



Senate Bill No. 821

Public Act No. 13-53

AN ACT CONCERNING RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANDATED REPORTERS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT.

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

Section 1. Section 17a-101e of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2013*):

(a) No employer shall (1) discharge, or in any manner discriminate or retaliate against, any employee who in good faith makes a report pursuant to sections 17a-101a to 17a-101d, inclusive, and 17a-103, testifies or is about to testify in any proceeding involving child abuse or neglect, or (2) hinder or prevent, or attempt to hinder or prevent, any employee from making a report pursuant to sections 17a-101a to 17a-101d, inclusive, and 17a-103, or testifying in any proceeding involving child abuse or neglect. The Attorney General may bring an action in Superior Court against an employer who violates this subsection. The court may assess a civil penalty of not more than two thousand five hundred dollars and may order such other equitable relief as the court deems appropriate.

(b) Any person, institution or agency which, in good faith, makes, or in good faith does not make, the report pursuant to sections 17a-101a to 17a-101d, inclusive, and 17a-103 shall be immune from any liability,

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civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such report provided such person did not perpetrate or cause such abuse or neglect.

(c) Any person who is alleged to have knowingly made a false report of child abuse or neglect pursuant to sections 17a-101a to 17a-101d, inclusive, and 17a-103 shall be referred to the office of the Chief State's Attorney for purposes of a criminal investigation.

(d) Any person who knowingly makes a false report of child abuse or neglect pursuant to sections 17a-101a to 17a-101d, inclusive, and 17a-103 shall be fined not more than two thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than one year or both.

Sec. 2. Section 31-51m of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2013*):

(a) As used in this section and section 31-278:

(1) "Person" means one or more individuals, partnerships, associations, corporations, limited liability companies, business trusts, legal representatives or any organized group of persons;

(2) "Employer" means a person engaged in business who has employees, including the state and any political subdivision of the state;

(3) "Employee" means any person engaged in service to an employer in a business of his employer;

(4) "Public body" means (A) any public agency, as defined in subdivision (1) of section 1-200, or any employee, member or officer thereof, or (B) any federal agency or any employee, member or officer thereof.

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(b) No employer shall discharge, discipline or otherwise penalize any employee because (1) the employee, or a person acting on behalf of the employee, reports, verbally or in writing, a violation or a suspected violation of any state or federal law or regulation or any municipal ordinance or regulation to a public body, [or because an] (2) the employee is requested by a public body to participate in an investigation, hearing or inquiry held by that public body, or a court action, or (3) the employee reports a suspected incident of child abuse or neglect pursuant to sections 17a-101a to 17a-101d, inclusive, or 17a-103. No municipal employer shall discharge, discipline or otherwise penalize any employee because the employee, or a person acting on behalf of the employee, reports, verbally or in writing, to a public body concerning the unethical practices, mismanagement or abuse of authority by such employer. The provisions of this subsection shall not be applicable when the employee knows that such report is false.

(c) Any employee who is discharged, disciplined or otherwise penalized by his employer in violation of the provisions of subsection (b) may, after exhausting all available administrative remedies, bring a civil action, within ninety days of the date of the final administrative determination or within ninety days of such violation, whichever is later, in the superior court for the judicial district where the violation is alleged to have occurred or where the employer has its principal office, for the reinstatement of his previous job, payment of back wages and reestablishment of employee benefits to which he would have otherwise been entitled if such violation had not occurred. An employee's recovery from any such action shall be limited to such items, provided the court may allow to the prevailing party his costs, together with reasonable attorney's fees to be taxed by the court. Any employee found to have knowingly made a false report shall be subject to disciplinary action by his employer up to and including dismissal.

(d) This section shall not be construed to diminish or impair the

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rights of a person under any collective bargaining agreement.

Approved May 28, 2013