

2018 Major Issues Report

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To Our Readers

Every year, the Office of Legislative Research (OLR) identifies and provides brief descriptions of important issues the General Assembly may face in the upcoming session.

This report represents the professional, nonpartisan views of staff in OLR, in consultation with the Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA) and the Legislative Commissioners' Office (LCO). It does not represent staff suggestions or recommendations. The office identifies issues based on interim studies; research requests; non-confidential discussions with legislators, other legislative participants, and executive branch agencies; as well as our general subject matter knowledge.

The report is organized according to the committee that has primary jurisdiction over an issue. Because more than one committee may consider aspects of the same issue, descriptions may overlap. Where appropriate, we provide links to OLR reports and other documents that contain additional information.

Contents	
Aging.....	2
Appropriations.....	2
Banks.....	2
Children.....	3
Commerce.....	4
Education.....	4
Energy and Technology.....	5
Environment.....	6
Finance, Revenue, and Bonding.....	7
General Law.....	8
Government Administration and Elections.....	9
Higher Education and Employment Advancement.....	9
Housing.....	10
Human Services.....	10
Insurance and Real Estate.....	11
Judiciary.....	12
Labor and Public Employees.....	12
Planning and Development.....	13
Public Health.....	14
Public Safety and Security.....	15
Transportation.....	16
Veterans' Affairs.....	16



Aging

Senior Centers

Legislation from 2016 created a task force to study the resources and training needs of senior center staff, municipal agents, and other municipal employees to facilitate delivery of health and human services and information. The task force, which began meeting in 2017, is exploring best practices for, and barriers to, delivering these services and information. In 2018, the legislature may consider recommendations from the task force's report as well as other related proposals.

Read related law:

- [SA 16-7](#), *An Act Concerning Senior Centers*

Appropriations

Current Fiscal Year

The Governor signed the FY 18 – FY 19 biennial budget on October 31, 2017. The November 13, 2017 consensus revenue forecast, issued jointly by the Office of Fiscal Analysis and the Office of Policy and Management, indicates that FY 18 revenue was already tracking \$178.4 million below levels assumed in the budget. On December 13, 2017, the Governor issued deficit mitigation options to the General Assembly.

Future Fiscal Years

The November consensus revenue forecast indicated that FY 19 revenue is projected to be \$147.1 million below the levels assumed in the biennial budget. Additionally, the budget as passed included structural deficits in the out years, totaling \$1.9 billion in FY 20, \$2.6 billion in FY 21, and \$3.1 billion in FY 22. These deficits are largely due to statutorily scheduled net revenue adjustments totaling \$1.5 billion in FY 20, \$1.7 billion in FY 21, and \$1.9 billion in FY 22. The remainder of the projected deficits reflects the assumed increase in fixed costs over these years.

Banks

Broker-Dealers' Standard of Care

The issue of the standard of care broker-dealers and financial planners owe their clients has recently received national attention. At the federal level, a new [Department of Labor Conflict of Interest Rule](#) treats people who provide investment advice or recommendations for compensation as fiduciaries. And, at least one state, Nevada, recently passed legislation imposing a fiduciary duty (i.e., a duty to act in the client's best interest) on broker-dealers (2017 Nev. Laws Ch. 322 (S.B. 383)). In 2017, Connecticut passed legislation that requires certain financial planners to disclose

to clients whether they have a fiduciary duty with regard to each financial recommendation they make ([PA 17-120](#)). The legislature may consider expanding these protections and other proposals on this topic during the 2018 legislative session.

Read OLR's reports:

- [2017-R-0142](#), *Broker-Dealers' Standard of Care Under New Nevada Law*
- [2017-R-0033](#), *Broker-Dealers' Standard of Care*
- [2017-R-0131](#), *Acts Affecting Banking*

Children

Concussions in Youth Sports

The state's concussion laws require, among other things, school coaches to receive training on concussions and to follow certain protocols when an athlete incurs a head injury, including removing the student from athletic activities until he or she receives medical clearance. Because of concerns over the long-term effects of concussions on young athletes, the Committee on Children may seek to expand these requirements beyond intramural and interscholastic sports.

Read OLR's report:

- [2017-R-0211](#), *Concussion Laws Issue Brief*

Use of Crumb Rubber on Turf Fields and Playgrounds

In February 2016, responding to public concerns about the safety of recycled tire crumbs (crumb rubber) on turf fields and playgrounds, the federal Environmental Protection Agency, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Consumer Product Safety Commission launched a study of the substance. In December 2016, the agencies released an interim status report, but it is unclear when the final report and safety assessment will be complete. In the meantime, the Committee on Children may consider legislation limiting crumb rubber use on turf fields and playgrounds.

For more information:

- [December 2016 Status Report: Federal Research Action Plan on Recycled Tire Crumb, United States Environmental Protection Agency](#)

Commerce

Economic Development Marketing

In recent months, widespread media reports suggested that businesses may be overlooking the state's many advantages, such as an educated workforce, proximate location, and high quality of life. The recent budget act diverts a portion of the hotel tax to the new "Tourism Fund" to be used to support statewide marketing, among other things. Last session, the legislature also established a working group to develop a marketing plan to attract businesses to the state, encourage entrepreneurship, and leverage private resources to bolster the state's marketing efforts ([SA 17-18](#)). The group's report is due to the legislature in January 2018. In 2018, the legislature may consider proposals based on the working group's recommendations as well as other proposals related to economic development and marketing the state to businesses and tourists.

Read OLR's reports:

- [2017-R-297](#), *Economic Development Branding and Marketing in Other States*
- [2017-R-242](#), *Public-Private State Marketing Organizations*

Education

CCJEF v. Rell Court Decision

In September 2017, the Connecticut Supreme Court heard oral arguments as both sides in the ongoing *Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding (CCJEF) v. Rell* school funding civil lawsuit appealed a 2016 Superior Court judge's ruling that Connecticut's education system does not meet the state's constitutional obligation. The Supreme Court is considering whether to uphold or overturn all or parts of the ruling that found the state has failed to provide an adequate education to public school students in the following areas: (1) intervening in struggling school districts when local government falters; (2) distributing education aid; (3) defining elementary and secondary education; (4) setting standards for hiring, firing, evaluating, and paying teachers; and (5) funding special education, identifying eligible students, and delivering services.

While there is no set date for the Supreme Court ruling to be issued, it could happen during the 2018 legislative session. This may mean the legislature will have to consider modifying how it addresses these issues even though the legislature recently revised the Education Cost Sharing formula in the most recent budget ([PA 17-2, June Special Session, §§ 225-230](#)).

Read OLR's reports:

- [2016-R-0177](#), *OLR Backgrounder: CCJEF v. Rell*
- [2016-R-0306](#), *Issue Brief: CCJEF v. Rell Court Decision*
- [2010-R-0527](#), *OLR Backgrounder: CCJEF v. Rell (Supreme Court decision)*

Read the court decision:

- [CCJEF v. Reil](#)

Energy and Technology

Utility Storm Response

At the end of October, a severe windstorm knocked out power for over 200,000 Connecticut residents. The Energy and Technology Committee has already held an informational forum on electric companies' responses to the outages and the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) will also be reviewing the companies' responses. Depending on the findings, the committee may consider legislation to improve responses and bolster storm response legislation enacted in 2012.

Read OLR's summary of the 2012 legislation:

- [PA 12-148](#)

Read OLR's reports:

- [2011-R-0398](#), *Options Regarding Utility Outages*
- [2013-R-0353](#), *2013 Storm-Related Acts*
- [2014-R-0008](#), *Electric Company Tree Trimming and Property Law*

See also:

- [Final Report of the Two Storm Panel](#) (2012)
- PURA [Docket 12-06-09](#), PURA Establishment of Industry Performance Standards for Electric and Gas Companies

Comprehensive Energy Strategy (CES)

The Energy and Technology Committee may debate policy proposals from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's (DEEP) Comprehensive Energy Strategy (CES) in the upcoming session. DEEP published its draft 2017 CES in July and held several public meetings on it throughout August and September. The draft CES discusses energy strategies for the electric power, building, and transportation sectors. It includes a proposal to evaluate the electricity rate and environmental impacts of various scenarios involving the retention or retirement of the Millstone nuclear plant, similar to the appraisal due February 1, 2018, under [PA 17-3](#), June Special Session.

By law, DEEP must prepare a CES every three years and it must include a statement of energy policies and long-range energy planning objectives and strategies to achieve various goals, including (1) a sound economy, (2) the least-cost mix of energy supply sources and measures that reduce energy demand, and (3) security and diversity of fuel supplies and energy generating methods.

Read OLR's reports:

- [2017-R-0195](#), *DEEP's Draft 2017 Comprehensive Energy Strategy: Electric Power Sector*

For more information:

- [Draft 2017 Comprehensive Energy Strategy](#), DEEP

Environment

Bear Hunting Season

UConn wildlife biologists have been [tracking](#) Connecticut's black bear population. They have determined that the population, which is highest in the outermost suburbs, is increasing and bears are adjusting to living in a habitat shared with humans. In 2017, the legislature considered [sSB 522](#) (File 241), which would have required the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to establish regulations on a black bear hunting season. Among other things, the regulations would have had to provide management standards, methods, regulated areas, bag limits, seasons, and permit eligibility for taking black bear by bow and arrow, muzzleloader, and shotgun. In 2018, the legislature may again consider bills to establish a bear hunting season.

Read OLR reports:

- [2016-R-0158](#), *Bear Hunting in Selected States*
- [2012-R-0351](#), *Bear Feeding Laws in the Northeast*

Bottle Bill

Connecticut's beverage container redemption law ("bottle bill") has been in effect since 1980. Under the law, a five-cent deposit is charged on a container at the time of purchase, which is then returned to the consumer when the container is returned to a retailer or redemption center. The General Fund receives the unclaimed deposits. Over the last several years, the legislature has considered a number of proposals to change the bottle bill. Some of the proposals have been to (1) replace the deposit with a nonrefundable fee to fund recycling programs; (2) increase the deposit value to 10 cents; (3) increase the handling fee that retailers and redemption centers receive for

taking back containers; and (4) expand the bottle bill's scope to include such things as nips, juices, teas, or sports drinks. In 2018, the legislature may continue discussing proposed changes to the state's bottle bill.

Read OLR reports:

- [2017-R-0259](#), *Unclaimed Bottle Deposits*
- [2017-R-0176](#), *Issue Brief: Connecticut's Bottle Bill*
- [2016-R-0093](#), *Bottle Bill Handling Fees*

Finance, Revenue, and Bonding

Impact of Federal Tax Reform

Connecticut, like most other states, links its tax code to the federal tax code by incorporating various federal provisions (e.g., personal and corporation income tax exclusions, deductions, and credits and gift and estate tax exclusions). Consequently, recently enacted federal tax changes could have far-reaching implications for Connecticut residents and businesses. The General Assembly will likely analyze their implications for Connecticut taxpayers and the state's revenue collections. The legislature may also consider conforming or compensating changes to the state's tax code in response to the federal changes.

Evaluating Tax Expenditures

Fiscal deficits not only pressure the General Assembly to cut the budget but also to reduce the amount of tax revenue the state annually forgoes due to tax credits, exemptions, and deductions (i.e., tax expenditures). The General Assembly may consider proposals to repeal or limit these tax expenditures in response to an Office of Policy and Management (OPM) study of state tax expenditures that is due just before the start of the 2018 session. The FY 18-19 budget act requires OPM to examine existing state tax expenditures, prioritize them, and identify alternative revenue sources the state can use to pay them. OFA is also due to submit its latest Tax Expenditure Report before the start of session.

Read OLR's reports:

- [2017-R-0287](#), *Guide to Connecticut's Business Tax Credits*
- [2015-R-0104](#), *Sales and Use Tax Exemptions*

For more information:

- [Connecticut Tax Expenditure Report: February 2016](#), OFA

General Law

Biological Products

Biologic medicines are more complex than traditional drugs that are chemically synthesized because they are manufactured from living organisms. Once a patent expires for a biologic drug, a “biosimilar” drug may be produced, as is the case with brand name and generic prescription drugs. Currently, 35 states have laws to regulate biosimilar substitutions. In recent years, the Connecticut legislature has considered bills to establish similar legislation. In 2018, the legislature may again consider proposals to establish requirements for prescribing and substituting biological products.

For more information:

- [State Laws and Legislation Related to Biologic Medications and Substitution of Biosimilars](#), National Conference of State Legislatures

Occupational Licensing

The legislature often considers proposals to amend the licensing or registration requirements of the state’s regulated occupations, many of which are within the purview of the General Law and Public Health committees.

In 2017, the National Conference of State Legislatures, National Governors Association, and Council of State Governments chose 11 states, including Connecticut, to participate in the National Occupational Licensing Learning Consortium. The group’s goal is to develop an action plan for removing unnecessary barriers to labor markets (e.g., improving license portability across states). The group began meeting in December 2017. Connecticut’s involvement in the consortium may influence discussions that the legislature has in 2018 on occupational licensing requirements.

Read OLR's report:

- [2016-R-0220](#), *Occupational Registration, Certification, and Licensing Requirements for Individuals*

For more information:

- [Occupational Licensing Policy Learning Consortium](#), National Conference of State Legislatures

Government Administration and Elections

Constitutional Restrictions on Voting

The state constitution contains provisions regarding the administration of elections in Connecticut, including requiring voters to cast their ballots at their polling place on Election Day, unless they qualify to vote by absentee ballot because, among other reasons, they will be out of town on Election Day or they are sick or have a physical disability. The legislature may reconsider a proposed constitutional amendment to ease these restrictions and grant the legislature increased authority to pass legislation relating to the time, place, and manner of voting. For example, in 2017 the House passed [sHJ 95](#), which would have authorized the legislature to provide by law for an in-person early voting period.

Quasi-Public Agency Oversight

In this tight fiscal climate, the legislature may seek to extend expenditure oversight and control to quasi-public agencies, including to their contracting or personnel practices. Though the legislature created these agencies to operate with more autonomy than other state agencies, recent media reports indicate that some quasi-public agencies have given large severance payments to departing employees. For this reason the legislature may reconsider proposals similar to [SB 356](#) from the 2017 session, which, among other things, would have required that quasi-public agencies submit contracts with an annual cost of more than \$100,000 to the attorney general and legislative committee of cognizance for review.

Higher Education and Employment Advancement

Community College Consolidation

In December 2017, the Board of Regents for Higher Education approved a plan to consolidate the state's 12 regional community-technical colleges into a single entity to be known as the Community College of Connecticut. The target date for the consolidation's completion is July 2019. The legislature may consider issues related to the consolidation plan in the upcoming session.

Program Approval

For the past two years, private colleges and universities have been given a pilot exemption from the Office of Higher Education's (OHE) program approval process ([CGS 10a-34\(l\)](#)). This process requires institutions to submit to OHE detailed information about proposed modifications to existing degree programs or the creation of new programs. With the pilot set to expire on July 1, 2018, the legislature will need to decide whether to end or extend the exemption.

Read OLR's report:

- [2017-R-0209](#), *Program Approval for Private Higher Education Institutions*

Housing

Increasing Housing Opportunities

In recent sessions, the legislature has considered bills aimed at increasing fair and equal housing opportunities for all Connecticut residents. In 2018, the legislature will likely continue to consider legislation on this issue, including proposals to eliminate historic patterns of segregation by (1) incentivizing the creation and rehabilitation of affordable housing in a variety of locations and (2) addressing the impact of local zoning regulations.

Human Services

Medical Assistance

Facing changes at the federal level and budgetary pressure at the state level, the legislature may debate proposals concerning the size and scope of the state's medical assistance programs (e.g., Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)).

The recently passed budget ([PA 17-2, June Special Session](#) §§ 50; 138-139) decreased eligibility for (1) HUSKY A parents and caretakers and (2) the Medicare Savings Program. In a subsequent special session, the legislature delayed the MSP eligibility decrease until July 1, 2018. In the 2018 session, the legislature may debate how to mitigate those cuts or whether further cuts are necessary.

Federal funding for CHIP, which provides health coverage to children in families with incomes too high to qualify for Medicaid, expired September 30, 2017. Congress approved partial funding in December, allowing Connecticut to keep the program open through February. Also at the federal level, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently announced that it will allow states to implement work requirements for certain Medicaid recipients. The legislature may consider proposals in response to these developments.

Read OLR's reports:

- [2017-R-0254](#), *Issue Brief: Children's Health Insurance Program*
- [2017-R-0278](#), *Medicare Savings Program*
- [2017-R-0053](#), *Medicaid Glossary*

Insurance and Real Estate

Contract Disputes between Health Insurers and Hospitals

In the fall of 2017, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield and Hartford HealthCare were involved in a protracted contract dispute. The previous contract between the entities expired without a new one in place, causing Anthem customers to pay higher out-of-network rates for services provided at Hartford HealthCare facilities. In 2015, the legislature considered legislation that sought to minimize the impact on consumers during such contract disputes ([SB 249](#) (File 635) and [SB 994](#)). According to the [Hartford Courant](#), the legislature may again seek legislation in 2018 that requires health insurers and hospital systems to settle contract disputes with minimal impact on consumers.

Prescription Drug Pricing, Transparency, and Formulary Changes

In 2017, the Insurance and Real Estate Committee introduced [SB 925](#) (File 345), which sought to curb rising prescription drug costs, one of the major drivers of increasing health care costs. Among other things, the bill would have (1) required insurers to implement value based insurance design and change how certain coinsurances and deductibles are calculated and (2) controlled how certain reimbursements are handled in contracts between health carriers and providers. It also would have required drug manufacturers to notify the insurance commissioner when they increase drug prices beyond a certain threshold and annually submit to her a report on all drug price concessions provided to pharmacy benefit managers.

The committee also introduced [HB 7123](#), which generally would have allowed insureds to continue to access prescription drugs at the same benefit level for an entire plan year by limiting when insurers could change prescription drug formularies.

In 2018, the legislature may again consider bills regulating prescription drug pricing, transparency, and formulary changes.

Read OLR's report:

- [2017-R-0294](#), *Issue Brief: Prescription Drug Pricing Transparency Laws*

Insurance-Based Models for Special Education Funding

Last session, legislators introduced three bills that applied insurance concepts to special education funding. Generally, [SB 542](#) and [sHB 6619](#) (File 318) would have created a process to implement a Special Education Predictable Cost Cooperative, which would attempt to minimize volatility in municipal special education costs by aggregating statewide costs and distributing aid

proportionally. And [SB 468](#) would have required insurers to cover a student's special education costs before the local board of education covered such costs. The legislature may pursue similar legislation in 2018.

Judiciary

Juvenile Delinquency Adjudications

By law, when a child is adjudicated delinquent in juvenile court, the court may take certain actions (e.g., place the child on probation). Under current law, the court may order a child committed to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) for placement by the commissioner. And those she determines to be the highest risk may be placed in the Connecticut Juvenile Training School (CJTS) or Pueblo Unit for Girls (the two DCF-run secure facilities for delinquent juveniles) or another state facility ([CGS § 46b-140\(j\)](#)). However, a new law generally prohibits the court, starting July 1, 2018, from committing children to DCF as a result of a delinquency conviction. The new law also (1) establishes a transition period during which the Judicial Branch may place a child adjudicated delinquent in DCF congregate care or order DCF services and (2) requires the Judicial Branch to expand its juvenile justice services to provide services, sanctions, and secure placements for children convicted as delinquent ([PA 17-2 §§ 321-323](#)).

The legislature may take additional action this session to provide alternatives to the CJTS or Pueblo Unit placement for the highest risk delinquent children.

Sex Offender Registration

Special Act [15-2](#), an Act Concerning a Study of the Sexual Offender Registration System, requires the Sentencing Commission to take a comprehensive look at the registration, management, and sentencing of sexual offenders in Connecticut. The commission is also required to submit reports, including recommendations for legislation, to the General Assembly. The commission has formed a [Special Committee on Sex Offenders](#) and submitted a [2016 Interim Report](#). The final report was submitted in December 2017 and is available from the Legislative Library. The legislature may consider the report's recommendations and related proposals in the 2018 legislative session.

Labor and Public Employees

Paid Family and Medical Leave

Over the past three sessions, the Labor Committee has considered expanding the state's family and medical leave act (FMLA) and creating a paid FMLA program to provide limited wage replacement benefits to employees out on leave. Last session, the Labor Committee favorably

reported two bills ([SB 1](#) (File 236) and [HB 6212](#) (File 217)) that would have expanded family and medical leave and created a paid leave program. Although neither bill became law, the legislature may again consider acting on similar legislation.

Read OLR's reports:

- [2015-R-0308](#), *Connecticut's Family and Medical Leave Act*
- [2016-R-0030](#), *Paid Family Leave Programs in California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island*

For more information:

- [Implementing Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance, Connecticut](#), Institute for Women's Policy Research

Predictable Scheduling

Predictable scheduling laws generally require certain employers to provide their employees with advance notice of their work shifts and extra pay if the employer changes an employee's shift on short notice. San Francisco, New York City, and Seattle have enacted such laws at the local level and last year Oregon became the first state to enact such a law statewide. The Labor Committee has considered similar bills, such as [sSB 747](#), over the past few sessions and may do so once again in 2018.

Planning and Development

Municipal Cost Efficiencies

Local budgets continue to face the strain of increasing education, public safety, and other costs. In recent years, the legislature has taken a number of steps to encourage municipalities to cut costs by collaborating on activities and delivering services regionally. In 2018, the legislature will likely continue its emphasis on promoting municipal cost efficiencies by (1) examining ways to provide mandate relief, (2) removing barriers to regionalizing municipal functions, (3) providing incentives for regional collaboration, and (4) implementing mechanisms to track and evaluate these initiatives.

Read OLR's report:

- [2016-R-0291](#), *Issue Brief: Regional Collaboration*

Public Health

Regulation of Whiting Forensic Division

The Whiting Forensic Division, under maximum security conditions, generally cares for patients with psychiatric issues, some of whom have been convicted of serious offenses or were found incompetent to stand trial. This fall, ten staff members in the division were arrested following a state police investigation of ongoing patient abuse.

Unlike other hospitals, which are licensed and regulated by the Department of Public Health (DPH), state psychiatric hospitals are not licensed and instead are regulated by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). DMHAS is currently investigating the matter and to date, 37 employees have been placed on administrative leave (of these, five resigned and five were terminated). Until recently, Whiting had been part of Connecticut Valley Hospital (CVH). On December 29, 2017, the Governor signed an executive order designating Whiting as a separate entity from CVH. Among other things, the order requires DMHAS to establish an independent governing body and policies and procedures specific to Whiting.

In November, the Public Health Committee held an [informational forum and public hearing](#) on the Whiting Forensic Division. This session, the legislature may consider related legislation, such as transferring regulatory authority of state-funded psychiatric facilities from DMHAS to DPH and instituting staff training requirements.

Read OLR's report:

- [2017-R-0311](#), *Whiting Forensic Division Patient Abuse Investigation*

For more information:

- [Executive Order 63](#), Governor Malloy

Certificate of Need

Hospitals and certain other health care facilities generally must receive a certificate of need (CON) from the Department of Public Health's Office of Health Care Access (OHCA) before (1) establishing new facilities or services, (2) changing ownership, (3) acquiring certain equipment, or (4) terminating certain services.

There has been debate about the extent to which CON programs accomplish their objectives of reducing health care costs, ensuring access to high-quality care, and avoiding unnecessary duplication of facilities and services. In 2017, the Public Health Committee voted out [sSB 795](#) (File

574), which would have made several changes to OHCA's CON program, such as (1) creating an expedited review process for certain CON applications and (2) modifying the factors that OHCA must consider when evaluating an application. The legislature may consider similar legislation this year.

Public Safety and Security

Firearms

Growing concern about the increase in gun violence throughout the country may spur the legislature to review the state's gun laws and address gun control issues. The Public Safety and Security Committee could consider past proposals such as requiring a gun permit holder to show his or her permit to any law enforcement officer who asks to see it after seeing an openly carried handgun.

Read OLR's reports:

- [2016-R-0330](#), *Concealed vs. Open Carrying of Firearms in Connecticut*
- [2016-R-0328](#), *Gun Storage Requirements*
- [2013-R-0216](#), *Summary of Gun Provisions in Public Act 13-3*
- [2013-R-0247](#), *Summary of Senate Bill 1094, as amended by LCO #8513 and #8619*

Drones

The private, commercial, and government use of drones continues to expand and attract public attention around the country. A drone (also called an unmanned aircraft system (UAS) or unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV)) is an aircraft controlled by computers located on the aircraft or remotely by someone on the ground or in another vehicle. Many people raise privacy and safety concerns and question the appropriate use of drones by government agencies. In 2018, the legislature may consider proposals limiting law enforcement agencies' use of drones without a warrant, prohibiting anyone from arming a drone with a weapon, or specifying how using a drone affects voyeurism crimes.

Read OLR's reports:

- [2014-R-0132](#), *Information on the 2012 Federal Aviation Administration Modernization and Reform Act*
- [2014-R-0137](#), *Privacy Protections Implicated by the Domestic Use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or Drones*

Transportation

Transportation Funding

For more than half a century, transportation infrastructure has been funded primarily by federal and state fuel taxes, but such tax revenue has eroded in recent years due to inflation and the introduction of increasingly fuel efficient vehicles. At the same time, the annual cost of maintaining the state's aging infrastructure continues to increase, straining state resources and limiting the state's ability to undertake new transportation projects. Given this, the legislature has sought additional financing and revenue for transportation infrastructure in recent years, including tolling, which the House debated but did not vote on last session. The legislature has also sought more oversight over transportation planning and financing, creating the Transportation Policy Advisory Council last session ([PA 17-192](#)).

This session, the legislature may again consider implementing tolling or expanding transportation oversight by creating a new statewide transportation authority. It may also consider proposals to increase transportation revenue, such as raising motor vehicle fees, or finance new transportation projects, such as authorizing general obligation (GO) bonds for transportation or additional special tax obligation (STO) transportation bonds.

Read OLR's reports:

- [2016-R-0298](#), *Issue Brief: Transportation Funding*
- [2016-R-0047](#), *Transportation Finance Panel Recommendations*
- [2017-R-0207](#), *Toll Revenue in Neighboring States*

For more information:

- [Current State of the Special Transportation Fund](#), Office of Policy and Management (December 2017)

Veterans' Affairs

Veterans' Aid and Benefits

This session, the legislature may continue to explore proposals that increase aid to, and benefits for, Connecticut veterans. These proposals may include (1) increasing property tax exemption amounts; (2) expanding those who qualify for veterans' benefits; and (3) exempting specific groups of veterans from certain fees.

Read OLR's report:

- [2016-R-0112](#), *Veterans' Benefits*