House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 773

January Session, 2025

Substitute House Bill No. 7255

House of Representatives, April 24, 2025

The Committee on Judiciary reported through REP. STAFSTROM of the 129th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING JUDICIAL BRANCH OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES AND THE DUTIES OF JUDICIAL BRANCH PERSONNEL.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2026*) (a) As used in this section:

(1) "Public agency" has the same meaning as provided in section 1-200 of the general statutes.

(2) "Personal information" means a: (A) Home address of a primary residence; (B) home telephone number; (C) mobile telephone number; (D) personal electronic mail address; (E) Social Security number; (F) driver's license number; (G) federal tax identification number; (H) license plate number or unique identifier of a vehicle; (I) birth or marital record; or (J) child's name. "Personal information" does not include information that has been publicly displayed that the protected individual has not requested to be removed, or information that is relevant to and displayed as part of a news story, commentary, an

editorial or any other speech on a matter of public concern.

(3) "Protected individual" means: (A) A justice or judge of a court established under article XX of the State Constitution; (B) a senior judge appointed pursuant to section 51-50i of the general statutes; (C) a state referee appointed pursuant to section 52-434 of the general statutes, as amended by this act; (D) a family support magistrate appointed pursuant to section 46b-231 of the general statutes; (E) a family support referee appointed pursuant to section 46b-236 of the general statutes; and (F) a spouse, a child or a dependent who resides in the same household as an individual described in subparagraphs (A) to (E), inclusive, of this subdivision.

(4) "Publish" means to post or otherwise make available to the public on the Internet, social media or social networks.

(b) There is established an Office of Information Privacy within the Judicial Branch.

(c) A protected individual may request that the Office of Information Privacy direct a public agency to: (1) Not publish any specific personal information identified by the protected individual; or (2) remove such specific personal information that has already been published.

(d) The Office of Information Privacy shall have the following powers and duties:

(1) Certify that an individual requesting to have personal information removed from the Internet, social media or social network or to not publish personal information on the Internet, social media or social network is a protected individual.

(2) Work with the protected individual to identify the specific personal information that the protected individual is seeking to have removed if it has already been published including the exact Internet web site address where the content appears, if available, and, if the personal information is a land record, the exact Internet web site address of the record as it appears on such web site, if available, and the volume

and page number that indicates where the published land record is recorded.

(3) After certifying that a requestor is a protected individual, provide the public agency with the specific personal information that the individual is seeking to have removed if it has already been published including the exact Internet web site address where the content appears, if available, and, if it is a land record, the exact Internet web site address of the record as it appears on such web site, if available, and the volume and page number that indicates where the published land record is recorded, and direct that the personal information be removed as soon as practicable.

(4) Work with a protected individual to identify the specific personal information that the individual does not want to be published including the volume and page number, if the personal information is recorded in a land record.

(5) After certifying that a requestor is a protected individual, provide the public agency with the specific personal information that the individual does not want to be published including the volume and page number, if the personal information is recorded in a land record.

(6) Inform the public agency whenever a previously certified protected individual no longer meets the definition of a protected individual and is no longer eligible to (A) have personal information removed from the Internet, social media or social network, or (B) request that a public agency not publish personal information on the Internet, social media or social network.

(7) Take any other actions necessary to fulfill the purposes of this section.

(e) Upon receipt of a request pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, a public agency shall promptly acknowledge receipt of the request by electronic mail and: (1) Take steps reasonably necessary to ensure that any specific personal information identified by the protected individual

is not published; or (2) if such specific personal information is already published, remove the personal information identified as quickly as practicable after receipt of the request.

(f) No employee of a public agency shall be held civilly liable for any damages or injuries that occur as a result of the failure to remove requested personal information of a protected individual from the Internet, social media or social networks, provided the employee acted in good faith and in accordance with the laws governing the handling of such information.

(g) For purposes of this section, an employee shall be deemed to have acted in good faith if the employee (1) reasonably believed that such employee's actions were in compliance with applicable laws concerning the protection of personal information, and (2) did not engage in gross negligence, wilful misconduct or intentional wrongdoing.

Sec. 2. Subsection (g) of section 17a-28 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(g) The department shall disclose records, subject to subsections (b) and (c) of this section, without the consent of the person who is the subject of the record, to:

(1) The person named in the record or such person's authorized representative, provided such disclosure shall be limited to information (A) contained in the record about such person or about such person's biological or adoptive minor child, if such person's parental rights to such child have not been terminated; and (B) identifying an individual who reported abuse or neglect of the person, including any tape recording of an oral report pursuant to section 17a-103, if a court determines that there is reasonable cause to believe the reporter knowingly made a false report or that the interests of justice require disclosure;

(2) An employee of the department for any purpose reasonably

related to the performance of such employee's duties;

(3) A guardian ad litem or attorney appointed to represent a child or youth in litigation affecting the best interests of the child or youth;

(4) An attorney representing a parent, guardian or child in a petition filed in the Superior Court pursuant to section 17a-112 or 46b-129, provided (A) if such records do not pertain to such attorney's client or such client's child, such records shall not be further disclosed to another individual or entity by such attorney except pursuant to the order of a court of competent jurisdiction, (B) if such records are confidential pursuant to federal law, such records shall not be disclosed to such attorney or such attorney's client unless such attorney or such attorney's client is otherwise entitled to such records, and (C) nothing in this subdivision shall limit the disclosure of records under subdivision (3) of this subsection;

(5) The Attorney General, any assistant attorney general or any other legal counsel retained to represent the department during the course of a legal proceeding involving the department or an employee of the department;

(6) The Child Advocate or the Child Advocate's designee;

(7) The Chief Public Defender or the Chief Public Defender's designee for purposes of ensuring competent representation by the attorneys with whom the Chief Public Defender contracts to provide legal and guardian ad litem services to the subjects of such records and for ensuring accurate payments for services rendered by such attorneys;

(8) The Chief State's Attorney or the Chief State's Attorney's designee for purposes of investigating or prosecuting (A) an allegation related to child abuse or neglect, (B) an allegation that an individual made a false report of suspected child abuse or neglect, (C) an allegation that a mandated reporter failed to report suspected child abuse or neglect in accordance with section 17a-101a, provided such prosecuting authority shall have access to records of a child charged with the commission of a

delinquent act, who is not being charged with an offense related to child abuse, only while the case is being prosecuted and after obtaining a release, or (D) an allegation of fraud in the receipt of public or private benefits, provided no information identifying the subject of the record is disclosed unless such information is essential to such investigation or prosecution;

(9) A state or federal law enforcement officer, including a military law enforcement authority under the United States Department of Defense, for purposes of investigating (A) an allegation related to child abuse or neglect, (B) an allegation that an individual made a false report of suspected child abuse or neglect, or (C) an allegation that a mandated reporter failed to report suspected child abuse or neglect in accordance with section 17a-101a;

(10) A foster or prospective adoptive parent, if the records pertain to a child or youth currently placed with the foster or prospective adoptive parent, or a child or youth being considered for placement with the foster or prospective adoptive parent, and the records are necessary to address the social, medical, psychological or educational needs of the child or youth, provided no information identifying a biological parent is disclosed without the permission of such biological parent;

(11) The Governor, when requested in writing in the course of the Governor's official functions, the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human services, the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the judiciary or the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children, when requested in writing by any of such committees in the course of such committee's official functions, and upon a majority vote of such committee, provided no name or other identifying information is disclosed unless such information is essential to the gubernatorial or legislative purpose;

(12) The Office of Early Childhood for the purpose of (A) determining the suitability of a person to care for children in a facility licensed

pursuant to section 19a-77, 19a-80, 19a-87b or 19a-421; (B) determining the suitability of such person for licensure; (C) determining the suitability of a person to provide child care services to a child and receive a child care subsidy pursuant to section 17b-749k; (D) an investigation conducted pursuant to section 19a-80f; (E) notifying the office when the Department of Children and Families places an individual licensed or certified by the office on the child abuse and neglect registry pursuant to section 17a-101k; or (F) notifying the office when the Department of Children and Families possesses information regarding an office regulatory violation committed by an individual licensed or certified by the office;

(13) The Department of Developmental Services, to allow said department to determine eligibility, facilitate enrollment and plan for the provision of services to a child who is a client of said department and who is applying to enroll in or is enrolled in said department's behavioral services program. At the time that a parent or guardian completes an application for enrollment of a child in the Department of Developmental Services' behavioral services program, or at the time that said department updates a child's annual individualized plan of care, said department shall notify such parent or guardian that the Department of Children and Families may provide records to the Department of Developmental Services for the purposes specified in this subdivision without the consent of such parent or guardian;

(14) Any individual or entity for the purposes of identifying resources that will promote the permanency plan of a child or youth approved by the court pursuant to sections 17a-11, 17a-111b and 46b-129;

(15) A state agency that licenses or certifies a person to educate, care for or provide services to children or youths;

(16) A judge or employee of a Probate Court who requires access to such records in order to perform such judge's or employee's official duties;

(17) A judge of the Superior Court for purposes of determining the

appropriate disposition of a child adjudicated as delinquent;

(18) A judge of the Superior Court in a criminal prosecution for purposes of in camera inspection whenever (A) the court has ordered that the record be provided to the court; or (B) a party to the proceeding has issued a subpoena for the record;

(19) A judge of the Superior Court and all necessary parties in a family violence proceeding when such records concern family violence with respect to the child who is the subject of the proceeding or the parent of such child who is the subject of the proceeding;

(20) The Auditors of Public Accounts, or their representative, provided no information identifying the subject of the record is disclosed unless such information is essential to an audit conducted pursuant to section 2-90;

(21) A local or regional board of education, provided the records are limited to educational records created or obtained by the state or Connecticut Unified School District #2, established pursuant to section 17a-37;

(22) The superintendent of schools for any school district for the purpose of determining the suitability of a person to be employed by the local or regional board of education for such school district pursuant to subsection (a) of section 10-221d;

(23) The Department of Motor Vehicles for the purpose of criminal history records checks pursuant to subsection (e) of section 14-44, provided information disclosed pursuant to this subdivision shall be limited to information included on the Department of Children and Families child abuse and neglect registry established pursuant to section 17a-101k, subject to the provisions of sections 17a-101g and 17a-101k concerning the nondisclosure of findings of responsibility for abuse and neglect;

(24) The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services for the purpose of treatment planning for young adults who have transitioned

from the care of the Department of Children and Families;

(25) The superintendent of a public school district or the executive director or other head of a public or private institution for children providing care for children or a private school (A) pursuant to sections 17a-11, 17a-101b, 17a-101c, 17a-101i, 17a-111b and 46b-129, or (B) when the Department of Children and Families places an individual employed by such institution or school on the child abuse and neglect registry pursuant to section 17a-101k;

(26) The Department of Social Services for the purpose of (A) determining the suitability of a person for payment from the Department of Social Services for providing child care; (B) promoting the health, safety and welfare of a child or youth receiving services from either department; or (C) investigating allegations of fraud provided no information identifying the subject of the record is disclosed unless such information is essential to any such investigation;

(27) The Court Support Services Division of the Judicial Branch, **[**to allow the division to determine**]** for the purpose of (A) determining the supervision and treatment needs of a child or youth or any other person, and provide appropriate supervision and treatment services to such child or youth **[**, provided such disclosure shall be limited to information that identifies the child or youth, or a member of such child's or youth's immediate family, as being or having been (A) committed to the custody of the Commissioner of Children and Families as delinquent, (B) under the supervision of the Commissioner of Children and Families, or (C) enrolled in the voluntary services program operated by the Department of Children and Families;

(28) The Court Support Services Division of the Judicial Branch for the purpose of**]** or any other person, or (B) sharing common case records to track recidivism of juvenile offenders;

[(29)**]** (28) The birth-to-three program's referral intake office for the purpose of (A) determining eligibility of, (B) facilitating enrollment for, and (C) providing services to (i) substantiated victims of child abuse and

neglect with suspected developmental delays, and (ii) newborns impacted by withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure;

[(30)**]** (29) The Department of Public Health for (A) the purpose of notification when the Commissioner of Children and Families places an individual licensed or certified by the Department of Public Health on the child abuse and neglect registry established pursuant to section 17a-101k, and (B) purposes relating to the licensure of the Albert J. Solnit Children's Center and the administration of licensing requirements established pursuant to or set forth in sections 19a-134 and 19a-498;

[(31)**]** (30) The Department of Correction, for the purpose of determining the supervision and treatment needs of a child or youth, and providing appropriate supervision and treatment services to such child or youth;

[(32)**]** (31) Any child placing agency subject to licensure by the Department of Children and Families, for the purpose of determining the suitability of a person (A) for employment by such agency, or (B) to adopt or provide foster care pursuant to sections 17a-114 and 17a-151;

[(33)**]** (32) The Department of Administrative Services, for the purpose of determining whether an applicant for employment with the state, who would have contact with children in the course of such employment, appears on the child abuse or neglect registry maintained pursuant to section 17a-101k; and

[(34)**]** (33) Any individual, upon the request of such individual, when the information concerns an incident of abuse or neglect that resulted in the fatality or near fatality of a child or youth, provided (A) such disclosure shall be limited to (i) the cause and circumstances of such fatality or near fatality, (ii) the age and gender of such child or youth, (iii) a description of any previous reports of or investigations into child abuse or neglect that are relevant to the child abuse or neglect that led to such fatality or near fatality, (iv) the findings of any such investigations, and (v) a description of any services provided and

actions taken by the state on behalf of such child or youth that are relevant to the child abuse or neglect that led to such fatality or near fatality, and (B) the department shall not make any disclosure that is prohibited by the provisions of any relevant federal law, including, but not limited to, Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act, as amended from time to time. The department may withhold the disclosure of any records described in this subdivision if the commissioner determines that such disclosure may (i) result in harm to the safety or well-being of the child or youth who is the subject of such records, the family of such child or youth, or any individual who made a report of abuse or neglect pertaining to such child or youth, or (ii) interfere with a pending criminal investigation.

Sec. 3. Subsection (a) of section 29-32b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

(a) There is established a Board of Firearms Permit Examiners, within the Office of Governmental Accountability established under section 1-300, to be comprised of **[**nine**]** eight members **[**, eight of whom**]** who shall be appointed by the Governor to serve during the Governor's term and until such members' successors are appointed and qualify. **[**, and one of whom shall be a retired judge of the Superior Court appointed by the Chief Court Administrator.**]** With the exception of two public members, the members appointed by the Governor shall be appointed from nominees of the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection, the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Connecticut State Association of Chiefs of Police, the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection, The Connecticut State Rifle and Revolver Association, Inc., and Ye Connecticut Gun Guild, Inc., and each of said organizations shall be entitled to representation on the board. At least one member of the board appointed by the Governor shall be a lawyer licensed to practice in this state who shall act as chairman of the board during the hearing of appeals brought under this section.

Sec. 4. Subsection (f) of section 42a-9-518 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

(f) (1) A person identified in any record filed pursuant to sections 42a-9-501 to 42a-9-526, inclusive, may petition the Tax and Administrative Appeals Session of the Superior Court to invalidate a record, when such record was falsely filed or amended. The court shall review such petition and determine whether cause exists to doubt the validity of such record. Upon a determination that such cause exists, the court **[**shall**]** may, not later than sixty days after the date of such determination, hold a hearing to determine whether to invalidate such record or grant any other relief deemed appropriate by the court. The court's finding may be made solely on a review of the documentation attached to the petition and the responses, if any, of the person named as a secured party in the financing statement record and without hearing any oral testimony if none is offered by the secured party. There shall be no fee to petition for a hearing under this section. The person petitioning the court to invalidate a record shall send a copy of the petition to all parties named in such record.

(2) A person who files a petition under subdivision (1) of this subsection shall include, as part of such petition, a certified copy of the record that such person seeks to invalidate.

(3) In determining whether cause exists to doubt the validity of a record under subdivision (1) of this subsection, the court may consider factors that include, but are not limited to, whether (A) the record is related to a valid existing commercial or financial transaction, or a potential commercial or financial transaction, or a judgment of a court of competent jurisdiction; (B) the same individual is named as both debtor and creditor; (C) an individual is named as a transmitting utility; and (D) the record has been filed with the intent to defraud, deceive, injure or harass a person, business or governmental entity.

(4) If the court determines **[**after a hearing**]** that a record identified in a petition filed pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection is not valid,

the court shall render a judgment that such record is void in its entirety and shall direct the custodian of such record, when feasible, to note that such record is not valid. The court may grant such other relief as it deems appropriate. The petitioner under subdivision (1) of this subsection shall provide a copy of the petition and the judgment of the court granting such petition to the custodian of the record adjudged invalid by the court.

Sec. 5. Subsection (a) of section 46b-3 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) The Chief Court Administrator shall appoint such family relations personnel as the Chief Court Administrator deems necessary for the proper operation of the family relations sessions. The salaries and duties of such **[**officers**]** personnel shall be determined by the judges of the Supreme Court in accordance with the compensation plan established under section 51-12. For the purposes of any investigation or pretrial conference the judge presiding at any family relations session may employ the services of any probation officer, including those under the direction of Adult Probation Services, physician, psychologist, psychiatrist or family counselor. The Chief Court Administrator may assign, reassign and modify the assignments of such family relations personnel as such administrator deems necessary to be in the best interest of the disposition of family relations matters.

Sec. 6. Subsection (d) of section 46b-124 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

(d) Records of cases of juvenile matters involving delinquency proceedings shall be available to (1) Judicial Branch employees who, in the performance of their duties, require access to such records, (2) judges and employees of the Probate Court who, in the performance of their duties, require access to such records, and (3) employees and authorized agents of municipal, state or federal agencies involved in (A) the delinquency proceedings, (B) the provision of services directly to the

child, (C) the delivery of court diversionary programs, or (D) the evaluation of a proposed transfer of a firearm to a person under the age of twenty-one in this state or any other state, as required by Title II, Section 12001 of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, Public Law 117-159, as amended from time to time. Such employees and authorized agents include, but are not limited to, law enforcement officials, community-based youth service bureau officials, state and federal prosecutorial officials, school officials in accordance with section 10-233h, court officials including officials of both the regular criminal docket and the docket for juvenile matters and officials of the Division of Criminal Justice, the Division of Public Defender Services, the Department of Children and Families, if the child is under the oversight of the department's administrative unit pursuant to section 17a-3b, provided such disclosure shall be limited to information that identifies the child as residing in a justice facility or incarcerated, or, if the child is **[**committed pursuant to section 46b-129**]** receiving services from the department, provided such disclosure shall be limited to (i) information that identifies the child as the subject of the delinquency petition, or (ii) the records of the delinquency proceedings, when the **[**juvenile court orders the department to provide**]** department is providing services to said child, the Court Support Services Division and agencies under contract with the Judicial Branch. Such records shall also be available to (I) the attorney representing the child, including the Division of Public Defender Services, in any proceeding in which such records are relevant, (II) the parents or guardian of the child, until such time as the subject of the record reaches the age of majority, (III) the subject of the record, upon submission of satisfactory proof of the subject's identity, pursuant to guidelines prescribed by the Office of the Chief Court Administrator, provided the subject has reached the age of majority, (IV) law enforcement officials and prosecutorial officials conducting legitimate criminal investigations, as provided in subsection (o) of this section or orders to detain pursuant to section 46b-133, (V) a state or federal agency providing services related to the collection of moneys due or funding to support the service needs of eligible juveniles, provided such disclosure shall be limited to that information necessary

for the collection of and application for such moneys, (VI) members and employees of the Board of Pardons and Paroles and employees of the Department of Correction who, in the performance of their duties, require access to such records, provided the subject of the record has been charged with or has been convicted of a crime in the regular criminal docket of the Superior Court and such records are relevant to the performance of a risk and needs assessment of such person while such person is incarcerated, the determination of such person's suitability for release from **[**incarceration**]** the custody of the Department of Correction or for a pardon, or the determination of the supervision and treatment needs of such person while on parole or other supervised release, and (VII) members and employees of the Judicial Review Council who, in the performance of their duties related to said council, require access to such records. Records disclosed pursuant to this subsection shall not be further disclosed, except that information contained in such records may be disclosed in connection with bail or sentencing reports in open court during criminal proceedings involving the subject of such information, or as otherwise provided by law.

Sec. 7. Subsection (f) of section 46b-124 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

(f) Information concerning a child who is the subject of an order to take such child into custody or other process that has been entered into a central computer system pursuant to subsection (i) of section 46b-133 may be disclosed to employees and authorized agents of the Judicial Branch, law enforcement agencies and the Department of Children and Families, provided the information is limited to a child who **[**has been committed pursuant to section 46b-129**]** is receiving services from the department, in accordance with policies and procedures established by the Chief Court Administrator.

Sec. 8. Section 47a-26e of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

If an order of payments is in effect on the date of judgment in the trial

court and an appeal is taken by any party, the order shall remain in effect and compliance with the order shall constitute satisfactory compliance with **[**the bond requirement**]** subsection (a) of section 47a-35a, as amended by this act.

Sec. 9. Section 47a-35a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) When any appeal is taken by the defendant occupying a dwelling unit in an action of summary process, the chief clerk of the Appellate Court, or the chief clerk's designee, shall transmit notice of the pendency of the appeal to the Superior Court that rendered the judgment that is the subject of the appeal. Upon receipt of the notice of the pendency of such appeal, the Superior Court shall schedule and conduct a hearing to guarantee payment for all rents that may accrue during the pendency of such appeal. The Superior Court shall schedule and conduct such hearing not later than fourteen days after the date of receiving notice of the pendency of such appeal. After conducting such hearing the Superior Court may order the defendant to deposit with the court (1) an amount equal to the defendant's portion of the last-agreed upon rent, or (2) where no lease had existed, an amount equal to the reasonable value for such use and occupancy that may so accrue. After hearing thereon, the court shall order the defendant to deposit with the court payments for the reasonable fair rental value of the use and occupancy of the premises during the pendency of such appeal accruing from the date of such order. Such order shall permit the payment of such amount in monthly installments, as it becomes due. If all or a portion of the defendant's rent is being paid to the plaintiff by a housing authority, municipality, state agency or similar entity, this requirement shall be satisfied if the defendant deposits with the court an amount equal to the defendant's portion of the rent.

(b) In any other appeal the **[**court**]** Superior Court on its own motion or on motion of the parties, may fix a sufficient bond with surety to the adverse party in such amount as it may determine.

(c) When any appeal is taken by a plaintiff in an action of summary

process, the [court] Superior Court, upon motion of the plaintiff and after a hearing thereon, shall order the defendant to deposit with the court payments in monthly installments, as each payment becomes due, for the reasonable fair rental value of the use and occupancy of the premises during the pendency of the appeal accruing from the date of such order.

Sec. 10. Subsection (b) of section 51-5c of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(b) (1) The following information contained in the registry of protective orders shall not be subject to disclosure and may be accessed only in accordance with this section, unless otherwise ordered by the court: (A) Any information that would identify a person protected by an order contained in the registry; (B) any information that is confidential pursuant to state or federal law, including, but not limited to, any information that is confidential pursuant to a court order; and (C) any information entered in the registry pursuant to an ex parte order prior to a hearing by a court having jurisdiction over the parties and the subject matter.

(2) Any judge of the Superior Court or any employee of the Judicial [Department] Branch who is authorized by policies and procedures adopted by the Chief Court Administrator pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall have access to such information. The Chief Court Administrator may grant access to such information to personnel of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, the Department of Correction, the Department of Children and Families, the Board of Pardons and Paroles, the Psychiatric Security Review Board, the Division of Criminal Justice, any municipal or tribal police department within this state or any other agency, organization or person determined by the Chief Court Administrator, pursuant to policies and procedures adopted by the Chief Court Administrator, to have a legitimate interest in the information contained in the registry. Any person who obtains such information pursuant to this subdivision may

use and disclose the information only in the performance of such person's duties.

(3) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, the information contained in the registry shall be provided to and may be accessed through the Connecticut on-line law enforcement communications teleprocessing system maintained by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. Nothing in this section shall be construed to permit public access to the Connecticut on-line law enforcement communications teleprocessing system.

Sec. 11. Subsection (c) of section 51-47 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(c) Each such judge shall be an elector and a resident of this state, shall be a member of the bar of the state of Connecticut and shall not engage in private practice, nor on or after July 1, 1985, be a member of any board of directors or of any advisory board of any state bank and trust company, state bank or savings and loan association, national banking association or federal savings bank or savings and loan association. **[**Nothing in this subsection shall preclude a senior judge from participating in any alternative dispute resolution program approved by STA-FED ADR, Inc.**]**

Sec. 12. Section 51-50c of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) (1) Any senior judge of the Supreme Court may be designated and assigned by the Chief Justice or the Chief Court Administrator to perform such judicial duties in the Supreme Court or by the Chief Court Administrator to perform such judicial duties in the Superior Court, as such senior judge is willing to undertake; (2) any senior judge of the Appellate Court may be designated by the Chief Judge of the Appellate Court or the Chief Court Administrator to perform such judicial duties in the Appellate Court or by the Chief Court Administrator to perform such judicial duties in the Superior Court, as such senior judge is willing

to undertake.

(b) Any senior judge of the Superior Court may be designated and assigned by the Chief Court Administrator to perform such judicial duties in the Superior Court as such senior judge is willing to undertake.

(c) A senior judge shall not perform judicial duties unless such senior judge is so designated and assigned except as a state referee in the manner prescribed by law.

(d) The Chief Court Administrator may designate, assign or summon any senior judge, in any matter in which the Chief Court Administrator may designate, assign or summon a judge or judges, to sit or act in any judicial capacity.

(e) The Chief Court Administrator may make new designations and assignments in accordance with the provisions of this section and may revoke designations and assignments previously made by the Chief Court Administrator.

[(f) A senior judge may participate in an alternative dispute resolution program approved by STA-FED ADR, Inc. in any year commencing July first provided such judge performed the duties of a senior judge for at least seventy-five days during the preceding year, except that (1) for the year commencing July 1, 1993, a senior judge may participate in said alternative dispute resolution program without having performed the duties of a senior judge for seventy-five days during the preceding year and (2) a senior judge may participate in said alternative dispute resolution program from the date such judge assumes the status of a senior judge, through the completion of the year commencing July first following such date, without having satisfied the seventy-five-day requirement.**]**

Sec. 13. Section 51-50k of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

Each retired justice or judge who is designated and assigned by the Chief Justice or the Chief Court Administrator to perform judicial duties

shall be an elector and a resident of this state, shall be a member of the bar of the state of Connecticut and shall not engage in private practice. **[**Participation in an alternative dispute resolution program approved by STA-FED ADR, Inc. shall not be considered the private practice of law.**]**

Sec. 14. Section 51-197f of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

Upon final determination of any appeal by the Appellate Court or upon the Appellate Court's denial of a motion to file a late appeal, there shall be no right to further review except the Supreme Court shall have the power to certify cases for its review upon petition by an aggrieved party or by the appellate panel which heard the matter. A vote of three judges of the Supreme Court shall be required to certify a case for review by the Supreme Court, except that if fewer than six judges of said court are available to consider a petition, a vote of two judges of said court shall be required to certify a case, under such other rules as the justices of said court shall establish. The procedure on appeal from the Appellate Court to the Supreme Court shall, except as otherwise provided, be in accordance with the procedure provided by rule or law for the appeal of judgments rendered by the Superior Court, unless modified by rule of the justices of the Supreme Court.

Sec. 15. Section 51-344 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

For purposes of establishing venue, the Superior Court shall consist of the following judicial districts:

(1) The judicial district of Ansonia-Milford, consisting of the towns of Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Derby, Milford, Orange, Oxford, Seymour, Shelton and West Haven;

(2) The judicial district of Danbury, consisting of the towns of Bethel, Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield and Sherman;

(3) The judicial district of Bridgeport, consisting of the towns of

Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Monroe, Stratford and Trumbull;

(4) The judicial district of Hartford, consisting of the towns of **[**Avon,**]** Bloomfield, **[**Canton,**]** East Granby, East Hartford, East Windsor, Enfield, **[**Farmington,**]** Glastonbury, **[**Granby,**]** Hartford, Manchester, Marlborough, **[**Simsbury,**]** South Windsor, Suffield, West Hartford, Windsor and Windsor Locks;

(5) The judicial district of Litchfield, consisting of the towns of Avon, Barkhamsted, Bethlehem, Bridgewater, Burlington, Canaan, Canton, Colebrook, Cornwall, Farmington, Goshen, Granby, Hartland, Harwinton, Kent, Litchfield, Morris, New Hartford, New Milford, Norfolk, North Canaan, Roxbury, Salisbury, Sharon, Simsbury, Thomaston, Torrington, Warren, Washington and Winchester;

(6) The judicial district of Middlesex, consisting of the towns of Chester, Clinton, Cromwell, Deep River, Durham, East Haddam, East Hampton, Essex, Haddam, Killingworth, Middlefield, Middletown, Old Saybrook, Portland and Westbrook;

(7) The judicial district of New Britain, consisting of the towns of Berlin, Bristol, **[**Burlington,**]** New Britain, Newington, Plainville, Plymouth, Rocky Hill, Southington and Wethersfield;

(8) The judicial district of New Haven, consisting of the towns of Bethany, Branford, Cheshire, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Madison, Meriden, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Wallingford and Woodbridge;

(9) The judicial district of New London, consisting of the towns of Bozrah, Colchester, East Lyme, Franklin, Griswold, Groton, Lebanon, Ledyard, Lisbon, Lyme, Montville, New London, North Stonington, Norwich, Old Lyme, Preston, Salem, Sprague, Stonington, Voluntown and Waterford;

(10) The judicial district of Stamford-Norwalk, consisting of the towns of Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Stamford, Weston, Westport and Wilton;

(11) The judicial district of Tolland, consisting of the towns of Andover, Bolton, Columbia, Coventry, Ellington, Hebron, Mansfield, Somers, Stafford, Tolland, Union, Vernon and Willington;

(12) The judicial district of Waterbury, consisting of the towns of Middlebury, Naugatuck, Prospect, Southbury, Waterbury, Watertown, Wolcott and Woodbury; and

(13) The judicial district of Windham, consisting of the towns of Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Scotland, Sterling, Thompson, Windham and Woodstock.

Sec. 16. Section 51-345 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

(a) Except as provided in section 51-348 and subsections (b) to (h), inclusive, of this section, all civil process shall be made returnable to a judicial district, as follows:

(1) If all of the parties reside outside this state, to the judicial district where (A) the injury occurred, (B) the transaction occurred, or (C) the property is located or lawfully attached.

(2) If the defendant is not a resident, to the judicial district where the attached property is located.

(3) If either or both the plaintiff or the defendant are residents of this state, to the judicial district where either the plaintiff or the defendant resides, except:

(A) If either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of Manchester, East Windsor, South Windsor or Enfield, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Hartford or the judicial district of Tolland.

(B) If either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of Plymouth, the action may be made returnable at the option of the

plaintiff to either the judicial district of New Britain or the judicial district of Waterbury.

(C) If either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of Bethany, Milford, West Haven or Woodbridge, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of New Haven or the judicial district of Ansonia-Milford.

(D) If either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of Southbury, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Ansonia-Milford or the judicial district of Waterbury.

(E) If either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Stamford, Weston, Westport or Wilton, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Stamford-Norwalk or the judicial district of Bridgeport.

(F) If either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of Watertown or Woodbury, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Waterbury or the judicial district of Litchfield.

[(G) If either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of Avon, Canton, Farmington or Simsbury, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Hartford or the judicial district of New Britain.**]**

[(H)**]** (G) If either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of Newington, Rocky Hill or Wethersfield, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Hartford or the judicial district of New Britain, except for actions where venue is in the geographical area as provided in section 51-348 or in rules of court.

[(I)**]** (H) If either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of Cromwell, the action may be made returnable at the option of the

plaintiff to either the judicial district of Hartford or the judicial district of Middlesex.

[(J)**]** (I) If either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of New Milford, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Danbury or the judicial district of Litchfield.

[(K)**]** (J) If either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of Windham or Ashford, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Windham or the judicial district of Tolland.

(b) In all actions involving the title to land, for trespass to land and to foreclose or redeem mortgages or liens upon real property, civil process shall be made returnable to the judicial district where the real property is located, either entirely or in part, except:

(1) If the land is located in the town of Manchester, East Windsor, South Windsor or Enfield and either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of Manchester, East Windsor, South Windsor or Enfield, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Hartford or the judicial district of Tolland.

(2) If the land is located in the town of Plymouth and either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of Plymouth, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of New Britain or the judicial district of Waterbury.

(3) If the land is located in the town of Bethany, Milford, West Haven or Woodbridge and either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of Bethany, Milford, West Haven or Woodbridge, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of New Haven or the judicial district of Ansonia-Milford.

(4) If the land is located in the town of Southbury and either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of Southbury, the action

may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Ansonia-Milford or the judicial district of Waterbury.

(5) If the land is located in the town of Weston, Westport or Wilton and either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in any one of these towns, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Stamford-Norwalk or the judicial district of Bridgeport.

(6) If the land is located in the town of Watertown or Woodbury and either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of Watertown or Woodbury, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Waterbury or the judicial district of Litchfield.

[(7) If the land is located in the town of Avon, Canton, Farmington or Simsbury and either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of Avon, Canton, Farmington or Simsbury, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Hartford or the judicial district of New Britain.**]**

[(8)**]** (7) If the land is located in the town of Newington, Rocky Hill or Wethersfield and either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of Newington, Rocky Hill or Wethersfield, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Hartford or the judicial district of New Britain, except for actions where venue is in the geographical area as provided in section 51-348 or in rules of court.

[(9)**]** (8) If the land is located in the town of New Milford and either the plaintiff or the defendant resides in the town of New Milford, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Danbury or the judicial district of Litchfield.

(c) In all actions by a domestic or foreign business organization, except actions made returnable under subsection (b), (d) or (g) of this section, civil process shall be made returnable as follows:

(1) If the plaintiff is a domestic business organization and the defendant is a resident, either (A) to the judicial district where the plaintiff has an office or place of business, or (B) to the judicial district where the defendant resides, except:

(i) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Manchester, East Windsor, South Windsor or Enfield, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Hartford or the judicial district of Tolland.

(ii) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Plymouth, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of New Britain or the judicial district of Waterbury.

(iii) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Bethany, Milford, West Haven or Woodbridge, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of New Haven or the judicial district of Ansonia-Milford.

(iv) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Southbury, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Ansonia-Milford or the judicial district of Waterbury.

(v) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Stamford, Weston, Westport or Wilton, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Stamford-Norwalk or the judicial district of Bridgeport.

(vi) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Watertown or Woodbury, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Waterbury or the judicial district of Litchfield.

[(vii) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Avon, Canton, Farmington or Simsbury, the action may be made

returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Hartford or the judicial district of New Britain.**]**

[(viii)**]** (vii) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Newington, Rocky Hill or Wethersfield, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Hartford or the judicial district of New Britain, except for actions where venue is in the geographical area as provided in section 51-348 or in rules of court.

[(ix)**]** (viii) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Cromwell, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Hartford or the judicial district of Middlesex.

[(x)**]** (ix) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of New Milford, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Danbury or the judicial district of Litchfield.

[(xi)**]** (x) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Windham or Ashford, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Windham or the judicial district of Tolland.

(2) If the plaintiff is a domestic business organization and the defendant is a domestic or foreign business organization, to the judicial district where (A) the plaintiff has an office or place of business, (B) the injury occurred, (C) the transaction occurred, or (D) the property is located or lawfully attached, except:

(i) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Manchester, East Windsor, South Windsor or Enfield, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Hartford or the judicial district of Tolland.

(ii) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Plymouth, the action may be made returnable at the option of the

plaintiff to either the judicial district of New Britain or the judicial district of Waterbury.

(iii) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Bethany, Milford, West Haven or Woodbridge, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of New Haven or the judicial district of Ansonia-Milford.

(iv) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Southbury, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Ansonia-Milford or the judicial district of Waterbury.

(v) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Stamford, Weston, Westport or Wilton, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Stamford-Norwalk or the judicial district of Bridgeport.

(vi) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Watertown or Woodbury, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Waterbury or the judicial district of Litchfield.

[(vii) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Avon, Canton, Farmington or Simsbury, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Hartford or the judicial district of New Britain.**]**

[(viii)**]** (vii) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Newington, Rocky Hill or Wethersfield, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Hartford or the judicial district of New Britain, except for actions where venue is in the geographical area as provided in section 51-348 or in rules of court.

[(ix)**]** (viii) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Cromwell, the action may be made returnable at the option of the

plaintiff to either the judicial district of Hartford or the judicial district of Middlesex.

[(x)**]** (ix) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of New Milford, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Danbury or the judicial district of Litchfield.

[(xi)**]** (x) If the plaintiff has an office or place of business in the town of Windham or Ashford, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Windham or the judicial district of Tolland.

(3) If the plaintiff is a foreign business organization and the defendant is a resident, to the judicial district where the defendant resides.

(4) If the plaintiff is a foreign business organization and the defendant is a domestic or foreign business organization, to the judicial district where (A) the injury occurred, (B) the transaction occurred, or (C) the property is located or lawfully attached.

(d) In all actions involving consumer transactions, civil process shall be made returnable to the judicial district where the consumer resides or where the transaction occurred. For the purposes of this subsection, "consumer transaction" means a transaction in which a natural person obligates himself or herself to pay for goods sold or leased, services rendered or moneys loaned for personal, family or household purposes.

(e) In all actions for the partition or sale of any property, civil process shall be made returnable to the judicial district where the parties, or one of them, reside; but, if none of them resides in this state, then to the judicial district where all or a part of the property is located.

(f) In all actions by a nonresident executor, trustee under a will or administrator, civil process shall be made returnable to the same judicial district as would be proper if the plaintiff resided in the town where the Probate Court which granted administration is held.

(g) Venue for small claims matters shall be at Superior Court facilities designated by the Chief Court Administrator to hear such matters. In small claims matters, civil process shall be made returnable to the Superior Court facility designated by the Chief Court Administrator to serve the small claims area where the plaintiff resides, where the defendant resides or is doing business or where the transaction or injury occurred. If the plaintiff is a domestic or foreign business organization, civil process shall be made returnable to a Superior Court facility designated by the Chief Court Administrator to serve the small claims area where the defendant resides or is doing business or where the transaction or injury occurred.

(h) (1) In all actions involving housing matters, as defined in section 47a-68, civil process shall be made returnable to the judicial district where the premises are located, except that actions described in subdivision (6) of section 47a-68 shall be heard in the geographical area where the premises are located unless otherwise provided in subsection (d) of section 51-348.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection concerning the judicial district to which civil process shall be made returnable:

(A) If the premises are located in **[**Avon, Canton, Farmington,**]** Newington, Rocky Hill **[**, Simsbury**]** or Wethersfield, the action may be made returnable at the option of the plaintiff to either the judicial district of Hartford or the judicial district of New Britain.

(B) If the premises are located in Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Derby, Oxford, Seymour or Shelton, the action shall be made returnable to the judicial district of Ansonia-Milford. After the filing of the action, the plaintiff or the defendant may request a change in venue to the judicial district of New Haven or the judicial district of Waterbury.

(C) If the premises are located in Milford, Orange or West Haven, the action shall be made returnable to the judicial district of New Haven.

Sec. 17. Section 52-434 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) (1) Each judge of the Supreme Court, each judge of the Appellate Court, each judge of the Superior Court and each judge of the Court of Common Pleas who ceases or has ceased to hold office because of retirement other than under the provisions of section 51-49 and who is an elector and a resident of this state shall be a state referee for the remainder of such judge's term of office as a judge and shall be eligible for appointment as a state referee during the remainder of such judge's life in the manner prescribed by law for the appointment of a judge of the court of which such judge is a member. The Superior Court may refer any civil, nonjury case or with the written consent of the parties or their attorneys, any civil jury case pending before the court in which the issues have been closed to a judge trial referee who shall have and exercise the powers of the Superior Court in respect to trial, judgment and appeal in the case, and any proceeding resulting from a demand for a trial de novo pursuant to subsection (e) of section 52-549z may be referred without the consent of the parties to a judge trial referee who has been specifically designated to hear such proceedings pursuant to subsection (b) of this section. The Superior Court may, with the consent of the parties or their attorneys, refer any criminal case to a judge trial referee who shall have and exercise the powers of the Superior Court in respect to trial, judgment, sentencing and appeal in the case, except that the Superior Court may, without the consent of the parties or their attorneys, (A) refer any criminal case, other than a criminal jury trial, to a judge trial referee assigned to a geographical area criminal court session, and (B) refer any criminal case, other than a class A or B felony or capital felony under the provisions of section 53a-54b in effect prior to April 25, 2012, to a judge trial referee to preside over the jury selection process and any voir dire examination conducted in such case, unless good cause is shown not to refer.

(2) Each judge of the Circuit Court who has ceased to hold office because of retirement other than under the provisions of section 51-49 and who is an elector and a resident of this state shall be a state referee

for the remainder of such judge's term of office as a judge and shall be eligible for appointment as a state referee during the remainder of such judge's life in the manner prescribed by law for the appointment of a judge of the court of which such judge is a member, to whom the Superior Court may, with the written consent of the parties or their attorneys, refer any case pending in court in which the issues have been closed and which the judges of the Superior Court may establish by rule to be the kind of case which may be heard by such referees who have been appointed judge trial referees pursuant to subsection (b) of this section. The judge trial referee shall hear any such case so referred and report the facts to the court by which the case was referred.

(3) Each judge of the Juvenile Court who ceases or has ceased to hold office because of retirement other than under the provisions of section 51-49 and who is an elector and a resident of this state shall be a state referee for the remainder of such judge's term of office as a judge and shall be eligible for appointment as a state referee during the remainder of such judge's life in the manner prescribed by law for the appointment of a judge of the court of which such judge is a member, to whom a judge before whom any juvenile matter is pending may, with the written consent of the child concerned, either of such child's parents, or such child's guardian or attorney, refer any juvenile matter pending, provided such referee has been appointed a judge trial referee specifically designated to hear juvenile cases pursuant to subsection (b) of this section. The judge trial referee shall hear any matter so referred and report the facts to the court for the district from which the matter was referred.

(4) In addition to the judge trial referees who are appointed pursuant to subdivision (1), (2) or (3) of this subsection, the Chief Justice may appoint, from qualified members of the bar of the state, who are electors and residents of this state, as many state referees as the Chief Justice may from time to time deem advisable or necessary. No appointment of a member of the bar may be for a term of more than three years. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (f) of this section, state referees appointed by the Chief Justice from members of the bar shall

receive such reasonable compensation and expenses as may be determined by the Chief Justice. The Superior Court may appoint a state referee pursuant to this subdivision to take such evidence as it directs in any civil, nonjury case including, but not limited to, appeals under section 8-8. Any such state referee shall report on such evidence to the court with any findings of fact. The report shall constitute a part of the proceeding upon which the determination of the court shall be made.

(b) The Chief Justice may designate, from among the state referees, judge trial referees to whom criminal and civil cases and juvenile matters may be referred. Criminal cases and civil cases of an adversary nature shall be referred only to state referees who are designated as judge trial referees, and proceedings resulting from a demand for a trial de novo pursuant to subsection (e) of section 52-549z shall be referred only to judge trial referees who are specifically designated to hear such proceedings. On or before October first of each year, the Chief Court Administrator shall publish the list of the judge trial referees specifically designated to hear such proceedings. Juvenile matters shall be referred only to judge trial referees who are specifically designated to hear juvenile cases. No designation pursuant to this subsection may be for a term of more than one year.

(c) Each hearing by a judge trial referee shall be held in a suitable room, to be provided by the Office of the Chief Court Administrator, in a courthouse in the judicial district where the case is pending unless the parties or their attorneys stipulate in writing that the hearing may be held elsewhere.

(d) Each judge trial referee may have the attendance of a judicial marshal at any hearing before such trial referee. The judicial marshal shall receive the same compensation provided for attendance at regular sessions of the court from which the case was referred and such compensation shall be taxed by the state referee in the same manner as similar costs are taxed by the judges of the court.

(e) Each judge trial referee may compel the attendance of any witness summoned to appear before such trial referee at any hearing, in the

same manner as the attendance of any witness may be compelled in the Superior Court, and may punish for any act of contempt committed in such trial referee's presence while engaged in the hearing in the same manner and to the same extent as judges of the Superior Court.

(f) Each judge trial referee shall receive, for acting as a referee or as a single auditor or committee of any court or for performing duties assigned by the Chief Court Administrator with the approval of the Chief Justice, for each day the judge trial referee is so engaged, in addition to the retirement salary: (1) (A) on and after July 1, 2022, the sum of two hundred eighty-five dollars, (B) on and after July 1, 2023, the sum of two hundred ninety-four dollars, and (C) on and after July 1, 2024, the sum of three hundred two dollars; and (2) expenses, including mileage. Such amounts shall be taxed by the court making the reference in the same manner as other court expenses.

[(g) A judge trial referee may participate in an alternative dispute resolution program approved by STA-FED ADR, Inc. in any year commencing July first provided such referee performed the duties of a judge trial referee or a senior judge for at least seventy-five days during the preceding year, except that (1) for the year commencing July 1, 1993, a judge trial referee may participate in said alternative dispute resolution program without having performed the duties of a judge trial referee or senior judge for seventy-five days during the preceding year, and (2) a judge trial referee may participate in said alternative dispute resolution program from the date such referee assumes such status, through the completion of the year commencing July first following such date without having satisfied the seventy-five-day requirement. Any judge trial referee who participates in said alternative dispute resolution program pursuant to subsection (f) of section 51-50c without having satisfied the seventy-five-day requirement set forth in said subsection shall not be eligible to participate in said program pursuant to this subsection without having satisfied the seventy-five-day requirement set forth in this subsection.**]**

Sec. 18. Section 54-1k of the general statutes is repealed and the

following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

(a) Upon the arrest of a person for a violation of subdivision (1) or (2) of subsection (a) of section 53-21, section 53a-70, 53a-70a, 53a-70c, 53a-71, 53a-72a, 53a-72b or 53a-73a, or any attempt thereof, or section 53a-181c, 53a-181d, **[**or**]** 53a-181e **[**,**]** or 53a-181f, the court may issue a protective order pursuant to this section. Upon the arrest of a person for a violation of section 53a-182b or 53a-183, the court may issue a protective order pursuant to this section if it finds that such violation caused the victim to reasonably fear for his or her physical safety. Such order shall be an order of the court, and the clerk of the court shall cause (1) a copy of such order, or the information contained in such order, to be sent to the victim, and (2) a copy of such order, or the information contained in such order, to be sent by facsimile or other means not later than forty-eight hours after its issuance to the law enforcement agency or agencies for the town in which the victim resides, the town in which the victim is employed and the town in which the defendant resides. If the victim is enrolled in a public or private elementary or secondary school, including a technical education and career school, or an institution of higher education, as defined in section 10a-55, the clerk of the court shall, upon the request of the victim, send, by facsimile or other means, a copy of such order, or the information contained in such order, to such school or institution of higher education, the president of any institution of higher education at which the victim is enrolled and the special police force established pursuant to section 10a-156b, if any, at the institution of higher education at which the victim is enrolled, if the victim provides the clerk with the name and address of such school or institution of higher education.

(b) A protective order issued under this section may include provisions necessary to protect the victim from threats, harassment, injury or intimidation by the defendant, including but not limited to, an order enjoining the defendant from (1) imposing any restraint upon the person or liberty of the victim, (2) threatening, harassing, assaulting, molesting or sexually assaulting the victim, or (3) entering the dwelling of the victim. A protective order issued under this section may include

provisions necessary to protect any animal owned or kept by the victim including, but not limited to, an order enjoining the defendant from injuring or threatening to injure such animal. Such order shall be made a condition of the bail or release of the defendant and shall contain the following language: "In accordance with section 53a-223 of the Connecticut general statutes, any violation of this order constitutes criminal violation of a protective order which is punishable by a term of imprisonment of not more than ten years, a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars, or both. Additionally, in accordance with section 53a-107 of the Connecticut general statutes, entering or remaining in a building or any other premises in violation of this order constitutes criminal trespass in the first degree which is punishable by a term of imprisonment of not more than one year, a fine of not more than two thousand dollars, or both. Violation of this order also violates a condition of your bail or release and may result in raising the amount of bail or revoking release.".

(c) The information contained in and concerning the issuance of any protective order issued under this section shall be entered in the registry of protective orders pursuant to section 51-5c, as amended by this act.

Sec. 19. Subsection (f) of section 54-63d of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(f) The Court Support Services Division shall establish written procedures for the release of information contained in reports and files of the Court Support Services Division, such procedures to be approved by the Chief Court Administrator, or the Chief Court Administrator's designee. Such procedures shall allow access to (1) nonidentifying information by qualified persons for purposes of research related to the administration of criminal justice; (2) all information provided to the Court Support Services Division by probation officers for the purposes of compiling presentence reports; **[**and**]** (3) all information provided to the Court Support Services Division concerning any person convicted of a crime and held in custody by the Department of Correction; and (4)

information concerning any person to the Department of Children and Families, provided such person's conditions of release require cooperating with said department.

Sec. 20. Subsection (b) of section 54-76*l* of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(b) The records of any such youth, or any part thereof, may be disclosed to and between individuals and agencies, and employees of such agencies, providing services directly to the youth, including law enforcement officials, state and federal prosecutorial officials, school officials in accordance with section 10-233h, court officials, the Division of Criminal Justice, the Court Support Services Division, a victim advocate under section 54-220 for a victim of a crime committed by the youth and the Department of Children and Families. **[**, if the child is under the oversight of the department's administrative unit pursuant to section 17a-3b, provided such disclosure shall be limited to information that identifies the child as residing in a justice facility or incarcerated.**]** Such records shall also be available to the attorney representing the youth, in any proceedings in which such records are relevant, to the parents or guardian of such youth, until such time as the youth reaches the age of majority or is emancipated, and to the youth upon his or her emancipation or attainment of the age of majority, provided proof of the identity of such youth is submitted in accordance with guidelines prescribed by the Chief Court Administrator. Such records shall also be available to members and employees of the Board of Pardons and Paroles and employees of the Department of Correction who, in the performance of their duties, require access to such records, provided the subject of the record has been adjudged a youthful offender and sentenced to a term of imprisonment or been convicted of a crime in the regular criminal docket of the Superior Court, and such records are relevant to the performance of a risk and needs assessment of such person while such person is incarcerated, the determination of such person's suitability for release from incarceration or for a pardon, or the determination of the supervision and treatment needs of such person

while on parole or other supervised release. Such records shall also be available to law enforcement officials and prosecutorial officials conducting legitimate criminal investigations or seeking an order to detain pursuant to section 46b-133. Such records shall also be available to members and employees of the Judicial Review Council who, in the performance of their duties, require access to such records. Records disclosed pursuant to this subsection shall not be further disclosed.

Sec. 21. Subsection (b) of section 54-203 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

(b) The Office of Victim Services shall have the following powers and duties:

(1) To direct each hospital, whether public or private, each university or college health services center, whether public or private, and each community health center, as defined in section 19a-490a, to prominently display posters in a conspicuous location giving notice of the availability of compensation and assistance to victims of crime or their dependents pursuant to sections 54-201 to 54-218, inclusive, and to direct every law enforcement agency of the state to inform victims of crime or their dependents of their rights pursuant to sections 54-201 to 54-218, inclusive;

(2) To obtain from the office of the state's attorney, state police, local police departments or any law enforcement agency such investigation and data as will enable the Office of Victim Services to determine if in fact the applicant was a victim of a crime or attempted crime and the extent, if any, to which the victim or claimant was responsible for his own injury, including, but not limited to, a request for information form promulgated by the Office of Victim Services;

(3) To request from the Department of Correction, other units of the Judicial **[**Department**]** Branch and the Board of Pardons and Paroles such information as will enable the Office of Victim Services to determine if in fact a person who has requested notification pursuant to

section 54-228 was a victim of a crime;

(4) To take or cause to be taken affidavits or depositions within or without the state;

(5) To apply for, receive, allocate, disburse and account for grants of funds made available by the United States, by the state, foundations, corporations and other businesses, agencies or individuals to implement a program for victim services which shall assist witnesses and victims of crimes as the Office of Victim Services deems appropriate within the resources available and to coordinate services to victims by state and community-based agencies, with priority given to victims of violent crimes, by (A) assigning such victim advocates as are necessary to provide assistance; (B) administering victim service programs; and (C) awarding grants or purchase of service contracts to private nonprofit organizations or local units of government for the direct delivery of services, except that the provision of training and technical assistance of victim service providers and the development and implementation of public education campaigns may be provided by private nonprofit or for-profit organizations or local units of government. Such grants and contracts shall be the predominant method by which the Office of Victim Services shall develop, implement and operate direct service programs and provide training and technical assistance to victim service providers;

(6) To provide each person who applies for compensation pursuant to section 54-204, within ten days of the date of receipt of such application, with a written list of rights of victims of crime involving personal injury and the programs available in this state to assist such victims. The Office of Victim Services, the state or any agent, employee or officer thereof shall not be liable for the failure to supply such list or any alleged inadequacies of such list. Such list shall include, but not be limited to:

(A) Subject to the provisions of sections 18-81e and 51-286e, the victim shall have the right to be informed concerning the status of his or her case and to be informed of the release from custody of the defendant;

(B) Subject to the provisions of section 54-91c, the victim shall have the right to present a statement of his or her losses, injuries and wishes to the prosecutor and the court prior to the acceptance by the court of a plea of guilty or nolo contendere made pursuant to a plea agreement with the state; [wherein the defendant pleads to a lesser offense than the offense with which the defendant was originally charged;]

(C) Subject to the provisions of section 54-91c, prior to the imposition of sentence upon the defendant, the victim shall have the right to submit a statement to the prosecutor as to the extent of any injuries, financial losses and loss of earnings directly resulting from the crime. Upon receipt of the statement, the prosecutor shall file the statement with the sentencing court and the statement shall be made a part of the record and considered by the court at the sentencing hearing;

(D) Subject to the provisions of section 54-126a, the victim shall have the right to appear before a panel of the Board of Pardons and Paroles and make a statement as to whether the defendant should be released on parole and any terms or conditions to be imposed upon any such release;

(E) Subject to the provisions of section 54-36a, the victim shall have the right to have any property the victim owns which was seized by police in connection with an arrest to be returned;

(F) Subject to the provisions of sections 54-56e and 54-142c, the victim shall have the right to be notified of the application by the defendant for the pretrial program for accelerated rehabilitation and to obtain from the court information as to whether the criminal prosecution in the case has been dismissed;

(G) Subject to the provisions of section 54-85b, the victim cannot be fired, harassed or otherwise retaliated against by an employer for appearing under a subpoena as a witness in any criminal prosecution;

(H) Subject to the provisions of section 54-86g, the parent or legal guardian of a child twelve years of age or younger who is a victim of

child abuse or sexual assault may request special procedural considerations to be taken during the testimony of the child;

(I) Subject to the provisions of section 46b-15, the victim of assault by a spouse or former spouse, family or household member has the right to request the arrest of the offender, request a protective order and apply for a restraining order;

(J) Subject to the provisions of sections 52-146k, 54-86e and 54-86f, the victim of sexual assault or domestic violence can expect certain records to remain confidential; and

(K) Subject to the provisions of section 53a-32, the victim and any victim advocate assigned to assist the victim may receive notification from a probation officer whenever the officer has notified a police officer that the probation officer has probable cause to believe that the offender has violated a condition of such offender's probation;

(7) Within available appropriations, to maintain a victim's assistance center which shall (A) make available to victims information regarding victim's rights and available services, (B) maintain a victims' notification system pursuant to sections 54-227 to 54-230a, inclusive, and 54-235, and (C) maintain a toll-free number for access to information regarding victims' rights and available services;

(8) To provide a telephone helpline that shall provide information on referrals for various services for victims of crime and their families;

(9) To provide staff services to a state advisory council. The council shall consist of not more than twenty members to be appointed by the Chief Justice and shall include the Chief Victim Compensation Commissioner and members who represent victim populations, including but not limited to, homicide survivors, family violence victims, sexual assault victims, victims of gun violence, victims of drunk drivers, and assault and robbery victims, and members who represent the judicial branch and executive branch agencies involved with victims of crime. The members shall serve for terms of four years. Any vacancy

in the membership shall be filled by the appointing authority for the balance of the unexpired term. The members shall receive no compensation for their services. The council shall meet at least four times a year. The council shall recommend to the Office of Victim Services program, legislative or other matters which would improve services to victims of crime and develop and coordinate needs assessments for both court-based and community-based victim services. The Chief Justice shall appoint two members to serve as cochairpersons. Not later than December fifteenth of each year, the council shall report the results of its findings and activities to the Chief Court Administrator;

(10) To utilize such voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and organizations as may from time to time be offered and needed;

(11) To recommend policies and make recommendations to agencies and officers of the state and local subdivisions of government relative to victims of crime;

(12) To provide support and assistance to state-wide victim services coalitions and groups;

(13) To provide a training program for judges, prosecutors, police, probation and parole personnel, bail commissioners, intake, assessment and referral specialists, officers from the Department of Correction and judicial marshals to inform them of victims' rights and available services;

(14) To (A) maintain, within available appropriations, a sexual assault forensic examiners program that will train and make available sexual assault forensic examiners to adolescent and adult victims of sexual assault who are patients at participating health care facilities. In order to maintain such program, the Office of Victim Services may apply for, receive, allocate, disburse and account for grants of funds made available by the United States, the state, foundations, corporations and other businesses, agencies or individuals; or (B) establish, within available appropriations, a training program for health care

professionals on the care of and collection of evidence from adolescent and adult victims of sexual assault;

(15) To provide victims of crime and the general public with information detailing the process by which a victim may register to receive notices of hearings of the Board of Pardons and Paroles; and

(16) To submit to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the judiciary, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, on or before January 15, 2000, and biennially thereafter a report of its activities under sections 54-201 to 54-235, inclusive.

Sec. 22. Section 54-230 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

(a) Upon receipt of notice from **[**an inmate**]** a person who is incarcerated pursuant to section 54-227, the Office of Victim Services shall notify by first class mail or electronic mail, based on the election of the registrant, all persons who have requested to be notified pursuant to subsection (a) of section 54-228 and section 54-229 whenever such **[**inmate**]** person who is incarcerated makes application for release or sentence reduction or review. Such notice shall be in writing and notify each person of the nature of the release or sentence reduction or review being applied for, the address and telephone number of the board or agency to which the application by the **[**inmate**]** person who is incarcerated was made, and the date and place of the hearing or session, if any, scheduled on the application.

(b) Upon receipt of notice from a person pursuant to subsection (b) of section 54-227, the Office of Victim Services shall notify by first class mail or electronic mail, based on the election of the registrant, all persons who have requested to be notified pursuant to subsection (b) of section 54-228 whenever such person files an application with the court to be exempted from the registration requirements of section 54-251 pursuant to subsections (b) or (c) of said section or files a petition with the court pursuant to section 54-255 for an order restricting the dissemination of

the registration information, or removing such restriction. Such notice shall be in writing and notify each person of the nature of the exemption or of the restriction or removal of the restriction being applied for, the address and telephone number of the court to which the application or petition by the person was made, and the date and place of the hearing or session, if any, scheduled on the application or petition.

(c) Upon compliance with the notification requirements of this section, the Office of Victim Services shall notify, on a form prescribed by the Office of the Chief Court Administrator, the board, agency or court to which the application or petition was made of such compliance.

(d) Upon receipt of notice from the Department of Correction pursuant to section 54-231, the Office of Victim Services shall notify by first class mail or electronic mail, based on the election of the registrant, all victims who have requested to be notified pursuant to section 54-228 whenever such **[**inmate**]** person who is incarcerated is scheduled to be released from a correctional institution. Such notice shall be in writing and notify each victim of the date of **[**such inmate's release**]** release of such person who is incarcerated. The victim shall notify the Office of Victim Services of his or her current mailing address, electronic mail address, if electronic mail is requested by the registrant, and telephone number, which shall be kept confidential and shall not be disclosed by the Office of Victim Services. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the Office of Victim Services, the Board of Pardons and Paroles and the Victim Services Unit within the Department of Correction from communicating with each other for the purpose of facilitating notification to a victim and disclosing to each other the name, mailing address and telephone number of the victim, provided such information shall not be further disclosed.

Sec. 23. Section 51-85a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) As used in this section:

(1) "Communication technology" means an electronic device or

process that:

(A) Allows a commissioner of the Superior Court and a remotely located individual to communicate with each other simultaneously by sight and sound; and

(B) When necessary and consistent with other applicable law, facilitates communication between a commissioner of the Superior Court and a remotely located individual who has a vision, hearing or speech impairment.

(2) "Identity proofing" means a process or service by which a third person provides a commissioner of the Superior Court with a means to verify the identity of a remotely located individual by a review of personal information from public or private data sources.

(3) "Outside the United States" means a location outside the geographic boundaries of the United States, Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands and any territory, insular possession or other location subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

(4) "Remotely located individual" means an individual who is not in the physical presence of the commissioner of the Superior Court who takes an acknowledgment under subsection (b) of this section.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (g) of this section, a **[**document**]** record may be acknowledged by an individual who is not in the physical presence of a commissioner of the Superior Court at the time of the acknowledgment if the following requirements are met:

(1) The individual and the commissioner of the Superior Court can communicate simultaneously, in real time, by sight and sound using communication technology; and

(2) When performing a remote acknowledgment pursuant to the provisions of this section, the commissioner of the Superior Court reasonably identifies the individual at the time of the acknowledgment by one or more of the following methods:

(A) Personal knowledge of the identity of the individual;

(B) The individual presents a government-issued identification document or record that has not expired and includes the individual's photograph, name and signature. An acceptable form of government-issued identification document or record includes, but is not limited to, a driver's license, government-issued identification card or passport;

(C) Not less than two different types of identity proofing processes or services by which a third person provides a means to verify the identity of the individual through a review of public or private data sources; or

(D) Oath or affirmation by a credible witness who:

(i) Is in the physical presence of either the commissioner of the Superior Court or the individual; or

(ii) Is able to communicate in real time with the commissioner of the Superior Court and the individual by sight and sound through an electronic device or process at the time of the acknowledgment, if the credible witness has personal knowledge of the identity of the individual and has been reasonably identified by the commissioner of the Superior Court by a method provided in this section.

(c) When an individual who is physically located outside of the state of Connecticut or outside the United States seeks a remote acknowledgment pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, the record being acknowledged shall:

(1) Be intended for filing or presentation in a matter before a court, governmental entity, public official or other entity subject to the jurisdiction of the state of Connecticut; or

(2) Otherwise not be prohibited by law of the state of Connecticut to be acknowledged outside the state.

(d) Once the record acknowledged pursuant to subsection (b) of this section is signed by the individual in accordance with the procedures

set forth in this section, the individual shall mail or otherwise cause to be delivered the signed original copy of the record to the commissioner of the Superior Court.

(e) The date and time of an acknowledgment conducted pursuant to subsection (b) of this section shall be the date and time when the commissioner of the Superior Court witnessed the signature being performed by means of communication technology.

(f) Nothing in this section shall affect the authority of a commissioner of the Superior Court to refuse to take an acknowledgment or require a commissioner of the Superior Court to take an acknowledgment:

(1) With respect to an electronic record;

(2) For an individual not in the physical presence of the commissioner of the Superior Court; or

(3) Using a technology that the commissioner of the Superior Court has not selected.

(g) No record shall be acknowledged remotely pursuant to subsection (b) of this section in (1) the making and execution of a will, codicil, trust or trust instrument, (2) the execution of health care instructions pursuant to section 19a-575a, (3) the execution of a designation of a standby guardian pursuant to section 45a-624, (4) the execution of a designation of a person for decision-making and certain rights and obligations pursuant to section 1-56r, (5) the execution of a living will, as defined in section 19a-570, (6) the execution of a power of attorney, as defined in section 1-350a, (7) the execution of a self-proving affidavit for an appointment of a health care representative or for a living will under sections 1-56r and 19a-578, (8) the execution of a mutual distribution agreement under section 45a-433, (9) the execution of an agreement as to the division of an estate under section 45a-434, (10) the execution of a disclaimer under section 45a-579 or 45a-583, or **[**(10)**]** (11) a real estate closing, as defined in section 51-88a. The performance of any such acknowledgment in connection with any of the acts described

in this subsection shall be ineffective for any purpose and shall constitute a violation of section 51-88.

Sec. 24. (*Effective from passage*) The Connecticut Sentencing Commission established pursuant to section 54-300 of the general statutes shall conduct a review of the habeas corpus procedures utilized by the federal government and the states of Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia and, after conducting such review, make recommendations to the General Assembly as to best practices that could be implemented in this state to: (1) Ensure a timely review and adjudication of habeas corpus claims; (2) establish standards for the presentation of repeated habeas corpus claims associated with the same incident; (3) prioritize credible habeas corpus claims and limit the filing of repetitive or meritless habeas corpus claims; and (4) provide balance between providing public counsel in habeas corpus claims and the cost of litigating repetitive or meritless claims. Not later than January 15, 2026, the executive director of the Connecticut Sentencing Commission shall report on the results of such review, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the judiciary.

Sec. 25. Section 36a-649 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

As used in this section and sections 36a-650 and 36a-651:

(1) "Claim" means a right to receive payment of a credit card debt;

(2) "Claimant" means an entity that has, or purports to have, a claim against a debtor arising from coerced debt or allegedly coerced debt, and includes a consumer collection agency, as defined in section 36a-800, to collect said debt, or such entity's successor or assignee;

(3) "Coerced debt" means any debt incurred in the name of a debtor

who is a victim of domestic violence, as defined in subsection (b) of section 46b-1, when such debt was incurred in response to any duress, intimidation, threat of force, force or undue influence used to specifically coerce the debtor into incurring such debt;

(4) "Collection activities" means any activity of a claimant to collect or to attempt to collect a debt owed, due or asserted to be owed or due, including, but not limited to, commencing or proceeding with an action in a court of competent jurisdiction;

(5) "Credit rating agency" has the same meaning as provided in section 36a-695;

(6) "Debt" means an unsecured credit card debt, or any portion of an unsecured credit card debt, incurred on or after January 1, 2025, for personal, family or household use that **[**(A) was not**]** was not (A) subject to a final judgment in an action for dissolution of marriage or collection matter which occurred prior to the time when a debtor requests that the claimant waive such debt; or (B) **[**was**]** incurred more than ten years prior to the date of the request;

(7) "Debtor" means an individual against whom a claimant asserts a claim arising from coerced debt or allegedly coerced debt;

(8) "Immediate family member" has the same meaning as provided in section 36a-485;

(9) "Negative information" has the same meaning as provided in 15 USC 1681s-2, as amended from time to time;

(10) "Qualified third-party professional" means a domestic violence counselor or sexual assault counselor, as those terms are defined in section 52-146k, a psychiatrist licensed under chapter 370, a psychologist licensed under chapter 383, a clinical social worker licensed under chapter 383b, a marital and family therapist licensed under chapter 383a and a professional counselor licensed under chapter 383c; and

(11) "Requests that the claimant waive such debt" means a request that a claimant waive, forgive, excuse, write off or not collect a debt or portion of a debt.

Sec. 26. Section 52-350f of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

(a) A money judgment may be enforced against any property of the judgment debtor unless the property is exempt from application to the satisfaction of the judgment under section 52-352a, 52-352b, 52-352d or 52-361a or any other provision of the general statutes or federal law. The money judgment may be enforced, by execution or by foreclosure of a real property lien, to the amount of the money judgment with (1) all statutory costs and fees as provided by the general statutes, (2) interest as provided by chapter 673 on the money judgment and on the costs incurred in obtaining the judgment, and (3) any attorney's fees allowed pursuant to section 52-400c.

(b) In an action to enforce a money judgment by foreclosure of a real property lien, the amount of the judgment lien to attach to the property shall be calculated by taking the fair market value of the property, less any priority liens and the amount of any applicable exempt property under sections 52-352b and 52-352d. The Chief Court Administrator shall ensure that any form prescribed by the Judicial Branch relating to an action to enforce a money judgment by foreclosure of a real property lien, including, but not limited to, the foreclosure worksheet, includes the property that is not subject to debt collection under sections 52-352b and 52-352d.

Sec. 27. Subsection (f) of section 53a-29 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

(f) The period of probation **[**,**]** (1) unless terminated sooner as provided in section 53a-32, shall be not less than ten years or more than thirty-five years for conviction of a violation of section 53a-70b of the general statutes, revision of 1958, revised to January 1, 2019, or

subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of section 53-21 or section 53a-70, 53a-70a, 53a-71, 53a-72a, 53a-72b, 53a-90a or subdivision (2), (3) or (4) of subsection (a) of section 53a-189a, or section 53a-196b, 53a-196c, 53a-196d, 53a-196e or 53a-196f, and (2) shall be five years for a violation of section 53-247.

Sec. 28. Subsection (c) of section 53a-189a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

(c) Voyeurism is (1) a class D felony for a first offense, except as provided in subdivision (3) of this subsection, (2) a class C felony for any subsequent offense, and (3) a class C felony for a first offense when (A) such person has been previously convicted of an offense enumerated in subdivision (1) of subsection (f) of section 53a-29, as amended by this act, or (B) the intended subject of the offense is a person under sixteen years of age.

Sec. 29. Section 52-278f of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

In an action upon a commercial transaction, as defined in section 52-278a, wherein the defendant has waived his right to a notice and hearing under sections 52-278a to 52-278g, inclusive, the attorney for the plaintiff shall issue the writ for a prejudgment remedy without securing a court order provided that (1) the complaint shall set forth a copy of the waiver; (2) the plaintiff shall file an affidavit sworn to by the plaintiff or any competent affiant setting forth a statement of facts sufficient to show that there is probable cause that a judgment in the amount of the prejudgment remedy sought, or in an amount greater than the amount of the prejudgment remedy sought, taking into account any known defenses, counterclaims or set-offs, will be rendered in the matter in favor of the plaintiff; **[**and**]** (3) the plaintiff shall include in the process served on the defendant a notice satisfying the requirements of subsections (b) and (c) of section 52-278e; and (4) service of process of such complaint be returned to the court (A) within twelve days, inclusive, after the earlier of (i) service of process upon the defendant

preventing the dissipation of property, or (ii) service of process upon any third person holding property of the defendant, and (B) at least six days before the return date.

Sec. 30. Section 52-46a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

Process in civil actions returnable to the Supreme Court shall be returned to its clerk at least twenty days before the return day and, if returnable to the Superior Court, except process in summary process actions, the commencement of any civil action containing the issuance of a prejudgment remedy when the defendant in a commercial transaction has waived notice and hearing as provided under chapter 903a and petitions for parentage and support, to the clerk of such court at least six days before the return day.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	*January 1, 2026*	New section
Sec. 2	*from passage*	17a-28(g)
Sec. 3	*July 1, 2025*	29-32b(a)
Sec. 4	*July 1, 2025*	42a-9-518(f)
Sec. 5	*from passage*	46b-3(a)
Sec. 6	*July 1, 2025*	46b-124(d)
Sec. 7	*July 1, 2025*	46b-124(f)
Sec. 8	*from passage*	47a-26e
Sec. 9	*from passage*	47a-35a
Sec. 10	*from passage*	51-5c(b)
Sec. 11	*from passage*	51-47(c)
Sec. 12	*from passage*	51-50c
Sec. 13	*from passage*	51-50k
Sec. 14	*July 1, 2025*	51-197f
Sec. 15	*October 1, 2025*	51-344
Sec. 16	*October 1, 2025*	51-345
Sec. 17	*from passage*	52-434
Sec. 18	*October 1, 2025*	54-1k
Sec. 19	*from passage*	54-63d(f)
Sec. 20	*from passage*	54-76l(b)

Sec. 21	*October 1, 2025*	54-203(b)
Sec. 22	*October 1, 2025*	54-230
Sec. 23	*from passage*	51-85a
Sec. 24	*from passage*	New section
Sec. 25	*from passage*	36a-649
Sec. 26	*July 1, 2025*	52-350f
Sec. 27	*October 1, 2025*	53a-29(f)
Sec. 28	*October 1, 2025*	53a-189a(c)
Sec. 29	*October 1, 2025*	52-278f
Sec. 30	*October 1, 2025*	52-46a

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 1(a)(1) "or 'agency'" was deleted for accuracy; in Section 6(d), "release from **[**incarceration**]** the department's custody" was changed to "release from **[**incarceration**]** the custody of the Department of Correction" for clarity; and in Section 22(a), (b) and (d), "standard mail" was changed to "first class mail" for consistency with other provisions of the general statutes.

JUD *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 $	FY 27 $
Judicial Dept.	GF - Cost	Up to 164,393	Up to 316,785
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits[1]	GF - Cost	Up to 94,177	Up to 136,104
Various State Agencies	GF - Potential Cost	See Below	See Below
Policy & Mgmt., Off.	GF - Cost	35,000	None

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 26 $	FY 27 $
Various Municipalities	Potential Cost	See Below	See Below

Explanation

The bill makes various changes concerning judicial branch operations resulting in the following impacts.

Section 1 creates the Office of Information Privacy (OIP) within the Judicial Department which results in a cost of up to $164,393 in FY 26 and up to $316,785 in FY 27 to the Judicial Department for up to 3 new positions[2] as well as associated other expenses and a cost of up to

[1]The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 40.71% of payroll in FY 26. The estimated active hazardous duty employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 49.15% of payroll in FY 26.

[2] It is expected that the Judicial Department may require a Deputy Director, a Court Planner, and a Chief Judicial Marshal to fulfill the requirements of the bill. The annual salaries for these positions are $119,425, $86,553, and $106,307 respectively.

$94,177 in FY 26 and up to $136,104 in FY 27 to the Office of the State Comptroller for associated fringe benefits. The FY 26 estimate is adjusted for partial year implementation and includes a one-time equipment cost of $2,000 per position.

OIP will be required, at the request of the eligible individual[3], to direct public entities to remove or to not publish specific personal information and to inform public entities when that personal information is no longer protected.

This section may also result in a potential cost to municipalities and to various state agencies beginning in FY 26 to the extent they require additional information to redact certain information.

Section 24 results in a potential cost of $35,000 in FY 26 to the Office of Policy and Management for a part-time consultant to assist the Connecticut Sentencing Commission in (1) conducting a review of habeas corpus procedures, and (2) making recommendations on best practices.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation and Office of Information Privacy caseload.

[3] It is anticipated that at least 390 Judicial employees and their household members will be eligible for this service.

OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 7255

AN ACT CONCERNING JUDICIAL BRANCH OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES AND THE DUTIES OF JUDICIAL BRANCH PERSONNEL.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

SUMMARY

§ 1 — OFFICE OF INFORMATION PRIVACY
Establishes the OIP within the judicial branch to, upon request, take steps to direct a public agency not to publish or to remove from the agency's website a protected person's (e.g., a judge) personal information

§§ 2, 6, 7, 10, 19 & 20 — DCF AND CSSD INFORMATION SHARING
Allows CSSD and DCF to share information on juveniles who have been in both systems

§ 3 — BOARD OF FIREARMS PERMIT EXAMINERS
Reduces the membership of the Board of Firearms Permit Examiners from nine to eight by removing the retired Superior Court judge appointee

§ 4 — UCC FALSE RECORDS
Makes permissive the Superior Court's hearing and reviewing of certain petitions to invalidate false records filed under the Uniform Commercial Code for secured transactions

§ 5 — DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES
Makes a minor conforming change for consistency with other statutory references

§§ 8 & 9 — APPEAL OF SUMMARY PROCESS JUDGEMENT
Clarifies that the Superior Court orders the amount a tenant must pay the court for rent that accrues during the pendency of an appeal of a judgement and that it is not a bond

§§ 11-13 & 17 — "STA-FED, ADR, INC."

Eliminates reference in certain statutes to the name of a nonprofit organization that used to oversee alternative dispute resolutions

§ 14 — MOTION TO FILE A LATE APPEAL

Allows the state Supreme Court to review the Connecticut Appellate Court's decision to deny a motion to file a late appeal

§§ 15 & 16 — COURT VENUE AND SERVICE OF PROCESS

For purpose of establishing venue and where civil process should be returnable, makes changes to the judicial districts of Hartford, Litchfield, and New Britain

§ 18 — ELECTRONIC STALKING AND CRIMINAL PROTECTIVE ORDER

Expands the criminal protective order protection to victims of electronic stalking by allowing a court to issue such an order against someone arrested for that crime

§§ 21 & 22 — OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES

Allows crime victims to make a statement to the prosecutor and the court on any plea agreement; allows victim notifications to be sent electronically to those who request it and provide their email address to OVS; maintains the use of U.S. mail as an option

§ 23 — REMOTE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Adds the execution of an agreement as to the division of an estate to the list of records that cannot be remotely acknowledged

§ 24 — SENTENCING COMMISSION'S REVIEW OF FEDERAL HABEAS CORPUS PROCEEDINGS

Requires the Connecticut Sentencing Commission to conduct a review of the habeas corpus procedures used by the federal government and select states; requires the commission to report its findings and recommendations by January 15, 2026

§ 25 — COERCED DEBT LIABILITY

Changes the lookback period for debt to be eligible to be waived as coerced debt, by requiring that the debt be less than 10 years old rather than more than 10 years old

§ 26 — MONEY JUDGMENT ENFORCEMENT

Adds provisions for an action to enforce a money judgment by foreclosure of a real property lien

§§ 27 & 28 — PROBATION PERIOD FOR ANIMAL CRUELTY CONVICTION

Establishes a five-year probation period for an offender convicted of animal cruelty

§§ 29 & 30 — CIVIL PROCESS AND COMMERCIAL WAIVERS

Addresses return of process for prejudgment remedy for certain commercial waivers

SUMMARY

This bill makes various unrelated changes in laws on court procedures and operations.

It also makes minor, technical, and conforming changes.

A section-by-section analysis appears below.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, unless stated otherwise below.

§ 1 — OFFICE OF INFORMATION PRIVACY

Establishes the OIP within the judicial branch to, upon request, take steps to direct a public agency not to publish or to remove from the agency's website a protected person's (e.g., a judge) personal information

OIP Established Purpose

The bill establishes the Office of Information Privacy (OIP) within the judicial branch to direct a public agency not to publish or to remove any specific personal information from the agency's website, including a social media or social network, upon the request of a protected individual.

Protected Individuals. The bill categorizes the following persons as protected individuals:

1. justices, judges, or senior judges;

2. state referees;

3. family support magistrates and family support referees; and

4. the spouse, children, or dependents who live in the same household as someone listed above.

Personal Information. Under the bill, "personal information" means the individual's:

1. home address or telephone number;

2. mobile telephone number or personal email address;

3. Social Security number or federal tax identification number;

4. driver's license number, license plate number, or unique vehicle identifier; or

5. birth or marital record or children's names.

It does not include information that has been publicly displayed that the protected individual has not requested to be removed, or information that is related to and part of a news story, commentary, editorial, or other speech on a matter of public concern.

Public Agency. For the purposes of the OIP's authority under the bill, "public agency" or "agency" means any:

1. executive, administrative, or legislative office of the state or any of its political subdivisions and any state or town agency, department, institution, bureau, board, commission, authority, or official of the state or of any city, town, borough, municipal corporation, school district, regional district, or other district or other political subdivision of the state, including a committee of, or created by it, and any judicial office (e.g., the Division of Public Defender Services), official, or body or committee thereof but only with respect to its or their administrative functions;

2. person to the extent the person is deemed to be the functional equivalent of a public agency according to law; or

3. "implementing agency," which includes one of the following

agencies designated by a municipality under the Economic Development and Manufacturing Assistance Act: (a) an economic development commission, redevelopment agency, sewer authority or sewer commission, public works commission, water authority or water commission, port authority or port commission, harbor authority or harbor commission, or parking authority or parking commission; (b) a nonprofit development corporation; or (c) any other agency designated and authorized by a municipality to undertake a project and approved by the economic and community development commissioner.

OIP's Powers and Duties

The bill establishes OIP's specific powers and duties, and requires it to take any action necessary to fulfill its purposes. The bill also lays out the specific steps that the office must take in carrying out its duties as follows, based on whether the information has already been published or not.

Personal Information Published. Under the bill, if the personal information has already been published, the office must take the steps outlined below:

1. certify that an individual making the request is a protected individual;

2. work with the protected individual to identify the specific personal information that they want removed, including the exact website address where the content appears, if available, and, if the personal information is a land record, the volume and page number where it is recorded; and

3. after certifying that a requestor is a protected individual, (a) provide the public agency with the specific personal information to be removed, including the exact website address where the content appears, if available, and, if it is a land record, the record's exact website address as it appears on the website, if available, and the volume and page number where it is recorded,

and (b) direct that the personal information be removed as soon as practicable.

Personal Information Not Yet Published. If the personal information has not yet been published, the office must do the following:

1. certify the individual is a protected individual;

2. work with the protected individual to identify the specific personal information that the individual does not want to be published, including the volume and page number, if the personal information is recorded in a land record; and

3. after certifying that the requestor is a protected individual, provide the public agency with the specific personal information that the individual does not want to be published, including the volume and page number, if the personal information is recorded in a land record.

Loss of Protected Status. The office must inform the public agency whenever a previously certified protected individual no longer meets the definition of a protected individual and is no longer eligible to (1) have personal information removed from the agency's website or (2) request that the agency not publish personal information.

Public Agency's Response to Request

Upon receipt of OIP's request, the public agency must promptly acknowledge receipt of the request by email and:

1. take steps reasonably necessary to ensure that any specific personal information identified by the protected individual is not published or

2. if the specific personal information is already published, remove it as quickly as practicable after receiving the request.

Civil Liability Protection

The bill provides immunity from civil liability for an employee of a public agency whose failure to remove a protected person's personal information as requested causes damages or injuries. The liability protection applies if the employee acted in good faith and following the law.

Good Faith. Under the bill, an employee is deemed to have acted in good faith if he or she (1) reasonably believed that their actions complied with applicable laws on the protection of personal information, and (2) did not engage in gross negligence, willful misconduct, or intentional wrongdoing.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2026

§§ 2, 6, 7, 10, 19 & 20 — DCF AND CSSD INFORMATION SHARING

Allows CSSD and DCF to share information on juveniles who have been in both systems

DCF's Confidential Records (§ 2)

By law, records maintained by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) must be confidential and not be disclosed, unless the department receives written consent from the person or as provided under certain laws. The law makes exceptions that allow disclosure to certain entities for limited purposes (CGS § 17a-28(g)).

Under current law, the judicial branch's Court Support Services Division (CSSD) has limited access to DCF's information to (1) make certain determinations (e.g., whether the child or youth has been committed to DCF's custody as a delinquent) and (2) share common case records to track juvenile offender recidivism.

The bill instead allows DCF to disclose information on a child, youth, or any other person to CSSD so the division may determine supervision and treatment needs and track juvenile recidivism. The bill removes the limitations on the purposes for which the information may be disclosed.

Confidential Records in Juvenile Matters (§ 6)

By law, all records in juvenile matters, with certain exceptions (e.g., delinquency proceedings) are confidential and are generally not open to

inspection or disclosure to any third party unless ordered by the Superior Court (CGS § 46b-124(b)). The law allows the judicial branch to make records in delinquency proceedings available to certain people and government entities, such as DCF and the Department of Correction (DOC).

DCF. Under current law, if the child is under DCF's oversight, CSSD may generally disclose information to DCF to identify that the child is, among other things, committed by a court into DCF's custody due to being uncared for, abused, or neglected.

The bill instead allows disclosure to identify if the child is receiving services from DCF. Under the bill and existing law, this disclosure of delinquency proceeding records is limited to when DCF is providing services to the child.

DOC. Under current law, records of delinquency proceedings of a person who has been convicted of a crime in adult court may be disclosed to DOC and Board of Pardons and Paroles employees and members who need the records to do risk assessments to determine suitability for release from incarceration. The bill expands this by allowing disclosure of records for subjects who have been charged with a crime, not only for those convicted. Relatedly, it also allows disclosure of records for risk assessments to determine release from DOC custody, instead of incarceration.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

Custody Order Central Computer System (§ 7)

Under current law, information on a child who is the subject of a custody order or other process entered into the judicial branch's central computer system may be disclosed to DCF, if the information is limited to a child who was committed by a court into DCF's custody because they were uncared for, abused, or neglected. The bill instead allows this disclosure if the child is receiving services from DCF.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

Automated Registry of Protective Orders (§ 10)

By law, information in the judicial branch's automated registry of protective orders is not subject to disclosure, but the law allows the chief court administrator to grant access to the information to the personnel of certain agencies, including the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and the Board of Pardons and Paroles. The bill now allows the chief court administrator to also grant access to information on the protective order registry to DCF.

CSSD Information, Files, and Reports (§ 19)

By law, CSSD must establish written procedures for the release of information from the division's reports and files.

Current law allows access to (1) nonidentifying information by certain persons for research related to the administration of criminal justice, (2) all information provided to CSSD by probation officers for compiling presentence reports, and (3) all information provided to CSSD on convicted persons in DOC's custody.

The bill additionally allows access to information on any person in DCF's custody if the person's conditions of release require cooperating with the department.

Youthful Offender Confidential Records and Information (§ 20)

Generally, under the law, when a juvenile matter is transferred to adult criminal court, certain juvenile offenders may qualify for youthful offender status, which provides more confidentiality of his or her records (CGS § 54-76*l*).

Under current law, the records may be disclosed to DCF if the child is under the oversight of the department's administrative unit and the disclosure is limited to information that identifies the child as residing in a justice facility or incarcerated. The bill allows disclosure to DCF without these conditions.

§ 3 — BOARD OF FIREARMS PERMIT EXAMINERS

Reduces the membership of the Board of Firearms Permit Examiners from nine to eight by removing the retired Superior Court judge appointee

The bill reduces the membership of the Board of Firearms Permit Examiners from nine to eight. It does so by removing the retired Superior Court judge, who is appointed by the chief court administrator under current law.

By law, anyone aggrieved by an adverse action on a long gun eligibility certificate or application, including any limitation or revocation, may appeal to the board, following statutory procedures for appealing decisions on existing gun credentials.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§ 4 — UCC FALSE RECORDS

Makes permissive the Superior Court's hearing and reviewing of certain petitions to invalidate false records filed under the Uniform Commercial Code for secured transactions

By law, when a record was falsely filed or amended under the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) for secured transactions, a person identified in the record may petition the court to invalidate the record. The court must review the petition and determine whether cause exists to doubt the record's validity.

Under current law, if the court determines that cause exists, the court must hold a hearing to determine whether to invalidate the record or grant any other relief deemed appropriate. The bill instead makes this hearing permissive, so the court is not required to hold it. If the court holds a hearing it must do so within 60 days after cause was determined, as under current law.

Relatedly, the bill also specifies that the court's finding may be made solely on a review of the documentation attached to the petition and the responses, if any, of the person named as a secured party in the financing statement record and without hearing any oral testimony if the secured party offers none.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§ 5 — DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

Makes a minor conforming change for consistency with other statutory references

The bill makes a minor conforming change in the statutes on family relations, by changing the term "domestic relations officers" to "domestic relations personnel" for consistency with other references.

§§ 8 & 9 — APPEAL OF SUMMARY PROCESS JUDGEMENT

Clarifies that the Superior Court orders the amount a tenant must pay the court for rent that accrues during the pendency of an appeal of a judgement and that it is not a bond

By law, in a summary process (eviction) when the court has issued a judgment, the tenant may appeal. The law allows the court to order an amount, instead of a bond, that the defendant-tenant must make as a deposit with the court as a reasonable fair rent value for the use and occupancy of the premises while the appeal is pending.

The bill clarifies that it is the Superior Court that determines how much the defendant must pay (§ 9).

It also removes a reference to an obsolete bond requirement (§ 8).

§§ 11-13 & 17 — "STA-FED, ADR, INC."

Eliminates reference in certain statutes to the name of a nonprofit organization that used to oversee alternative dispute resolutions

The bill eliminates obsolete references in statutes to the organization, STA-FED ADR, Inc., that used to oversee alternative dispute resolutions in Connecticut.

PA 93-108 established STA-FED ADR, Inc., as a nonprofit, private corporation to oversee an alternative dispute resolution program that used state and federal senior judges and judge referees to resolve civil disputes referred by the state and federal court systems. This organization no longer exists.

§ 14 — MOTION TO FILE A LATE APPEAL

Allows the state Supreme Court to review the Connecticut Appellate Court's decision to deny a motion to file a late appeal

Under existing law, there is no right to further review after the state Appellate Court's final determination of an appeal, except that the

Connecticut Supreme Court has the power to certify cases for its review either (1) upon petition by an aggrieved party or (2) by the appellate panel that heard the matter.

The bill also allows the Connecticut Supreme Court to review the state Appellate Court's decision to deny a motion to file a late appeal.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§§ 15 & 16 — COURT VENUE AND SERVICE OF PROCESS

For purpose of establishing venue and where civil process should be returnable, makes changes to the judicial districts of Hartford, Litchfield, and New Britain

Venue (§ 15)

For purpose of establishing venue (i.e. where a case will be heard), the Superior Court is divided into judicial districts.

The bill removes five towns (Avon, Canton, Farmington, Granby, and Simsbury) from the Hartford judicial district and one town from the New Britain district (Burlington), and it adds all six of them to the Litchfield judicial district.

Service of Process (§ 16)

The bill eliminates some of the options for where process should be returned. Generally, it eliminates the options under current law that give the plaintiff the choice between the Hartford or New Britain judicial district when the action involves the towns of Avon, Canton, Farmington, and Simsbury.

Specifically, under the bill this pertains to a civil action:

1. in which either party lives in one of those four towns;

2. that involves land, and the land and either party are located in one of these towns;

3. in which the plaintiff is a domestic business organization and has an office or a place of business in one of those towns; and

4. that involves a housing matter, and the premises is located in one

of these towns.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

§ 18 — ELECTRONIC STALKING AND CRIMINAL PROTECTIVE ORDER

Expands the criminal protective order protection to victims of electronic stalking by allowing a court to issue such an order against someone arrested for that crime

By law, upon arrest for certain crimes, the court may issue a criminal protective order against the offender. Under existing law, an arrest for any of the following violations, or an attempt to commit them, subjects the offender to a criminal protective order at the court's discretion: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th degree sexual assault; 3rd degree sexual assault with a firearm; 1st degree aggravated sexual assault; aggravated sexual assault of a minor; and certain violations of injury or risk of injury to, or impairing morals of children. A person who is arrested for a violation of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd degree stalking may also be issued a criminal protective order by the court.

The bill also allows the court to issue a criminal protective order against someone arrested for the crime of electronic stalking, which is a class D felony punishable by a fine up to $5,000, up to five years in prison, or both.

By law, a criminal protective order may include provisions necessary to protect the victim from threats, harassment, injury, or intimidation by the defendant, including an order enjoining the defendant from (1) imposing any restraint on the person or liberty of the victim; (2) threatening, harassing, assaulting, molesting, or sexually assaulting the victim; or (3) entering the victim's home. It may also protect an animal (CGS § 54-1k(b)).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

§§ 21 & 22 — OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES

Allows crime victims to make a statement to the prosecutor and the court on any plea agreement; allows victim notifications to be sent electronically to those who request it and provide their email address to OVS; maintains the use of U.S. mail as an option

Victim Statement (§ 21)

By law, the Office of Victim Services (OVS) must give victims a list of specified information within 10 days after receiving their application for victim compensation.

Under current law, among other things, this list must inform victims of their right to present a statement of their losses, injuries, and wishes to the prosecutor and the court before the court accepts a plea of guilty or nolo contendere made under a plea agreement in which the defendant pleads to a lesser offense than that with which he or she was originally charged.

Under the bill, OVS's list no longer needs to specify to the victim that they can make the statement if the defendant pleads to a lesser offense. The bill allows the victim to make a statement on any plea agreement.

Victim Notification (§ 22)

By law, if a victim or other person (i.e. registrant) requests it, OVS must notify them when certain things happen related to the incarcerated person. Under existing law this applies when the person (1) applies for release or sentence reduction or review, (2) files an application with the court to be exempt from registering for committing an offense against a minor or a nonviolent sexual offense, or (3) is scheduled for release.

Under current law, this notice must be sent via mail. Under the bill, the notice must be sent either by first class mail or electronically, whichever the registrant chooses. The bill also requires victims to notify the office of their email address if the electronic notification is requested.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

§ 23 — REMOTE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Adds the execution of an agreement as to the division of an estate to the list of records that cannot be remotely acknowledged

Under existing law, no record can be acknowledged remotely in the following circumstances: the making and execution of a will, codicil, trust, or trust instrument; the execution of certain health care

instructions; the execution of a designation of a standby guardian; the execution of a living will; the execution of a power of attorney; the execution of a self-proving affidavit for an appointment of a health care representative or for a living will; the execution of a mutual distribution agreement; the execution of a disclaimer; or a real estate closing.

The bill adds the execution of an agreement as to the division of an estate to the list of records that cannot be remotely acknowledged.

The bill also makes a technical change in the statutes on remote acknowledgement of documents by changing the term "document" to "records" for consistency with other references.

§ 24 — SENTENCING COMMISSION'S REVIEW OF FEDERAL HABEAS CORPUS PROCEEDINGS

Requires the Connecticut Sentencing Commission to conduct a review of the habeas corpus procedures used by the federal government and select states; requires the commission to report its findings and recommendations by January 15, 2026

Scope of Review

The bill requires the Connecticut Sentencing Commission to review the habeas corpus procedures used by the federal government and Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Virginia.

Study and Recommendations

After conducting the study, the commission must make recommendations on the best practices that could be implemented in Connecticut to:

1. ensure a timely review and adjudication of habeas corpus claims,

2. set standards for the presentation of repeated habeas corpus claims associated with the same incident,

3. prioritize credible habeas corpus claims and limit the filing of those that are repetitive or meritless, and

4. provide balance between providing public counsel in habeas corpus claims and the cost of litigating repetitive or meritless claims.

Reporting

By January 15, 2026, the commission's executive director must report the results of the review to the Judiciary Committee.

§ 25 — COERCED DEBT LIABILITY

Changes the lookback period for debt to be eligible to be waived as coerced debt, by requiring that the debt be less than 10 years old rather than more than 10 years old

By law, coerced debt is any debt incurred in the name of a debtor who is a victim of domestic violence when the debt was incurred in response to any duress, intimidation, threat of force, force, or undue influence used to specifically coerce the debtor into incurring the debt. The law prohibits anyone from knowingly causing another person to incur coerced debt and subjects any violator to civil liability.

Under current law, "debt" means an unsecured credit card debt, or any portion of one, incurred on or after January 1, 2025, for personal, family, or household use that (1) was not subject to a final judgment in an action for dissolution of marriage or collection matter that occurred prior to the time when a debtor requests that the claimant waive the debt or (2) was incurred more than 10 years before the date of the request.

The bill changes the lookback period for when the debt could have been incurred for purposes of existing law's provisions on the collection of coerced debt. Specifically, it requires that the debt be less than 10 years old rather than more than 10 years old.

§ 26 — MONEY JUDGMENT ENFORCEMENT

Adds provisions for an action to enforce a money judgment by foreclosure of a real property lien

By law, a money judgment may generally be enforced against any property of the judgment debtor unless the property is exempt from application to the satisfaction of the judgment under state or federal law.

The bill adds provisions for an action to enforce a money judgment

by foreclosure of a real property lien. In such a case, under the bill, the amount of the judgment lien to attach to the property must be calculated by taking the fair market value of the property, less any priority liens and the amount of any applicable exempt property under state law.

The bill requires the chief court administrator to ensure that any form prescribed by the judicial branch relating to an action to enforce a money judgment by foreclosure of a real property lien, including the foreclosure worksheet, includes the property not subject to debt collection under the laws on exempt property and exempt property of farm partnership.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§§ 27 & 28 — PROBATION PERIOD FOR ANIMAL CRUELTY CONVICTION

Establishes a five-year probation period for an offender convicted of animal cruelty

The probation period for offenders convicted of certain crimes, including certain sexual assault crimes, is set in law. Under current law, the probation period cannot be less than 10 years or more than 35 years, unless terminated sooner.

The bill adds conviction of animal cruelty to the list of crimes for which the law provides a probation period. It establishes five years as the probation period for someone convicted of animal cruelty (§ 27).

It also makes a conforming change (§ 28).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

§§ 29 & 30 — CIVIL PROCESS AND COMMERCIAL WAIVERS

Addresses return of process for prejudgment remedy for certain commercial waivers

Commercial Waivers (§ 29)

The bill provides that in commercial transactions when a defendant has waived the right to notice and a hearing, the plaintiff's attorney must issue the writ for prejudgment remedy without a court order if, in addition to meeting requirements in existing law, the plaintiff's lawyer

serves process of the complaint to be returned to the court:

1. within 12 days, inclusive, after the earlier of (a) service of process upon the defendant preventing the dissipation of property or (b) service of process upon any third person holding property of the defendant and

2. at least six days before the return date.

Process in Civil Actions (§ 30)

Under existing law, process in civil actions returnable to the state Supreme Court must be returned to its clerk at least 20 days before the return day and, if returnable to Superior Court (except process in evictions and petitions for parentage and support), to the clerk of the court at least six days before the return day.

The bill also exempts from the above process return time frames the commencement of any civil action containing the issuance of a prejudgment remedy when the defendant, in a commercial transaction, has waived notice and hearing as provided above.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 41 Nay 0 (04/04/2025)