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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **HB 5420**

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY AT INOPERATIVE TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNALS.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill requires drivers, when approaching intersections with inoperative traffic signals, to stop their vehicles and proceed as though a stop sign were facing in each direction at the intersection (e.g., a four-way stop), unless a police officer directs them otherwise. The bill makes violating this requirement an infraction (see BACKGROUND).

Under current law, if a traffic signal is inoperative, the intersection becomes “uncontrolled” and the standard right-of-way rules apply. These rules vary based on the (1) location and (2) driver’s intended actions. For example:

1. at intersections where two or more roads cross each other, a driver must yield to a vehicle on the right if both vehicles arrive at the intersection at about the same time (CGS § 14-245);
2. at junctions (i.e., where a road joins another road but does not cross it), a driver on the joining road must yield to drivers on the other road if both vehicles arrive at about the same time (CGS § 14-246a); and
3. drivers intending to turn left at an intersection or into a driveway or alley must yield to vehicles approaching from the opposite direction (CGS § 14-242(e)).

By law, and under the bill, an “intersection” is generally the area within the extension of the lateral curb lines of two or more roads that join at an angle, whether or not one of the roads crosses the other (CGS § 14-212(4)).

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes, including one to the cross-reference for the definition of “intersection.”

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2021

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Infractions***

Infractions are punishable by fines, usually set by Superior Court judges, of between \$35 and \$90, plus a \$20 or \$35 surcharge and an additional fee based on the fine’s amount. There may also be other applicable charges depending on the type of infraction. For example, certain motor vehicle infractions trigger a Special Transportation Fund surcharge of 50% of the fine. With the various additional charges, the total amount due can be over \$300 but often is less than \$100.

An infraction is not a crime, and violators can pay the fine by mail without making a court appearance.

## **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 35      Nay 0      (03/24/2021)