

Comparison of Parole Boards in Connecticut and Neighboring States

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Issue

Compare Connecticut's parole board with those of the neighboring states, including the boards' composition and authority and provisions related to members' appointments and required qualifications and training.

Summary

Connecticut and all three of its neighboring states (Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island) have parole boards with independent authority to grant parole to inmates, set the parole conditions, and rescind or revoke such orders for violations. Of these states, Massachusetts is the only one that requires the board to supervise the offender after release.

In all four states, board members are appointed by the governor. However, the governor must get the consent of (1) both houses of the General Assembly in Connecticut, (2) the Executive Council in Massachusetts, and (3) the Senate in New York. Rhode Island does not have such a requirement. Connecticut's board members serve a term that is coterminous with the governor's term. While board members in Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island serve terms of five years, six years, and three years, respectively.

All states specify in statute the composition of the board, including the required qualifications of the members. The requisite qualifications generally include education and experience in certain fields, primarily those related to criminal justice and mental health services. Only Connecticut has a formal training requirement, which board members must complete annually.

(For additional information on Connecticut’s Board of Pardons and Paroles see OLR report [2023-R-0161](#).)

Appointments and General Authority

Table 1 below summarizes the provisions addressing appointments to and the general authority of parole boards in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island.

Table 1: Appointments and General Authority to Grant Paroles

State (Statute)	Board Name	Appointment of Members	General Authority
Connecticut CGS § 54-124a	Board of Pardons and Paroles	Members are appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of both houses of the General Assembly. <i>(A member’s term is coterminous with the governor’s term, or until a successor is chosen, whichever is later.)</i>	Grant parole, set conditions, and order revocation
Massachusetts Mass. Gen. Laws Ann. ch. 27, § 4 & § 5	Parole Board	Members are appointed by the governor with advice and consent of the Executive Council. <i>(Five-year terms)</i>	Grant parole, set conditions, order revocation, and supervise parolees
New York N.Y. Exec. Law §§ 259-b & -259-c	State Board of Parole	Members are appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. <i>(Six-year terms)</i>	Grant parole, set conditions, and order revocation
Rhode Island R.I. Gen. Laws Ann. § 13-8-1, et seq	Parole Board	Members are appointed by the governor. <i>(Three-year terms)</i>	Grant parole, set conditions, and order revocation

Board Members’ Qualifications and Training

Table 2 below summarizes the required qualifications and any training or continuing education requirements of parole board members in Connecticut and its neighboring states.

Table 2: Board Members Required Qualifications and Training

State (Statute)	Number of Members	Required Qualifications	Training and Continued Education
Connecticut CGS § 54-124a	10 full-time members and up to five part-time members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members must be qualified by education, experience, or training in the administration of community corrections, parole or pardons, criminal justice, criminology, the evaluation or supervision of offenders, or the provision of mental health services to offenders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal training program for members and officers must include an overview of the criminal justice and parole system, victim rights and services, reentry strategies, risk assessment, case management, and mental health issues. Each member must complete the training annually.

Table 2 (continued)

State (Statute)	Number of Members	Required Qualifications	Training and Continued Education
<p>Massachusetts Mass. Gen. Laws Ann. ch. 27, § 4</p>	<p>Seven members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor must appoint a panel to produce a list of nominees for vacancies on the board. • Each nominee must have a four-year bachelor's degree and at least five years of training and experience in one or more of the following fields: parole, probation, corrections, law, law enforcement, psychology, psychiatry, sociology, or social work. • A person who does not qualify but substantially meets the above qualifications and has demonstrated exceptional qualifications and aptitude for carrying out the duties of the board may be nominated by unanimous vote of the panel. • One nominee must be a professional with at least five years of experience or training in adolescent development and psychology. • Panel must attempt to include people with certain backgrounds on the list (attorney, psychiatrist, victim witness advocate, parole staff). • One member must have experience in forensic psychology. 	<p>No statutory training or continuing education requirement.</p>

Table 2 (continued)

State (Statute)	Number of Members	Required Qualifications	Training and Continued Education
<p>New York N.Y. Exec. Law §§ 259-b & -259-c</p>	<p>Up to 19 members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members must have at least (1) a bachelor’s or graduate degree and five years of experience in one or more specified fields or (2) 10 years’ experience in one or more of those fields. • The specified fields are criminology, administration of criminal justice, law enforcement, sociology, law, social work, corrections, psychology, psychiatry, or medicine. • Members are prohibited from holding any other public office or representing a political party, committee, organization, or association. • Members must work full-time. 	<p>No statutory training or continuing education requirement.</p>
<p>Rhode Island R.I. Gen. Laws Ann. § 13-8-1, et seq</p>	<p>Seven qualified electors <i>(The chairperson serves as a full-time employee for a two-year term.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board must consist of (1) a psychologist or physician qualified in the field of psychiatry or neurology; (2) a member of the Rhode Island bar in good standing; (3) an individual professionally trained in correctional work or closely related field (such as, social work); and (4) a law enforcement officer. • All members must have shown an interest in social welfare problems. • The chairperson must have a baccalaureate degree and experience in the criminal justice system. 	<p>No statutory training or continuing education requirement.</p>

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