconstructed building, the applicant must build and maintain a legible sign that is at least six feet by four feet. The sign must include the license applied for and the proposed licensee's name and be clearly visible from the street.

The applicant must make a return to DRS, under oath, of compliance with the notice requirements, on a DRS form. The department may require additional proof of compliance. Upon receiving sufficient evidence of compliance, DRS may hold a hearing on the proposed location's suitability.

Objections to a Proposed or Renewed Cigarette Dealer's License

The bill allows any 10 individuals who are at least age 18 and reside in the town in which the cigarette dealer's business is proposed or currently located, to file a "remonstrance" (i.e., objection) with DRS. For initial licenses, they must file a remonstrance within three weeks after the last day the license applicant's notice was posted. For renewals, they must file it at least 21 days before the license renewal date.

The remonstrance must include any objection to the suitability of the applicant or proposed business place, provided the issue is not controlled by local zoning. If a remonstrance is filed and the individuals apply in writing, DRS must hold a hearing and give at least five days' notice.

The remonstrants (i.e., the people making the objection) must designate one or more agents for service to receive all DRS notices. At any time before DRS issues a decision, the remonstrants or their agents may withdraw a remonstrance and DRS may cancel the hearing or withdraw the case. The DRS decision on the application is final for the remonstrance.

The bill allows the remonstrants who are aggrieved by the granting of a license to appeal under the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act.

§ 60 — UNION AVENUE DETENTION CENTER

Starting in 2026, requires that the Union Avenue detention center in New Haven be under the jurisdiction of an OPM-determined state agency rather than that of the local police

Starting on January 1, 2026, the bill places New Haven's Union Avenue detention center under the jurisdiction of a state agency, as the OPM secretary determines. Under current practice, the facility is under local police jurisdiction.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 61-63 — MEDICAID COVERAGE FOR SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH SERVICES

Requires DSS to amend the Medicaid state plan to expand coverage for health care services provided to eligible students (1) by or on behalf of an LEA and (2) in school nurse's offices; establishes an interagency coalition to coordinate and make

recommendations to maximize federal funding for Medicaid-eligible health care services in public schools

The bill makes several changes to expand access to Medicaid-covered health care for Connecticut schoolchildren. Specifically, it:

1. requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) commissioner, in consultation with the education commissioner, to, within appropriations, seek federal approval to amend the Medicaid state plan to expand Medicaid coverage for health services provided by or on behalf of a local educational agency (LEA; i.e., public board of education or other public school administrative authority) to any student enrolled in Medicaid;
2. requires the DSS commissioner, within available appropriations and subject to federal approval, to amend the Medicaid state plan to cover health care services in school nurse's offices for eligible students enrolled in Medicaid; and
3. establishes an interagency coalition to coordinate and make recommendations to maximize federal funding for Medicaid-eligible health services in Connecticut public schools.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except that the provision on nurse's offices is effective July 1, 2024.

Medicaid Coverage for School-Based Health Services

The bill requires the DSS commissioner, in consultation with the education commissioner and by October 1, 2025, to seek approval to amend the Medicaid state plan to give Medicaid coverage for health services provided by or on behalf of a LEA to any student enrolled in Medicaid, regardless of whether a student qualifies for federal services for students with disabilities.

The bill authorizes a LEA, to the extent permissible by federal law and within available appropriations, to submit Medicaid claims for each Medicaid-eligible student who receives Medicaid-eligible school-based services unless the student's parent or legal guardian opts out of authorizing the LEA to do so.

Under the bill, the DSS commissioner, in consultation with the education commissioner, must develop and distribute to each local or regional school board written guidance on health care services eligible for Medicaid reimbursement.

The bill requires the DSS commissioner, annually by January 1, and in consultation with the education commissioner, to report to the Appropriations, Children, Education, and Human Services committees on Medicaid reimbursement for school-based health services and recommendations for expanding Medicaid services provided in schools.

Interagency Coalition

The bill establishes an interagency coalition consisting of the education and DSS commissioners and the OPM secretary, or their designees, to coordinate and make recommendations on maximizing federal Medicaid funding for health services in public schools. The coalition must (1) hold its first meeting within 60 days after the bill passes and (2) meet at least quarterly.

The bill requires the coalition to report annually by January 1 to the Appropriations, Children, Education, and Human Services committees on the following:

1. the number of students receiving Medicaid-covered health services in the previous school year and any change in their proportion of the school's total enrollment;
2. steps taken to expand Medicaid coverage for student health services, including any Medicaid waivers or state plan amendments; and
3. a survey of what other states are doing to expand Medicaid-covered health services for students.

§ 64 — PHASING OUT MED CONNECT INCOME AND ASSET LIMITS

Phases out income and asset eligibility limits in the Med Connect program and eliminates them by July 1, 2029

The bill phases out income and asset eligibility limits in Med Connect,

DSS's medical assistance program for working people with disabilities.

The bill increases current law's income limit from \$75,000 to \$85,000; and doubles the asset limit for individuals and married couples to \$20,000 and \$30,000 respectively.

Beginning July 1, 2026, the bill requires DSS to phase out income and asset limits for Med Connect over four fiscal years by annually increasing the (1) income limit by \$10,000 and (2) asset limit by \$10,000 for individuals and \$15,000 for married couples. Under the bill, income and asset limits must be eliminated from the program by July 1, 2029.

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 1, 2025

§§ 65 & 68 — BUREAU OF SERVICES FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF, DEAFBLIND OR HARD OF HEARING

Establishes the bureau within ADS and requires the department to hire a bureau director; requires state agencies to appoint an employee to serve as a point of contact for concerns related to people who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing

The bill establishes a Bureau of Services for Persons who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing within the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS).

The bill requires ADS, in consultation with the Advisory Board for Persons who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing (see below) to hire a bureau director by October 1, 2024, who reports to the ADS commissioner. The commissioner must also hire the bureau director's administrative assistant. The bill requires the bureau director to (1) have professional experience serving deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing people, (2) be able to communicate in American Sign Language, and (3) be familiar with effective interpretation methods to help deafblind people.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024, except the provision on state agency points of contact is effective October 1, 2024.

Bureau Director Duties

Under the bill, the bureau director has the following duties:

1. assist in overseeing ADS employees who provide counseling, interpreting, and other help to people who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing, excluding federally-funded vocational rehabilitation employees;
2. create a separate webpage for the bureau on ADS's website that includes (a) the advisory board's meeting schedule, agenda, minutes, and other board resources, (b) an instructional video with audio and captions on the home page on how to navigate the webpage, resources, and tools, and (c) other materials under the bill;
3. annually update a resource guide for people who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing, and publish it on the ADS website and the bureau's webpage;
4. help register interpreters, including by maintaining a list of interpreters categorized by the settings where they are qualified to interpret and publishing it on the ADS website and the bureau's webpage;
5. coordinate ADS's efforts to provide information and referral services to people who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing on available resources;
6. coordinate responses to consumer concerns, requests for help, and referrals to resources, including from state agencies;
7. coordinate education and training initiatives (e.g., working with local and state public safety and public health officials and first responders on best practices to serve and communicate with deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing people or working with interpreters to maintain or enhance their skills in various settings);
8. collaborate with interpreting services providers and training organizations to increase opportunities for mentorships, internships, apprenticeships, and specialized training in

interpreting services;

9. partner with civic and community organizations serving deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing people on workshops and information sessions on new laws, regulations, or developments related to services, programs, or health care needs;
10. raise public awareness of programs and services available to deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing people;
11. work with the governor and Connecticut television stations on ways to make television broadcasts more accessible to people who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing; and
12. consult with the advisory board to identify needs and address needed policy changes.

The bill also requires the bureau director to help the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) implement telecommunication relay service (TRS) programs for people who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing. The bill requires PURA to consult with ADS and the bureau director when awarding a contract for this service. TRS enables telephone communication between (1) a hearing or speech impaired person using a text telephone or a telecommunications device for the deaf and (2) a person using a telephone. In practice, PURA opens a docket every five years to review proposals and choose a TRS provider.

State Agency Point of Contact

The bill requires each state agency to (1) appoint an employee to serve as point of contact for concerns related to people who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing, (2) identify the employee's name and contact information in a prominent place on the agency's website, and (3) require this employee to collaborate with the bureau director to resolve these concerns. This requirement applies to the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, including any such office, department, board, council, commission, institution, constituent unit of the state system of higher education, or technical education and career school.

The bill requires the bureau director to help each state agency appoint an employee to serve as this point of contact and coordinate with them to resolve concerns.

§§ 66, 67, 69 & 71 — ADVISORY BOARD FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF, DEAFBLIND OR HARD OF HEARING

Renames the board, changes its membership, and expands its duties and reporting requirements

The bill renames the advisory board from “the Advisory Board for Persons who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deafblind” to “the Advisory Board for Persons who are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing” and makes conforming changes. Among other related changes, the bill also modifies the board’s membership and expands its duties and reporting requirements.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2024

Membership and Administration

The bill replaces two members on the 15-member board. It does so by (1) removing the ADS commissioner or her designee and the Connecticut Chapter of We the Deaf People director and (2) adding the Hear Here Hartford (the Connecticut chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America) president or her designee and a Connecticut hospital organization representative appointed by the House speaker. The bill makes conforming changes to allow appointing authorities to fill vacancies.

The bill requires the bureau director to serve as the advisory board’s administrator beginning October 1, 2024.

Annual Leadership Roundtable Meeting

The bill requires the advisory board to hold an annual leadership roundtable meeting with various executive branch agencies to discuss best practices and gaps in services for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind, and make recommendations to rectify these gaps. The meeting includes the following participants or their designees:

1. commissioners of aging and disability services, public health,

social services, mental health and addiction services, education, developmental services, children and families, early childhood, economic and community development, emergency services and public protection, correction, housing, and labor;

2. the Office of Higher Education (OHE) executive director; and
3. the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR).

The bill eliminates a similar requirement that the advisory board meet periodically with some of the same agencies to discuss similar topics.

Reporting Requirement

Under current law, the advisory board must make recommendations for (1) technical assistance and resources for state agencies to serve people who are deaf or hard of hearing, (2) public policy and legislative changes needed to address gaps in services, and (3) interpreter qualifications and registration. The bill additionally requires the advisory board to make recommendations on technical assistance and resources for state agencies to serve deafblind people.

Current law requires the advisory board to submit these recommendations to the governor and the Human Services Committee, but does not set a deadline or frequency for this requirement. The bill requires the board to submit a report on these recommendations annually, starting by January 1, 2025, to the Appropriations, Aging, Commerce, Education, Higher Education, Housing, Human Services, Judiciary, Labor, Public Health, and Public Safety committees. The bill additionally requires the report to include the bureau's activities in the previous calendar year.

§§ 70 & 72 — ADS SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAFBLIND

Expands ADS responsibilities to include providing services for people who are deafblind, generally conforming to current practice

Under current law, ADS is responsible for providing services to, among others, people who are deaf or hard of hearing and the department may provide necessary services to them. The bill

additionally makes ADS responsible for providing services to people who are deafblind.

Under the bill, as under current law, ADS must annually report on its services to the governor and the Appropriations and Human Services committees.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2024

§ 73 — METHADONE MAINTENANCE RATE INCREASE

Requires DSS to increase Medicaid rates, within available appropriations, for chemical maintenance providers who currently receive the lowest weekly reimbursement rate

Current law sets the minimum weekly Medicaid reimbursement rate at \$88.52 for chemical maintenance providers who give methadone maintenance treatment to Medicaid beneficiaries. For FY 25, the bill requires DSS to amend the Medicaid state plan to increase rates, within available appropriations, to those providers who receive the lowest weekly reimbursement rate for this treatment. The bill prohibits its rate increase for the lowest paid providers from causing a rate decrease for higher paid providers.

By law, methadone maintenance is a chemical maintenance program under which an addiction to one drug (e.g., heroin) is treated with methadone in a weekly program that includes methadone administration, drug testing, and counseling. Chemical maintenance providers are certified and licensed by state and federal agencies and meet state and federal requirements.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 74 — MEDICAID AMBULANCE RATES

Requires DSS to increase FY 25 ambulance rates within available appropriations, including increasing the mileage rate for ambulance transportation covered under Medicaid by \$1.18 and providing mileage reimbursement for in-town trips

For FY 25, the bill requires DSS to increase the following rates, within available appropriations:

1. the Medicaid ambulance mileage rate for all emergency and nonemergency transports by \$1.18 and

2. all other emergency and nonemergency ambulance service rates.

The bill also requires the DSS commissioner to provide mileage reimbursement for in-town trips for FY 25, within available appropriations. The bill authorizes her to seek federal approval for a Medicaid state plan amendment if needed to implement these rates.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 75 — PACT PROGRAM

Expands the PACT Program's eligibility to include transition program students; increases the program's minimum award amounts; names the awards the "Mary Ann Handley Grant"; requires BOR's upcoming semesterly reports on certain program metrics by November 1, 2024, and March 1, 2025

This bill makes various changes to the Pledge to Advance CT (PACT) program, which gives eligible Connecticut high school graduates the opportunity to attend a Connecticut community college debt-free by awarding them grants for the difference between the cost of tuition and fees and their scholarships, grants, and federal, state, or institutional aid.

Program Expansion

This bill expands PACT eligibility to include transition program students who (1) are state residents, (2) have not graduated from high school, (3) are enrolled in a transition program under their individualized education program, and (4) enroll in one or more courses at a regional community-technical college.

Award Increase

The bill increases the program's minimum awards from \$250 to \$500 for full-time students, and from \$150 to \$300 for part-time students.

Mary Ann Handley Grant

The bill requires all grants made to eligible students under the debt-free community college program to be designated as the "Mary Ann Handley Grant."

Reporting Requirements

Current law requires BOR to report certain information about the PACT program to the Higher Education and Employment

Advancement and Appropriations committees each semester. The bill sets specific deadlines of November 1, 2024, and March 1, 2025, for two of the upcoming reports. Under existing law, the reports must include information on, among other things, the (1) number of qualifying students enrolled at the regional community-technical college, (2) number of qualifying students receiving minimum awards, and (3) completion rates of qualifying students by degree or certificate program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 76 — DEADLINE EXTENSION TO SUBMIT RECOMMENDATIONS ON CREATING A NEW SOLID WASTE-RELATED ENTITY

Extends, until July 1, 2025, the deadline for OPM to give the Environment and Energy and Technology committees recommendations on the feasibility and advisability of creating a new solid waste-related quasi-public state agency, waste authority, or other entity

The bill extends by one year, from July 1, 2024, to July 1, 2025, the deadline for the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to submit recommendations to the Environment and Energy and Technology committees on the feasibility and advisability of creating a new quasi-public state agency, waste authority, or other entity for developing new solid waste infrastructure, operate and maintain new or existing solid waste infrastructure, and for other purposes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 77 — SMALL TOWN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (STEAP)

Increases, from \$500,000 to \$1 million, the maximum STEAP grant amount municipalities can receive per fiscal year

The bill increases, from \$500,000 to \$1 million, the maximum total Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant amount a municipality may receive in a fiscal year. By law, STEAP grants provide funding to municipalities that are ineligible for Urban Action grants and must be used for economic development, community conservation, and quality-of-life capital projects.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 78 — VACATION AND PERSONAL DAYS DURING WORKING TEST PERIODS

Gives full-time permanent state employees paid vacation days and personal days during their initial working test periods

Existing law gives full-time permanent state employees 21 paid vacation days annually once they have worked at least one full calendar year (which, in practice, accrue incrementally throughout the year) and three paid personal days each calendar year (which are granted all at once). The bill gives this same paid time off to these employees during their initial working test period. For those that begin working on or after July 1, it requires the amount of personal days to be prorated during their first calendar year of employment. The proration must be based on the number of full calendar months remaining the year after the employee began employment, divided by six.

The bill requires the administrative services commissioner, by June 30, 2025, to adopt or amend regulations to implement these provisions on vacation and personal days during employees' initial working test periods. Before adopting the regulations, and by January 1, 2025, she must also adopt policies and procedures to implement them, which have the force and effect of law. The bill requires the commissioner to post the policies and procedures on the department's website and submit them to the secretary of the state to post on the eRegulations System at least 15 days before their effective date. The policies and procedures stop being effective once they are adopted as a final regulation.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2025

§ 79 — STATE AGENCY DEPUTY DUAL EMPLOYMENT

Eliminates a provision that prohibits certain state agency deputies from having other employment

Existing law requires each department head (e.g., state agency commissioner) to designate one deputy to exercise the department's head's powers and duties during his or her absence or disqualification. The bill removes a provision in current law that (1) requires these deputies to devote their full time to their department or agency duties and (2) prohibits them from having any other employment. It also

makes technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§§ 80 & 81 — JUDICIAL RETIREMENT SYSTEM AMORTIZATION

Changes the method for determining the state's contribution for JRS unfunded liability from a 40-year amortization to a 15-year layered amortization, which effectively extends the contributions for an additional seven years; requires the state retirement commission to revise the JRS actuarial valuation using the new amortization method

Starting July 1, 2024, the bill requires the state's contribution for the Judicial Retirement System's (JRS) unfunded past service liability to be based on a 15-year layered amortization of the unfunded liability. The 15-year period for the amortization must begin with the valuation for FY 23. Under current law, the unfunded liability payment is based on 40-year amortization, which began on July 1, 1991. In effect, the bill extends the unfunded liability's repayment from 2032 to 2039. In general, a layered amortization creates a new amortization schedule for each year's actuarial experience and helps reduce volatility in the required amortization payments.

The bill requires the State Employees Retirement Commission, which oversees the JRS, to prepare and submit (presumably, to the legislature) a revised actuarial valuation for JRS as of June 30, 2023, that incorporates the bill's change to the 15-year layered amortization. The commission must do this by June 30, 2024.

Current law generally prohibits the legislature from liberalizing JRS benefits unless the retirement commission certifies the unfunded liability created by the change and the change's cost using full normal cost plus a 30-year amortization. The bill requires the commission to use a 15-year layered, rather than 30-year, amortization. It correspondingly requires that any unfunded liability created by the change be amortized over a 15-year, rather than 30-year, period.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 82-85 — CONNECTICUT MUNICIPAL REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Requires MRDA to provide members, by request, assistance on developing project criteria and regulations to increase housing production; authorizes it to establish criteria to evaluate its projects' potential impacts; and eliminates a requirement that members appoint a local development board

The bill requires the Connecticut Municipal Redevelopment Authority (MRDA) to provide, by request, technical support to member municipalities (and joint member entities) on developing project criteria and local regulations to substantially increase housing production. (By law unchanged by the bill, municipalities that opt to collaborate with MRDA must establish an area (a "housing growth zone") in which zoning regulations facilitate substantial new housing development.)

The bill also authorizes MRDA to set criteria to evaluate the potential impact of its projects. If it does so, these criteria must include the impact the project may have on the tax base of the municipality or municipalities involved. It additionally eliminates the requirement that MRDA's member municipalities appoint a local development board to serve as liaison to the authority.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2024

§ 86 — INVESTMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL "GIFTS"

Allows the IAC's public members to receive travel expenses, lodging, food, beverages, and other benefits customarily provided in the course of employment

The bill exempts certain items received by the Investment Advisory Council's (IAC) public members from being considered "gifts" under the state code of ethics for public officials. More specifically, it exempts travel expenses, lodging, food, beverage, and other benefits customarily provided in the course of employment when given to these members. The bill's exemption generally allows the members to receive these items without violating the code.

By law, the IAC generally advises the state treasurer on investing the state's pension and other trust funds, including reviewing the treasurer's investment policy statement and trust fund investment. The 12-member council has five public members, all of whom must have investment experience. The governor, Senate president pro tempore and minority leader, and House speaker and minority leader each

appoints one of the public members.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 87 — REPEAL OF STUDENT LOAN REIMBURSEMENT AND RELATED PROGRAMS

Repeals several student loan reimbursement, scholarship, and related programs

The bill repeals the following programs that OHE administers:

1. the “Engineering Connecticut” student loan reimbursement program, which under current law, requires the office to provide, within available appropriations, student loan reimbursement grants for people with undergraduate or graduate degrees in engineering and who are newly employed in the state as engineers;
2. “You Belong” student loan reimbursement program, which under current law, requires the office to provide, within available appropriations, student loan reimbursement grants for people who (a) have been awarded a doctoral degree from any higher education institution, and (b) are newly employed in the state in an economically valuable field as the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) determines, or by a company or higher education institution that registers with or has been qualified by DECD;
3. the Connecticut green technology, life science, and health information technology student loan reimbursement program, which under current law, provides eligible residents who hold degrees in and work in these fields with student loan reimbursements; and
4. a program, which under current law, requires the office to provide grants in FYs 23-25 to public and private colleges and universities for delivery of student mental health services on campus.

The bill also repeals the information technology student loan

reimbursement pilot program, administered by BOR. (This program was restricted to a cohort who received grants in FY 02.)

The bill also repeals (1) a state scholarship program, which under current law, forgives loans provided by the state to residents for nursing education if the resident remains in the nursing field in the state for five years; and (2) a scholarship program for Vietnam era veterans, which under current law, requires a scholarship fund to be established for these veterans who have been accepted for full-time admission in a degree granting program at any independent, nontheological college in the state as long as the veteran is a state resident at the time of acceptance.

Lastly, the bill also repeals the Department of Public Health's (DPH) primary care direct services program. Under current law, the program provides, within available resources, three-year grants to community-based primary care providers to expand health care access to the uninsured by (1) funding direct services, (2) recruiting and retaining primary care clinicians and registered nurses through salary subsidies or a loan repayment program, and (3) funding capital expenditures.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 88 — REPEAL OF MULTILINGUAL LEARNER EDUCATOR INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Repeals the Multilingual Learner Educator Incentive Program

The bill repeals the OHE-administered multilingual learner educator incentive program. Under current law, the program provides a grant, within available appropriations, to any student who (1) is in the last two years of a teacher preparation program leading to professional certification at any four-year higher education institution in the state, and (2) will pursue an endorsement in bilingual education or teaching English to speakers of other languages. Under the program, students receive a grant of up to \$5,000 a year for up to two years, and after graduating, are eligible for up to \$2,500 of student loan reimbursement for up to four years if they teach at an in-state public school.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 89 — CONNECTICUT PORT AUTHORITY QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT REVIEW

Eliminates the requirement that DAS and OPM review and comment on the Port Authority's quarterly report before it is submitted to the Transportation Committee

Under existing law, the Connecticut Port Authority must submit a quarterly report to the Transportation Committee on the status of current and pending contracts, small harbor projects, and the State Pier project in New London. The bill eliminates the requirement that DAS and OPM review and comment on the report before it is submitted to the committee.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 90, 91 & 137-242 — HEALTH STRATEGY AND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSIONERS

Renames the title of OHS's and OHE's executive heads as "commissioners" rather than "executive directors"

The bill renames the title of the Office of Health Strategy's (OHS) head as a "commissioner" rather than an "executive director." It makes the same change to the title of the Office of Higher Education's (OHE) head. The bill also makes numerous conforming changes.

Under existing law, these two positions are already classified as statutory department heads, subject to the same nomination and appointment process, terms, and general qualifications, duties, and powers as other agency commissioners (see §§ 138 & 187 and CGS §§ 4-6 to 4-8).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 92 — TOBACCO AND HEALTH TRUST FUND TRANSFER

Suspends the annual \$12 million disbursement from the Tobacco Settlement Fund to the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund for FY 25 and redirects it to the General Fund

For FY 25, the bill suspends the annual \$12 million disbursement from the Tobacco Settlement Fund to the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund and instead redirects this amount to the General Fund.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§§ 93 & 94 — DSS PHARMACY APPROVALS

Increases, from two to 24 hours, how much time DSS has to grant or deny pharmacy requests for prior authorization or dispensing name brand drug products before they are deemed approved

The bill increases the length of time, from two hours to 24 hours, during which the Department of Social Services (DSS) may approve or deny certain pharmacy requests before they are deemed approved under DSS’s medical assistance programs (e.g., Medicaid). This applies to a (1) physician’s or pharmacist’s prior authorization request for prescription drugs and (2) pharmacist’s request to dispense a name brand drug when a chemically equivalent generic drug product substitution is available.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§§ 95-97 — BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH TRUST FUND

Eliminates the Biomedical Research Trust Fund and requires the state comptroller to transfer its remaining balance to the General Fund

The bill eliminates the Biomedical Research Trust Fund and requires the state comptroller to transfer its remaining balance to the General Fund by June 30, 2025.

Under current law, the public health commissioner can make grants from this fund to Connecticut-based (1) nonprofit colleges and universities and (2) hospitals that do biomedical research in heart disease, cancer, and other tobacco-related diseases; Alzheimer’s disease; stroke; and diabetes. The fund is a separate, nonlapsing fund that can accept transfers from the Tobacco Settlement Fund and receive funds from public or private sources.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025, except that the funds transfer is effective upon passage.

§ 98 — EMS REGIONAL COORDINATOR POSITIONS TO CLASSIFIED SERVICE

Requires DAS to transition EMS regional coordinators and assistant regional coordinators to classified service

The bill requires the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) commissioner to transition the regional emergency medical services

(EMS) coordinator and assistant regional EMS coordinator positions and incumbents into the classified service. To the extent these employees are performing jobs that would normally be within a current executive branch bargaining unit, the bill requires (1) the jobs to be added to the bargaining unit's descriptions and (2) employees in the jobs to be deemed part of the bargaining unit. The DAS commissioner must transition these employees beginning June 30, 2024, and do so in consultation with the Department of Public Health commissioner.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 99 — INFORMATION REQUESTS TO ORIGINATING AGENCIES

Requires requests for certain information to be directed to the state agency where the information originated

The bill requires anyone requesting data, records, or files that were shared between state agencies under a statute, regulation, data sharing agreement, memorandum of agreement or understanding, or court order, including requests under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), to direct the request to the state agency where the information originated. For this provision, a "state agency" is any office; department; board; council; commission; institution; constituent unit of the state system of higher education; technical education and career school; or other agency in the state's executive, legislative, or judicial branch.

Under the bill and regardless of FOIA, when a state agency receives one of these requests but is not the originating agency, it must (1) promptly refer the request to the state agency where the data, records, or files originated and (2) notify the requestor that the request has been referred to the originating agency. The notification must be in writing and include the originating agency's name, address, and phone number, and the date the referral was made.

Lastly, the bill specifies that this provision does not (1) require disclosure of any data, records, or files if the disclosure would not have been required had the request been made directly to the originating agency or (2) apply to certain requests for data in the criminal justice information system available to the public under FOIA (by law, this data

must be obtained from the originating agency).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 100 — AGREEMENTS OR SOLICITATIONS TO LOCATE UNCLAIMED PROPERTY

Expands requirements and processes regarding agreements and solicitations to locate unclaimed property

The bill establishes disclosure requirements for agreements to locate unclaimed property, beyond those in existing law. Under existing practice, people, businesses, and other entities assist property owners, for payment, in finding unclaimed property and reclaiming it on the owner's behalf.

Under current law, these agreements are only valid if they are (1) in writing, (2) signed by the owner, (3) disclose the nature and value of the property, and (4) clearly stipulate the owner's share after subtracting the fee or compensation.

The bill establishes additional requirements for these agreements entered into on or after January 1, 2025. In addition to the current requirements, these disclosures must also conspicuously and clearly disclose that the owner may file a claim directly with the treasurer at no cost and the method for doing so. The bill also requires the disclosure of the property's nature and value and the owner's share be clear and conspicuous.

The bill also requires that any solicitation to locate unclaimed property clearly and conspicuously disclose in writing that anyone may search for and file a claim directly with the treasurer at no cost and how to do so.

Under the bill, any claim for property filed with the treasurer under such an agreement or solicitation must include an unredacted version of the document to allow the treasurer to determine if the requirements under the bill and existing law have been met. The treasurer may withhold payment of a claim to anyone except an owner if the agreement or solicitation (1) is not provided or (2) fails to meet these requirements.

As under existing law, nothing in these provisions may be construed to prevent an owner from asserting that an agreement to locate or obtain an interest in unclaimed property is based upon excessive or unjust consideration. By law, the maximum fee or compensation for a person helping to locate unclaimed property is 10% of its value.

Under existing law, an agreement is invalid if it is entered into (1) within two years of the unclaimed property's required reporting date or (2) in the period between when the report is required to be filed and when it is filed, whichever period is longer.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§§ 101-104 — COPAYMENT-ONLY HEALTH PLANS

Exempts copayment-only health plans from the insurance law's copayment limitations for certain in-network imaging services and physical and occupational therapy services

Existing law limits the copayments that certain fully insured individual and group health insurance policies can charge for in-network imaging services (i.e., MRIs, CAT or PET scans) and in-network physical and occupational therapy services. For the imaging services, the law exempts high-deductible health plans from the copayment limitations. The bill exempts copayment-only health plans from the copayment limitations for in-network (1) MRIs and CAT or PET scans and (2) physical and occupational therapy services.

Under the bill, a "copayment-only health plan" is a health plan that (1) imposes a specific dollar amount that the insured pays for a covered health care service or prescription drug and (2) does not include deductibles or coinsurance.

For physical and occupational therapy services, the bill applies to individual and group health insurance policies delivered, issued, renewed, amended, or continued in Connecticut that cover (1) basic hospital expenses; (2) basic medical-surgical expenses; (3) major medical expenses; or (4) hospital or medical services, including those provided under an HMO plan. For MRIs and CAT or PET scans, the bill applies to all fully insured individual and group health insurance plans. Because of the federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act

(ERISA), state insurance benefit mandates do not apply to self-insured benefit plans.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2025

§ 105 — PRESUMPTIVE MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY FOR HOMECARE

Eliminates Section 10 of sHB 5001, as amended by House Amendment “A” and replaces it with generally similar provisions; requires the DSS commissioner to establish a presumptive Medicaid eligibility system for people applying to the Medicaid-funded portion of CHCPE; and requires the state to pay for up to 90 days of home care applicants determined to be presumptively Medicaid eligible

The bill eliminates Section 10 of sHB 5001, as amended by House Amendment “A,” and replaces it with generally similar provisions. It requires the DSS commissioner to establish a presumptive Medicaid eligibility system for people applying to the Medicaid-funded portion of the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE). It requires the commissioner to adopt regulations to implement and administer the system.

A presumptive eligibility determination deems an applicant immediately eligible for CHCPE services prior to a full Medicaid-eligibility determination. Under the bill, the state will pay for up to 90 days of care for applicants who (1) require a skilled level of nursing care and (2) are determined presumptively eligible for Medicaid.

The bill requires the commissioner, to the extent federal law allows, to seek a federal Medicaid waiver or state plan amendment needed to try to get federal reimbursement for the costs of providing coverage to those determined presumptively eligible for Medicaid. Under the bill, the presumptive eligibility system does not take effect until the commissioner gets the federal reimbursement.

The bill allows the commissioner, in her discretion, to discontinue the system if (1) it has been operational for at least two years and (2) she determines it is not cost effective.

The bill also makes related minor, technical, and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

Eligibility Determinations

By law, DSS contracts with “access” agencies to determine CHCPE participants’ service needs and develop individualized care plans. The bill requires the commissioner to develop a screening tool for these agencies to use to determine if a presumptive eligibility applicant is (1) functionally able to live in a home or community setting (“functionally eligible”) and (2) likely to be financially eligible for Medicaid.

Under the bill, applicants must complete a Medicaid application on the day they are screened for functional eligibility or within 10 days after.

If the applicant meets the two criteria, DSS must make a presumptive eligibility determination and approve a care plan authorizing home care services within 10 days. The bill requires DSS to make a final Medicaid-eligibility determination by the end of the 90-day presumptive eligibility period, and may do so before then if the department receives information that the applicant is ineligible for Medicaid.

For a person determined presumptively eligible for Medicaid, the commissioner must, in keeping with federal law, determine the person retroactively eligible for Medicaid for up to 90 days before the date of his or her Medicaid application.

Written Agreement

The bill requires applicants to sign a written agreement attesting to the accuracy of the information they provide. The agreement must also (1) acknowledge that applicants will receive state-funded services up to 90 days after the home care services begin and (2) waive applicants’ right to receive continued coverage while waiting for a hearing they request in response to the department’s determination, during or at the end of the presumptive eligibility period, that they are either ineligible for Medicaid or did not provide information necessary for DSS to make the determination.

Reporting Requirements

By law, the commissioner must annually report certain CHCPE

information to the Human Services Committee. The bill adds the following to this required information:

1. the number of people determined presumptively eligible for Medicaid,
2. state savings based on institutional care costs that were averted by correctly determining people presumptively eligible, and
3. the number of people incorrectly determined presumptively eligible and the costs to provide them with the home care services before the final eligibility determination.

§ 106 — MEN’S HEALTH PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

Requires the DPH commissioner to create a campaign promoting community-based screening and education for common diseases affecting high-risk male populations

The bill requires the public health commissioner to create a public awareness and educational campaign promoting community-based screening and education for common diseases (e.g., colorectal or prostate cancer, hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, infectious diseases, depression, and anxiety) affecting high-risk male populations. She must annually report on the campaign to the Public Health Committee, starting by January 1, 2025.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 107 — HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY BOARD

Establishes the Higher Education Financial Sustainability Advisory Board, designates its members, assigns the board powers and duties, and requires public higher education institutions and the UConn Health Center to submit certain information to the board at the chairpersons’ request

The bill establishes, within the legislative department, the Higher Education Financial Sustainability Advisory Board.

Membership and Administration

The advisory board must consist of the following members:

1. the chairpersons and ranking members of the Appropriations Committee,
2. the chairpersons and ranking members of the Appropriations Higher Education subcommittee,
3. the chairpersons and ranking members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee,
4. the OPM secretary, and
5. the Auditors of Public Accounts.

The Appropriations Committee chairpersons and the OPM secretary must jointly serve as board chairpersons and schedule the first board meeting by September 1, 2024. The board must meet at least quarterly, and a majority of its members constitutes a quorum.

The Appropriations Committee's administrative staff must serve in that capacity for the board.

Board Powers and Duties

Under the bill, the board has the following powers and duties:

1. meet with public higher education institution and UConn Health Center administrators to accept and review financial and related reports (see below) and to discuss (a) barriers to meeting state workforce needs, (b) developing economic growth, and (c) achieving or maintaining affordable tuition;
2. obtain from any executive department, board, commission, or other state agency the assistance and data needed to carry out board powers and duties; and
3. perform other acts that may be necessary and appropriate to carry out the board's duties.

Reporting Requirements

The bill requires each public higher education institution and the

UConn Health Center to submit to the board, at the request of the board chairpersons, the following information:

1. a detailed financial report for the current fiscal year, subsequent fiscal year, and five preceding fiscal years, that identifies each revenue source, expense category, and any assumptions upon which the reports are based;
2. a detailed plan that eliminates a deficiency if the current or subsequent year's financial report projects one;
3. a summary and general ledger account code analysis of the institution's unrestricted net position for the most recently completed fiscal year;
4. the number of full- and part-time enrolled students disaggregated by in-state and out-of-state;
5. the number of vacant and filled employment positions disaggregated by bargaining unit and management confidential type with corresponding average salaries from the first payroll in October of the most recently completed fiscal year;
6. a summary of the institution's cost drivers;
7. a summary of budget constraints affecting (a) workforce developments, economic development efforts, and student quality of life, including time required for degree completion, and (b) research productivity and faculty retention and recruitment; and
8. any other financial, operational, performance, or other outcome information, metrics, or data the board requests.

Under the bill, the board may require an institution to submit the above information on a disaggregated basis.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 108 — EDUCATION MANDATE REVIEW ADVISORY COUNCIL

Modifies criteria for two of the council's 10 appointees

sHB 5437, § 1 (as amended by House "A"), establishes an Education Mandate Review Advisory Council to advise and provide annual reports to the Education Committee on the (1) cost and implementation of existing education mandates on local and regional boards of education and (2) impact of proposals to add to or revise these mandates. The council consists of 10 legislative appointees (six by the legislative leaders and four by the Education Committee's leadership).

This bill modifies the criteria for the Education Committee's Senate chairperson's and ranking member's appointments. sHB 5437 requires them to each appoint a public school teacher in Connecticut. This bill instead requires the (1) chairperson to appoint a representative of the Connecticut Education Association and (2) ranking member to appoint a representative of the American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 109 — POPULATION CENSUS USED FOR MUNICIPAL GRANTS

For FY 25, requires OPM to use DPH's 2021 population estimates to calculate municipal grants

For FY 25, the bill requires OPM to use DPH's 2021 population estimates when calculating municipal grants that are based, at least in part, on a municipality's current population.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 110 — BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION EXPANSION

Expands BOR to include the OPM secretary as an ex-officio, nonvoting member

By law, the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) is the governing body for CT State (i.e., the recent consolidation of the state's 12 regional community-technical colleges), the Connecticut State Universities, and Charter Oak State College. The bill expands BOR's membership by requiring the OPM secretary to serve as an ex-officio, nonvoting member. Under existing law, unchanged by the bill, the chief workforce officer and the commissioners of the Education, Economic and Community Development, Labor, and Public Health departments

must serve as ex-officio, nonvoting members.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 111 — TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS DURING CODIFICATION

Requires the Legislative Commissioners' Office to make necessary technical, grammatical, and punctuation changes when codifying the bill

The bill requires the Legislative Commissioners' Office to make technical, grammatical, and punctuation changes as necessary to codify the bill, including internal reference corrections.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 112-121 — REVISIONS TO MAGNET SCHOOL AND VO-AG CENTER FUNDING PROGRAMS; CREATION OF NEW CHOICE PROGRAM GRANT

Makes significant changes to education funding grant programs for (1) interdistrict magnet schools, and (2) regional agricultural science and technology centers (i.e., "vo-ag centers"); eliminates, for FY 25, the existing magnet school and vo-ag center grants, and replaces them with new grants under the choice program

The bill makes significant changes to education funding grant programs for (1) interdistrict magnet schools, and (2) regional agricultural science and technology centers (i.e., "vo-ag centers").

The bill eliminates, for FY 25, the existing magnet school and vo-ag center grants and replaces them with new grants under the choice program, which the bill creates. Under the bill, the choice program grant provides funding for local or regional boards of education (i.e., "school boards") that operate a magnet school or a vo-ag center. It also creates a grant for any magnet school operated by an entity that is not a board of education, such as an independent institution of higher education.

The bill uses student need weightings in the choice program grants that mirror existing law's weighting for education cost sharing (ECS) grants and charter school grants. This gives additional weight for students eligible for free or reduced-priced meals or free milk (FRPM) or designated as an English language learner. By doing this, these grants give added funding for students that meet those criteria.

After FY 25, the bill sunsets the law that limits the tuition that magnet

schools can charge sending districts to 58% of the tuition the magnet charged in FY 24. Currently, that limit is ongoing. It also sunsets the general authority for any magnet school operator to charge tuition after FY 25. Under existing law, the per-student state charter school grant increases for FY 25 but will not be fully funded.

Finally, the bill requires the State Department of Education (SDE), by June 30, 2024, and again on February 1, 2025, to calculate and give estimates to the relevant operators or towns for the new grants. It creates a similar estimate requirement for SDE regarding ECS and state charter school grants.

New Choice Program Grants (§ 112)

For FY 25, the bill provides choice program grants for vo-ag centers and two different interdistrict magnet school grants, based on who operates the magnet school.

The state's vo-ag centers serve high school students from multiple sending towns and provide an agricultural career education in addition to the comprehensive high school education.

Under the bill, one magnet school grant is for school board-operated magnets and the other is for operators that are not school boards, such as an independent institution of higher education. By law, an interdistrict magnet school (i.e., magnet school) must (1) enroll no more than 75% of its students from the same district with at least 25% coming from other districts; (2) maintain an enrollment that meets state standards for a reduced-isolation setting; (3) support racial, ethnic, and economic diversity; and (4) enroll students who are at least half time.

Grant Student Weights. For choice program grants, the bill creates a grant formula that applies weights for certain students, such as whether the students are (1) from families that qualify for FRPM or (2) English language learners.

The weights increase the grant amounts for those students because the grant amount is produced by multiplying the need student number by the foundation number (see below). For example, the bill uses a 30%

weighting for student poverty (i.e., students that qualify for FRPM) for each of these grants. If 100 students from a district qualify, then those students count as 130 students for grant purposes. This increases the grant as the weighted number becomes the new student number that is multiplied by the foundation amount.

Foundation. Under the bill, the foundation amount is \$11,525 per pupil, which is the same as in the ECS law.

Host Magnet and Vo-Ag Grants. Under the bill, grants for the magnets operated by a school board (i.e., a host magnet) and vo-ag center use similar factors.

For FY 25, the new amount the magnet operator or vo-ag center receives must be (1) the grant they would receive with the FY 24 grant method (current law) using FY 25 enrollment plus (2) 42% of the difference between the new grant calculation component (see below) and the amount they would have received if using the FY 24 method.

Grant Calculation Component. For FY 25, the new grant component is the sum of the (1) sending town adjustment factors for each sending town added together and (2) number of in-district students for the choice program multiplied by the applicable per-student grant (magnet or vo-ag). The sending town is the student's town of residence that would otherwise be responsible for educating the student.

Sending Town Adjustment Factor. The "sending town adjustment factor" is the number of the town's resident choice program students multiplied by the greater of the sending town's (1) weighted funding amount per pupil or (2) total revenue per pupil. The "weighted funding amount per pupil" is the (1) foundation amount multiplied by a town's total need students for the fiscal year before the grant payment year and (2) resulting product divided by the number of a town's resident students. The "total revenue per pupil" is the sum of the (1) per-pupil amount of state grants for FY 24; (2) tuition received for choice students for FY 24; and (3) where appropriate, tuition received for children in a regional educational service center (RES-C)-operated preschool program at a magnet school for FY 24. This means the FY 24 amounts become the

hold-harmless minimum for these grants.

Additional Definitions. Additionally, the bill defines the following terms for the new grants:

1. “total need students” is a student poverty weighting (as under ECS law) of (a) 30% of students eligible for FRPM plus 15% of any FRPM-eligible students above 60% of the total number of resident students and (b) 25% of the number of students identified as English language learners;
2. “resident students” is generally the number of students in a town enrolled in its public schools at the town’s expense as of October 1 of each year (as under the ECS law);
3. “resident choice program students” is the number of part-time and full-time students of a town enrolled or participating in a particular choice program; and
4. “out-of-district student” is a student (a) enrolled or participating in a choice program operated or maintained by a local or regional board of education and (b) who does not reside in the town or a member town of the local or regional board.

Non-Board of Education Magnet Schools. For this FY 25 grant, a magnet school operator is an entity that is (1) not a board of education (presumably, this includes RESCs); (2) a nonprofit private institution of higher education that has its main campus in the state; or (3) a third-party nonprofit corporation that the education commissioner approves.

Under the bill, a magnet school operator that is not a board of education is entitled to a grant for FY 25 that is (1) the grant amount they would receive with the FY 24 grant method (current law) using FY 25 student enrollment plus (2) 42% of the difference between the non-board of education calculation component (see below) and the amount they would have received using the FY 24 method with the FY 25 enrollment.

Non-Board of Education Calculation Component. This grant calculation component equals the product of the foundation and its total

magnet school program need students.

Hold Harmless Provision. The bill includes a specific hold harmless provision for FY 25 grants for operators that are not boards of education. This hold harmless grant is triggered when the revenue per student for FY 24 is greater than the per student revenue for FY 25.

The first measure for the comparison to make this determination is the sum of the total revenue per pupil during FY 24, divided by the total number of students enrolled in the same program during FY 24. The second measure is the sum of the adjusted total revenue per pupil divided by the number of students enrolled in the same program during FY 25. If the first measure is greater than the second, then the operator receives a hold harmless grant that is the sum of the (1) new grant as calculated above and (2) product of the (a) difference between total revenue per pupil for FY 24 and the new grant plus tuition for FY 25 (i.e., the adjusted total revenue per pupil) and (b) total number of students enrolled in the program during FY 25.

Under the bill, the “adjusted total revenue per pupil” is the sum of the following three things:

1. per student grant amount for a choice program student for FY 25,
2. per student amount of any general education tuition for a student in the choice program for FY 25, and
3. per child amount of any tuition charged for a child enrolled in a preschool program offered by a RESC operating an interdistrict magnet school preschool program for FY 25.

The bill creates a formula for calculating total magnet school program need students that (1) counts full- and part-time students at the magnet schools, (2) generally uses the ECS student weighting percentages, and (3) includes a *Sheff* region additional student weighting (see *Background – Sheff Region*). The foundation component for this grant also has an annual cost-of-living factor that potentially increases the foundation from one year to the next.

Student Weighting. The student need weighting reflects the ECS formula weighting as follows: (1) student poverty weighting is 30% of students eligible for FRPM plus 15% of any FRPM-eligible students above 60% of the total number of resident students and (2) a 25% weighting for the number of students identified as English language learners.

For FY 25, the bill includes a 30% additional student weighting for magnet schools that help the state meet its obligations under the *Sheff v. O'Neill* desegregation decision and related agreements or orders (see *Background – Sheff v. O'Neill State Supreme Court Decision*).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

Choice Program, ECS, and Charter School Grant Estimates (§ 113)

The bill requires SDE, by June 30, 2024, to calculate and give the relevant operators or towns estimates for the following grants for the next fiscal year (FY 25):

1. each choice program grant the bill establishes (SDE must notify each local and regional board of education and inter-district magnet school program operator that is not a local or regional board of education),
2. ECS grants (SDE must notify each town), and
3. charter school grants (SDE must notify the fiscal authority for each school).

The bill also requires SDE to annually prepare the estimates by February 1, 2025, for the charter school grants, and by December 31, 2024, for the ECS grants.

For each of these calculations, SDE must calculate the estimates for the next fiscal year using data collected during the current one.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Magnet School Grant Programs and Tuition (§§ 114 & 115)

For FY 25, the bill eliminates the current per-student magnet school grants and replaces them with the new choice program grants the bill creates. Under current law, a magnet school generally receives a \$3,060 state grant for each student from the district that hosts the school (home district) and, depending on the type of magnet school, one of the grants listed in the table below for students from sending towns. In 2023, the legislature added a provision, beginning in FY 25, that instead sets these amounts as the minimum per-student grant amounts, which allows SDE to increase the grants within available appropriations.

In addition to repealing the \$3,060 grant for host district students, the bill repeals all the magnet school grants shown in the following table for students from sending districts.

Table: Magnet School Grants Repealed Under the Bill

<i>Type of Magnet</i>	<i>Bill §</i>	<i>Current Law Minimum Amount for Sending Students</i>
Non- <i>Sheff</i> host magnet	114(c)(1)	\$7,227
Non- <i>Sheff</i> RESC magnet with less than 55% enrollment from one town	114(c)(3)(A)	8,058
Non- <i>Sheff</i> RESC magnet with 55% or more of enrollment from one town	114(c)(3)(B)	7,227
<i>Sheff</i> host magnet	114(c)(3)(F)	13,315
RESC magnet enrolling less than 60% of its students from Hartford (i.e., <i>Sheff</i> magnet)	114(c)(3)(D)(i)	10,652
RESC magnet enrolling less than 50% of its students from Hartford (i.e., <i>Sheff</i> magnet)	114(c)(3)(D)(ii)	8,058 (for half of the non-Hartford students enrolled over 50% of total enrollment) 10,652 (for all the other students)
Magnet operated by independent institution of higher education and that meets certain criteria (Goodwin University)	114(c)(3)(E)	65% of the 10,652 grant for students enrolled in both semesters each year 32.5% of 10,652 for those enrolled in one semester a year
Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts	114(c)(3)(H)	65% of 8,058 (the grant for RESC magnets with less than 55% from a single town)

The bill eliminates the requirement that magnet school programs operating at least half-time, but at less than full-time, receive a grant equal to 65% of what a full-time program would receive. (The bill's provisions on choice grants treat half-time students the same as full-time students.)

By law and unchanged by the bill, the total grant SDE pays to a magnet school operator must not exceed the aggregate of the operator's reasonable operating budget, less revenue from other sources, and SDE must make these grants within available appropriations.

Tuition. Under current law, beginning in FY 25, magnet school operators can charge up to 58% of the FY 24 tuition to the towns that send students to the magnets for grades kindergarten to 12. (For FY 24, as in earlier years, tuition was determined as the difference between the (1) average per pupil expenditure for the magnet school for the previous year and (2) total per pupil grant amount received from the state and any other revenue from other sources on a per pupil basis.)

The bill sunsets at the end of FY 25, the magnet school operators tuition limit of 58% of the FY 24 tuition. It does not give magnet operators authority to charge tuition for FY 26 and the following years.

Magnet Preschool Tuition Charged to Parents. Currently, RESC magnets (both in and outside the *Sheff* region) may charge FY 24 tuition of up to \$4,053 to parents or guardians of children attending preschool, but they cannot charge tuition to any parent or guardian with a family income at or below 75% of the state median income. Beginning in FY 25, current law limits the tuition amount to no more than 58% of the tuition charged during FY 24. The bill sunsets the 58% limit in FY 25, and does not give magnet operators the authority to charge tuition for FY 26 and the following years.

The bill creates the same tuition provisions mentioned above (58% tuition limit for FY 25, ban on charging tuition in FY 25 to any family below 75% of the state median income, and tuition ban for following years with the exception mentioned above) for an independent higher

education institution or an approved nonprofit operating a preschool as part of a magnet school. It similarly does not give these operators authority to charge tuition beginning in FY 26.

Under the bill, SDE is responsible for any unpaid tuition charged to a parent or guardian with a family income at or below 75% of the state median. The commissioner may conduct a comprehensive financial review of the operating budget of any magnet school charging tuition to verify the tuition rate.

Magnet Students and ECS Count. Under the bill, magnet school students are counted in the town where they reside for the student count for ECS grants, which codifies current practice.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

Background — Sheff v. O’Neill State Supreme Court Decision

In this 1996 decision, the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled that the state had a constitutional obligation to remedy the educational inequities in the Hartford schools caused by racial and ethnic isolation (*Sheff v. O’Neill*, 238 Conn. 1 (1996)). The court ordered the state legislature and the governor to craft a solution and legislation was passed to create voluntary desegregation in Hartford by creating magnet schools and using other programs, such as Open Choice.

Background — Sheff Region

This region includes the school districts for the towns of Avon, Bloomfield, Canton, East Granby, East Hartford, East Windsor, Ellington, Farmington, Glastonbury, Granby, Hartford, Manchester, Newington, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, South Windsor, Suffield, Vernon, West Hartford, Wethersfield, Windsor, and Windsor Locks.

Charter School Grant Increases (§ 116)

Currently, the per-student state charter school grant for FY 25 and each following year is the foundation amount plus 56.7% of the charter grant adjustment. The bill eliminates the provision that the grants be provided each following year. By law, the grants go to the charter school’s governing authority.

Charter Grant Factors. By law, the state charter grant has the same student need weighting percentages with the same factors (FRPM and English learner status) used in existing ECS law and in the bill for choice grants.

Under current law, the increase in the state grant is a percentage of a school's charter grant adjustment, which is the absolute value of the difference between the (1) foundation (\$11,525) and (2) charter full weighted funding per student for the state charter schools under a governing authority's control for the school year.

The "charter full weighted funding per student" is a value calculated as (1) the product of the total charter need students and the foundation, divided by (2) the number of enrolled students under the charter school governing authority's control for the school year. Total charter need students includes the weighting for FRPM and English learner status.

Grant. The current (FY 24) per-student grant for charter school governing authorities is the foundation amount plus 36.08% of its charter grant adjustment. Under current law, the per-student grant for FY 25 and each following year is the foundation plus 56.7% of the charter grant adjustment. The bill leaves the grant unchanged for FY 25, and sunsets it at the end that year.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

Vo-Ag Center Grants and Tuition (§§ 117-120)

Beginning with FY 25, the bill repeals the current \$5,200 per-student state grant minimum for vo-ag centers and replaces it with the vo-ag choice grant the bill creates. It also repeals related supplementary grants for vo-ag centers ranging from \$60 to \$500 per student.

Under current law, a vo-ag center can charge the sending towns tuition for the students they send to the program, up to 59.2% of the foundation (\$11,525) used for ECS, resulting in a maximum tuition of \$6,823. Beginning with FY 25, current law prohibits a vo-ag center from charging tuition that is more than 58% of the amount a vo-ag center charged in FY 24. At the end of FY 25, the bill sunsets the 58% limit on

tuition and does not give vo-ag centers the authority to charge tuition for FY 26 and beyond.

The bill repeals the requirement that a sending district provide students in their district an equivalent number of seats from one year to the next to enroll in the vo-ag program. Current law requires the districts to make available (1) at least the same number of seats as in any written agreement or, in the absence of one, the average number enrolled over the last three years and (2) specifically for each ninth-grade class, either the agreement number or the average number who enrolled in ninth grade in the last three years.

The bill also (1) repeals the requirement for districts that send students to a vo-ag program to pay tuition and (2) specifies that for a town's student count for the ECS grant, a student enrolled in a vo-ag center is counted in the town where the student resides, which codifies current practice.

For vo-ag grants under current law, the bill removes the requirement that they be within available appropriations for FY 24.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 121 — SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING AMOUNTS FOR ECS, CHARTER SCHOOL, MAGNET SCHOOL, OPEN CHOICE, AND VO-AG CENTER GRANTS

Requires SDE to apportion the \$150 million appropriated for FY 25 for "Education Finance Reform" in specific amounts for (1) supplemental funds for the following grants: ECS, charter schools, interdistrict magnet schools, Open Choice Program, and agriscience and technology centers, and (2) grants for specific projects, programs, towns, and agencies

Last year's budget act required SDE to apportion the \$150 million appropriated for "Education Finance Reform" for FY 25 to five major education grants: ECS, charter schools, magnet schools, Open Choice, and vo-ag centers. The bill modifies how the money is allocated including providing funds for new projects or programs.

The bill allocates \$139,626,522 to (1) supplement ECS grants and charter school grants and (2) provide the choice program grants (magnet schools, Open Choice, and vo-ag) the bill establishes (see above).

The bill specifically provides \$1,473,478 to supplement the amount appropriated to SDE's charter schools account and to be used for grants for the following charter school seat expansion:

1. Brass City Charter School, 40 seats;
2. Odyssey Community School, 36 seats;
3. Interdistrict School for the Arts and Communication, 52 seats;
and
4. Integrated Day Charter School, 22 seats.
5. This charter school supplement must take into account reducing the funds for Booker T. Washington Academy by 40 seats.

Funds for Plan, Database, and Mapping Project

The bill allocates the following funds for certain plans, a database, and a mapping project and requires SDE to make all payments below no later than September 30, 2024:

1. \$50,000 to be used by the education commissioner to develop a plan to convert the State Board of Education (SBE) into an advisory board and make the education commissioner the department head (see § 122 below);
2. \$400,000 to provide a grant-in-aid to the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education to develop a new or expand an existing database to collect and retain educator professional development records; and
3. \$100,000 for SDE to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) (under a statute that allows one agency to designate another through an MOU to use funds for a purpose) with UConn to provide the funds to the UConn School of Public Policy to conduct a study and comprehensive asset and capacity mapping for nonprofit organizations (see § 123 below).

Funds for Program, Municipalities, and Organizations

The bill allocates the following funds for certain programs, municipalities, or organizations and requires SDE to make all the payments below no later than September 30, 2024:

1. \$175,000 to provide a grant-in-aid to the New Haven Board of Education to purchase bus passes for state-owned or state-controlled bus public transportation service for students who are enrolled in grades nine to twelve, inclusive, in New Haven public schools;
2. \$175,000 to provide a grant-in-aid to the Hartford Board of Education to purchase bus passes for state-owned or state-controlled bus public transportation service for students who are enrolled in grades nine to 12, inclusive, in Hartford public schools;
3. \$5,000,000 to provide a grant-in-aid to the Hartford board of education for magnet school tuition assistance;
4. \$1,200,000 to provide a grant-in-aid to the Goodwin University Magnet Schools, Inc. for student enrollment expansion and compliance with the *Sheff* decision and settlement, as determined by the education commissioner;
5. \$650,000 to provide a grant-in-aid to InterCommunity Health Care to provide mental health services to students at the school-based health centers in the East Hartford school district;
6. \$200,000 to provide a grant-in-aid to the Connecticut Association of Schools for operating and personnel expenses, including hiring an assistant director of leadership and development;
7. \$150,000 to provide a grant-in-aid to the Artist Collective for arts enrichment for students in grades kindergarten to 12, inclusive; and
8. \$800,000 to provide a grant-in-aid to the Brother Carl Institute for tutoring and mentoring services for students in grades four to 12, inclusive, and developing a summer college preparation

program.

Under the current budget act, the funds are allocated as shown below:

1. \$68,499,497 to the ECS grants account in SDE to provide ECS grants;
2. \$9,378,313 to SDE's Charter Schools account to provide charter school operating grants;
3. \$40,188,429 to SDE's Magnet Schools account to increase per student grant amounts to magnet school operators that are not local or regional school boards (including magnets operated by RESCs, independent institutions of higher education, or other approved operators);
4. \$13,254,358 to SDE's Magnet Schools account to increase per student grant amounts to local and regional school boards that operate magnet schools;
5. \$11,430,343 to SDE's Open Choice Program account to increase per student grant amounts to local and regional school boards that are receiving districts under the Open Choice program; and
6. \$7,249,060 to school boards of education that operate vo-ag centers.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 122 — PLAN TO CONVERT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION INTO AN ADVISORY BOARD

Requires the education commissioner to develop a plan to convert SBE into an advisory board and make the education commissioner the department head

The bill requires the education commissioner to develop a plan to (1) convert SBE from its legal status as the agency department head to an advisory board within the department and (2) empower the education commissioner to become the department head. By January 1, 2026, the commissioner must submit the plan and any legislative

recommendations to the Education Committee.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 123 — ASSET AND CAPACITY MAPPING FOR NONPROFITS

Requires UConn’s School of Public Policy to conduct a study and comprehensive asset and capacity mapping for nonprofit organizations to support information-sharing and collaboration between nonprofits and communities; requires the school to provide an interim report and a final report to the Education Committee

The bill requires UConn’s School of Public Policy to conduct a study and comprehensive asset and capacity mapping for nonprofit organizations in Connecticut to support information-sharing and collaboration between the nonprofits and the communities they serve. The School of Public Policy must consult with state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and philanthropic associations while conducting the study.

Under the bill, the study and mapping must do the following:

1. assess the nonprofit organizations’ capacity to assist the state in addressing public needs and identifying assets’ availability and strength and services’ gaps or weaknesses;
2. provide an effective tool for sharing data, documents, and communication among the nonprofit organizations to strengthen their capacity to serve state residents;
3. provide a resource for policymakers to determine gaps in services and capacity and enhance collaboration among different nonprofit organizations working in the same geographic areas and serving the same target population;
4. provide information to policymakers on ways to ensure that resources are invested in areas and populations with the greatest need; and
5. present data by town, by county, and statewide, as well as by each regional council of government, and include a summary of available resources, including nonprofit organizations and state

agencies, to create a database of the state's nonprofit organizations by target service population, mission, and geography.

The bill requires OPM, the Department of Consumer Protection, the secretary of the state, and any other state agency that contracts with nonprofits to provide the School of Public Policy, upon its request, with any data needed to conduct the study and mapping.

The school must submit to the Education Committee a preliminary report by October 1, 2024, and a final report by June 30, 2025.

The final report must include (1) the comprehensive asset and capacity mapping for nonprofit organizations in Connecticut, (2) a model to enhance collaboration among nonprofit organizations to ensure that state investments are addressing service gaps and not contributing to duplicative efforts or competition among the organizations, and the extent that the lack of resources, including budget deficits or other fiscal shortfalls, or state agency policies or regulations impede collaboration and lead to duplicative efforts and services, and (3) guidance on how to use the comprehensive asset and capacity mapping to create a continuum of care document.

The bill also requires the School of Public Policy to make the final report and the comprehensive asset and capacity mapping available on its website by June 30, 2025.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 124 — EXPANDS ECS REGIONAL BONUS TO INCLUDE TRIBES

Creates an ECS bonus for towns with students who reside in tribal reservations

By law, the ECS grant formula provides a regional bonus for towns that are part of a regional school district or that pay tuition for their students to attend an endowed academy that functions as the public high school for the town it is located in.

The bill adds a new regional bonus for any town with resident students who reside within the boundaries of reservations set aside for

the following tribes:

1. the Paucatuck Eastern Pequot tribe,
2. the Schaghticoke tribe,
3. the Golden Hill Paugussett tribe,
4. the Mashantucket Pequot tribe, and
5. the Mohegan tribe.

The grant bonus equals \$100 for each student multiplied by the number of grades, kindergarten to grade 12, inclusive, in the school district for the town.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 125 — SDE DISTRIBUTION OF PARAEDUCATOR FUNDING

Sets a September 1, 2024, deadline for SDE to distribute to school boards the FY 23 amount allocated to the department from ARPA funding for paraeducator professional development

The bill requires the State Department of Education (SDE), by September 1, 2024, to distribute to local and regional boards of education the amount allocated to the department for paraeducator professional development for FY 23 from ARPA funding. SDE must distribute the funds to school boards, proportionately based on the number of paraeducators each board employs, to cover the cost of providing them professional development and in-service training.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 126 & 128 — PARAEDUCATOR HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAMS

Extends by one year an HSA subsidy program for paraeducators and expands it to cover high deductible health plans for Medicare-eligible paraeducators; requires the comptroller to establish a one-year premium subsidy program for school boards that provide paraeducators with certain health plans; requires the comptroller and SDE commissioner to enter into an MOU related to these programs; and repeals a program providing stipends to paraeducators to purchase a qualified health plan through Access Health CT

HSA and High-Deductible Health Plan Subsidy Program

PA 23-204, § 203, required the comptroller to establish a program for FY 24, within available appropriations, providing subsidies to paraeducators who (1) open a health savings account (HSA) and (2) are employed by a local or regional board of education.

The bill extends the program to FY 25 and expands it to also provide subsidies to paraeducators, employed by boards of education, who are eligible for Medicare and enroll in a high deductible health plan (HDHP).

Under current law, the subsidy is a percentage of the initial investment made to open the account. The bill instead sets the subsidy as a percentage of the deductible for the paraeducator's health plan, minus the amount of any employer contributions to an HSA or health reimbursement account. As under current law, (1) the comptroller specifies the percentage and maximum subsidy and (2) no paraeducator may receive more than one subsidy.

The bill (1) allows the comptroller to work with boards of education to distribute the subsidies and (2) eliminates the requirement for paraeducators to apply to the comptroller to participate in the program.

Premium Subsidy Program for School Boards

The bill requires the comptroller, for FY 25, to set up a program providing subsidies to boards of education that provide coverage to paraeducators and their dependents under a health benefit plan (generally, a health insurance plan) or partnership plan (a health benefit plan the comptroller offers to nonstate public employers and certain others), but not under an HDHP. The subsidies must be given from any funds appropriated for this purpose.

Under this program, the subsidy must be no more than 10% of the aggregate premium cost, including the employee and employer shares, the board paid for coverage under the plan, divided by the number of paraeducators employed by the board and enrolled in health coverage. The subsidy must be used to offset the employee's share of the premium that is deducted from the paychecks of each paraeducator the board

employed during any pay period in FY 25.

MOU

The bill requires the comptroller and SDE commissioner to enter into a memorandum of understanding, under existing procedures, to allow the comptroller to use the \$5 million appropriated to SDE for assistance to paraeducators under the FY 24-25 budget act, to implement these two subsidy programs.

Repealer

The bill also repeals a program that, under current law, gives stipends to eligible paraeducators to buy silver-level health insurance plans through Access Health CT.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024, except the repealer is effective upon passage.

§ 127 — SERC FUNDING ALLOCATION

Requires, rather than allows, the SDE commissioner to allocate funds to the State Education Resource Center

Current law allows the SDE commissioner to allocate funds to the State Education Resource Center (SERC) so that it may provide professional development services, technical assistance and evaluation activities, policy analysis, and other forms of assistance to the following entities: (1) local and regional boards of education, (2) SDE, (3) state and local charter schools, (4) the Technical Education and Career System, (5) school readiness program providers, and (6) other education entities and providers. The bill makes the commissioner’s fund allocation to SERC required rather than optional.

Under existing law, SERC must spend these funds in line with procedures and conditions set by the SDE commissioner.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§§ 129-132 — PUBLIC HEARING EXEMPTION FOR CERTAIN ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORIZATIONS

For certain transportation capital projects, establishes an exemption from the requirement to have a public hearing when there is a petition signed by 25 people on an application for

a (1) structures, dredging, and fill permit; (2) tidal or inland wetland activity permit; or (3) certification to conduct certain work in a floodplain

Under certain circumstances, existing law requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection commissioner to hold a public hearing on an application for authorization to:

1. conduct a regulated activity in a tidal or inland wetland (e.g., draining, dredging, excavating, removing soil, depositing material);
2. perform certain work in the tidal, coastal, or navigable waters of the state waterward of the coastal jurisdiction line (e.g., dredge, erect structures, place fill); or
3. undertake activities or critical activities (i.e., those with a certain chance of flooding) by a state agency in or affecting a floodplain (generally, a “regulated activity”).

One of these circumstances is when the commissioner receives a petition signed by at least 25 people asking for a hearing.

The bill exempts the commissioner from having to hold a public hearing after receiving one of these petitions if the:

1. regulated activity is a transportation capital project, but not one at an airport;
2. federal government requires public participation on the activity; and
3. person proposing to do the activity (a) sought public input on it by implementing a plan a federal agency approved and (b) gave the commissioner a copy of the plan, a written summary of the public participation opportunities involved, and a copy or record of the comments received and how they were responded to or addressed.

Despite the above exemption, the bill requires the commissioner to hold a public hearing when she receives a petition that includes specific

facts to show either that:

1. the legal rights, duties, or privileges of at least one signatory will or may reasonably be expected to be affected by the regulated activity or
2. the regulated activity involves conduct that has or is reasonably likely to unreasonably pollute, impair, or destroy the public trust in the state's air, water, or other natural resources.

In the above cases, the petition must identify the relevant law or regulation that the proposed regulated activity is alleged to not meet. The commissioner must give a copy of the petition to the person proposing the activity, who then has seven business days to object to the petition for failing to have the specific facts required above.

Under the bill, the commissioner must (1) determine if the petition meets the above requirements and (2) give written notice of her decision to the person who submitted the petition and the person who proposed the regulated activity. (It does not specify a timeframe for her to do this.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§§ 133-136 — STATE EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE FOR BOARDS OF DIRECTORS OF CERTAIN QUASI-PUBLIC AGENCIES

Allows members of the boards of directors of SERC, CLC, CPA, and CAA to join the state employee health insurance plan if they meet certain criteria and requirements

The bill allows the members of the boards of directors of SERC, the Connecticut Lottery Corporation (CLC), the Connecticut Port Authority (CPA), and the Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA) to participate in the state employee health insurance plan if they meet certain criteria. For all of these members, the bill limits eligibility to those who are not otherwise eligible to participate in the plan. For the SERC and CLC members, the bill further limits eligibility to only those members whose nominations must be confirmed by both chambers of the General Assembly.

Under the bill, each member who opts to join the health insurance plan must pay the same percentage of the premium that state employees

pay for the type of coverage selected. SERC, CLC, CPA, or CAA (as applicable) must reimburse the appropriate state agency for the remainder of the premium and any other costs incurred due to the member's participation.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§§ 243-249 — DEFICIENCY APPROPRIATIONS

Please refer to the fiscal note for a summary of these sections