

# MAJOR ISSUES

## 2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION



OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH

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## Notice to 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 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. We also consult with the Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA) and the Legislative Commissioners' Office (LCO) when selecting issues. 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.

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## **Aging**

### ***Community Ombudsman Program***

Legislation enacted in 2019 required the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) and the Department of Social Services (DSS) to develop a proposal for a new Community Ombudsman Program to investigate complaints from recipients of DSS-administered home- and community-based services ([SA 19-18](#)). This session, the legislature may consider proposals to implement the program.

Related Reading:

- DSS and LTCOP, [Outline for a Community Ombudsman Program](#) (January 2020)

### ***Senior Fraud Prevention***

Last session, the legislature established a 10-member [task force](#) to study ways to protect seniors from fraud, including a study of planning services for Medicaid applicants ([PA 21-84](#), § 2). This session, the legislature may consider the task force's recommendations, which are due to the Aging and Human Services committees this month. Proposals may include, among other things, modifying education and training requirements for individuals who provide Medicaid long-term care planning advice.

## **Appropriations**

### ***Current Biennium***

OFA is projecting a General Fund operating surplus of \$915.6 million for the current fiscal year (FY 22). For FY 23, OFA is projecting an operating surplus of \$512.4 million. In addition to these operating surpluses, OFA is projecting volatility surpluses of \$969.2 million and \$780.0 million for FY 22 and FY 23, respectively. All totaled, this means that almost \$3.2 billion could be deposited in the Budget Reserve Fund during the current biennium. These surpluses are primarily driven by the federal response to the COVID-19 pandemic (via American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and other actions) and by strong growth in the sales and use tax.

The Budget Reserve Fund is currently at its statutory cap of 15% of appropriations, or \$3.112 billion. As such, any additional funds deposited (as noted above) would be transferred to reduce unfunded liabilities in the State Employees Retirement System and the Teachers' Retirement System.

## ***Out Years FY 24 - FY 26***

OFA is projecting General Fund deficits in FY 24 (\$931.9 million), FY 25 (\$670.3 million) and FY 26 (\$326.6 million). The most significant factor contributing to out-year deficits is the expiration of \$1.195 billion in FY 23 revenue replacement funding associated with ARPA. An encouraging note in the out-years is that revenue growth outpaces fixed cost growth creating a positive structural balance.

Read Related Report:

- OFA, [Fiscal Accountability Report: FY 22-FY 26](#), November 2021

## **Banking**

### ***Access to Financial Services***

The legislature often considers initiatives to increase access to financial services and in recent years there has been specific focus on serving un- and under-banked populations. Legislative proposals have included financial literacy programs, partnerships with state banks and credit unions to promote financial services, programs to ensure that banks and credit unions meet their communities' needs, and programs that promote fair lending and increased access to capital. The legislature may once again consider proposals to increase the knowledge of, and access to, financial services.

Read OLR Report:

- [2021-R-0025](#), *Connecticut's Community Reinvestment Act*

### ***Bank Mergers and Acquisitions***

Recently, the legislature has shown increased interest in bank mergers and acquisitions, particularly to ensure all Connecticut communities have access to banking services. In 2021, the legislature considered a bill to add disclosure requirements on banks closing branches ([HB 6454](#)). The legislature may revisit this topic during the 2022 session.

Read OLR Report:

- [2018-R-0252](#), *People's United Bank's Acquisition of Farmington Bank Under Federal and State Law*

## Children

### *Birth-to-Three and Childcare Program Expansion*

In 2021, the legislature passed a law that made the Birth-to-Three program cost-free to Connecticut families. New laws also (1) require the Office of Early Childhood commissioner to expand the program to enrolled children who are eligible for certain preschool programs but turn three during the summer break before the new school year and (2) generally extend to these children certain health insurance coverage for medically necessary early intervention services ([PA 21-46](#), §§ 24 & 28 and [PA 21-2](#), June Special Session (JSS), §§ 419-421).

The legislature also established a task force to study the (1) comprehensive needs of children in the state and (2) extent to which these needs are being met by educators, community members, and local and state agencies ([PA 21-46](#), § 30).

During the 2022 session, the legislature may explore more ways to expand access to childcare and preschool services and will likely consider the findings and recommendations of the task force study.

## Commerce

### *JobsCT*

In 2021 the Commerce Committee favorably reported [sHB 6440](#), which would have established the JobsCT tax rebate program. Under the bill, companies in specified industries could earn rebates against the insurance premiums, corporation business, and pass-through entity taxes for reaching certain job creation targets. The rebate was based on (1) the number of new full-time equivalent employees (FTEs) the business created and maintained, (2) these FTEs' average wage, and (3) the state income tax that would be paid on this average wage for a single filer.

In 2022, the legislature may again consider proposals to establish JobsCT or a similar program.

Related Reading:

- OLR Bill Analysis for [sSB 6440](#)

### *Pandemic Recovery*

As the COVID-19 pandemic enters its third year, many businesses continue to be affected by the pandemic's ongoing impact on the workforce. For example, according to the Connecticut Business and Industry Association's (CBIA) [2021 survey of businesses](#), 35% of respondents said that a labor

shortage was their greatest obstacle to growth, while 80% reported difficulty finding and retaining employees. Relatedly, a [January 2021 analysis](#) by Pew Research Center found that employees' childcare needs became more challenging during the pandemic, particularly for working mothers.

In 2022, the legislature may consider proposals to address these and other pandemic effects on businesses and the workforce.

## **Education**

### ***Education Funding Formulas***

The legislature may consider a new education funding formula study conducted by the Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA). The study, due to be submitted to the Appropriations and Education committees by January 15, provides an independent analysis of an education funding approach that was contained in [SB 948](#) (as reported out last session by the Education Committee) that would constitute a major revision to the state's education funding system. SB 948 proposed, among other education funding changes, a funding mechanism under which the per-student grants for magnet schools, charter schools, agricultural science and technology education centers ("vo-ag centers"), and the Open Choice program are merged into one grant program. The budget implementer act ([PA 21-2](#), JSS, § 373) required OFA to conduct the analysis.

### ***State Support for School Ventilation Systems***

The state's school construction grant program reimburses towns for a percentage of their eligible public school construction project costs, relative to town wealth. While experts have advocated for indoor air quality improvements in schools as a COVID-19 mitigation measure, state laws and regulations do not explicitly state that replacement or repair of a school's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system is a stand-alone project eligible for state reimbursement grants. In the upcoming legislative session, the General Assembly may consider whether to explicitly extend grant eligibility to these projects.

### ***Teacher and Staff Shortage***

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the existing shortage of teachers and other staff in Connecticut's public schools. Over the five year period ending in the 2020-21 school year, the number of general education teachers in the state has dropped by 750, according to the state Department of Education's (SDE) [EdSight](#) data website. For the current school year SDE has identified 10 teacher shortage areas including math, science, world languages, and bilingual education. Recently, some school districts face decisions about whether to temporarily offer remote

learning in limited circumstances as more staff and students are infected or in quarantine due to the pandemic's new wave.

Last year, the legislature continued its ongoing efforts to recruit more minority teachers in public school with a new law that creates a minority teacher residency program ([PA 21-2](#), JSS, §§ 378-379). This year, the legislature may consider bills to encourage hiring teachers and other staff ranging from social workers to school bus drivers.

Read Related Reports:

- SDE, [Teacher Shortage Areas, 2021-22 School Year](#) (April 2021)
- OLR Report [2020-R-0209](#), *Minority Teacher Recruitment Legislation*

## **Energy and Technology**

### ***Integrated Resources Plan***

In October 2021, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) released the latest [Integrated Resources Plan](#), which, among other things, assesses Connecticut's current and future electricity supply. As directed by Governor Lamont's 2019 Executive Order 3, the plan identifies pathways for the state to achieve a 100% zero carbon electric supply by 2040. In the upcoming session, the Energy and Technology Committee may consider many of the plan's provisions, such as adopting a 100% zero carbon electric sector goal for the state and promoting the greater use of distributed generation resources by low-income customers, and other initiatives to help de-carbonize the state's energy sector.

## **Environment**

### ***Climate Change Adaptation and Resiliency***

Last month, Governor Lamont signed an executive order ([EO 21-3](#)) on climate change. The EO requires various state agencies to take specific actions aimed at reducing carbon emissions and preparing for the effects of climate change. The provisions include updating building codes and appliance standards; using certain state properties for solar power arrays; establishing new entities to address concerns of climate change, health equity, and environmental justice; considering additional policies to reduce vehicle emissions; and engaging with stakeholders on policies to protect forested and agricultural lands, among others.

The legislature may consider bills related to the EO's provisions and other climate change adaptation and resiliency proposals. For example, the EO requires DEEP to assess the need to (1)

adopt California standards for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles to meet Connecticut's air quality goals and (2) provide its assessment by January 31, 2022 ([EO 21-3](#), item 15). In 2021, the legislature considered, but did not enact, a bill to allow the DEEP commissioner to adopt regulations implementing California's standards for these vehicles upon certain actions ([SB 931](#)). The General Assembly may consider such legislation again this year.

## ***Solid Waste Management***

Solid waste management is a perennial issue before the legislature and with the state's quasi-public Materials Innovations and Recycling Authority closing its trash-to-energy facility by July 1 of this year, the legislature will likely consider proposals to reduce waste and increase recycling in the state.

In the 2021 session, the legislature passed a revamping of the state's bottle bill ([PA 21-58](#)). But the legislature also, among other things, required DEEP to (1) report on recycled content standards for products sold in Connecticut ([SA 21-9](#)); (2) develop a municipal incentive program related to unit-based pricing (e.g., "pay-as-you-throw") ([PA 21-58](#), § 6); (3) develop the terms for an agreement to process in the state at least 80% of wine and liquor containers sold here ([PA 21-58](#), § 8); and (4) help increase recycling of source-separated organic materials by establishing a voluntary pilot program for municipalities and engage in certain educational efforts about using composting facilities ([PA 21-16](#), §§ 2 & 3). The legislature may consider proposals related to these provisions.

Other solid waste matters that may again receive consideration in 2022 are (1) restricting the use of certain products (e.g., helium balloons, polystyrene products, plastic straws), (2) applying the extended producer responsibility (EPR) model to additional product types (e.g., gas canisters, packaging materials, smoke detectors, and tires), and (3) expanding requirements for organics separation and composting.

Read OLR Reports:

- [2020-R-0134](#), *Issue Brief: Extended Producer Responsibility*
- [2019-R-0087](#), *Food Waste Policies*
- [2018-R-0254](#), *Banning Plastic Straws*



## **Finance, Revenue and Bonding**

### ***Tax Relief Proposals***

OFA analysts are projecting a General Fund surplus of \$915.6 million in the current fiscal year and a surplus of \$512.4 million in FY 23. In addition, OFA is anticipating the state's Budget Reserve Fund to exceed its statutory cap by over \$1 billion in both FY 22 and FY 23. These projected surpluses will likely spur legislative proposals to provide tax relief to residents and businesses. This may include proposals to (1) expand eligibility for the state's property tax credit against the personal income tax and increase the credit's maximum amount, (2) establish a child tax credit against the personal income tax, (3) decrease the gas tax rate, (4) decrease the sales and use tax rate, and (5) increase state aid to municipalities or redirect aid to municipalities based on their fiscal capacity in order to reduce property taxes and towns' reliance on the tax to balance their budgets.

Read Related Reports:

- OFA, [Fiscal Accountability Report: FY 22-FY 26](#), November 2021
- OPM, [Fiscal Accountability Report: FY 22-FY 26](#), November 2021

## **General Law**

### ***Consumer Data Privacy***

The legislature may again investigate the concerns and challenges involved in safeguarding consumers' personal information online. The pandemic may have heightened interest in such efforts, in light of the shift to remote learning and telehealth services, which often require consumers to use platforms over which they have limited control. This session, the legislature may look for ways to give consumers more control over their personal data, with the rights to access, modify, delete, or opt-out of the sale of their personal information, among other things.

## **Government Administration and Elections**

### ***Remote Meetings***

In the 2021 budget implementer, the legislature explicitly allowed public agencies, until April 30, 2022, to hold meetings under the Freedom of Information Act that are accessible to the public through electronic equipment, or through electronic equipment in conjunction with an in-person meeting. The implementer provision established several requirements for meetings held using electronic equipment, including that agencies provide (1) at least 48 hours' notice of a regular

meeting held in this manner and (2) instructions for how the public may attend the meeting ([PA 21-2](#), JSS, § 149).

In 2022, the legislature may consider proposals to extend this authority beyond April 30 or extend it with modifications.

Read OLR report:

- [2021-R-0192](#), *Public Agency Meeting Format Changes*

## **Higher Education and Employment Advancement**

### ***College Enrollment and Retention***

For the second year in a row, the [National Student Clearinghouse Research Center](#) has reported that college and university enrollment declined in the fall semester (2021), even with many institutions fully resuming in-person classes. As of October 21, 2021, the center reports that postsecondary enrollment has declined 2.6% since last year, for a total 5.8% decline since 2019. In the upcoming session, the legislature may explore barriers to enrollment and retention, particularly those resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

### ***Community College Consolidation***

In February 2021, the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) released a report featuring interviews with CSCU faculty, students, and members of the Board of Regents for Higher Education on the progress made towards consolidating the state's 12 regional community-technical colleges into one accredited two-year institution by 2023. In January 2022, CSCU is scheduled to submit a substantive change proposal in response to questions raised by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) in a 2020 meeting regarding the merger. NECHE is the regional accrediting body for the institutions. The legislature may continue to consider legislation related to the consolidation plan.

Related Reading:

- [NECHE letter to CSCU President](#) (July 2021)
- [Putting Students First in Connecticut](#) (February 2021)

## **Housing**

### ***COVID-19-Related Housing Issues***

Both in the state and across the country, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many housing-related issues. With an increased number of households facing the possibility of eviction and foreclosure, this session, the legislature may consider proposals (1) assisting renters and homeowners impacted by the pandemic and (2) preventing and addressing homelessness.

Read OLR Report:

- [2021-R-0189](#), *Eviction Process, Time Frame, and Impact of COVID-19 Executive Orders*

### ***Protections for Group and Family Child Care Homes***

In recent years, the Housing Committee has considered several bills that would have made changes to the municipal regulation of group and family child care homes. In 2021, the committee favorably reported [sSB 87](#), though the legislature took no further action on the bill. In 2022, the committee may once again consider legislation providing additional protections to these child care homes, such as prohibiting zoning regulations from treating licensed group child care homes located in a residence differently than single or multifamily properties (a prohibition that already applies to the treatment of family child care homes).

## **Human Services**

### ***Service Gaps for People Who Are Deaf, Deafblind, or Hearing Impaired***

In 2021, the legislature established a bill of rights for individuals in need of mental health services who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing. This includes a right to access services delivered in such an individual's primary language or communication mode or style ([PA 21-72](#), §§ 1 & 2). In 2022, the legislature may consider proposals from a work group that, during the interim, has been looking at potential revisions to interpreter standards and other issues relating to deaf, deafblind, and hearing-impaired persons.

Read OLR report:

- [2021-R-0153](#), *State Agencies Serving People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*

## Insurance and Real Estate

### *Health Insurance Reform*

In recent years, the Insurance and Real Estate Committee has considered several major health insurance reforms, including a “public option” health insurance program, a health reinsurance program, and programs to reduce the cost of prescription drugs by leveraging state purchasing power or importing them from Canada. While these, generally, did not pass, the legislature did enact various provisions, including the Covered Connecticut program, to extend health insurance coverage to more people. In 2022, the committee may once again look at additional ways to expand access to affordable health insurance or reduce out of pocket expenses for prescription drugs.

Read OLR Reports:

- [2021-R-0215](#), *Issue Brief: Healthcare Coverage Expansions*
- [2021-R-0160](#), *Issue Brief: Connecticut Health Insurance Reform (2016-2021)*
- [2021-R-0128](#), *Issue Brief: Covered Connecticut*
- [2020-R-0271](#), *Issue Brief: Connecticut Health Insurance Reform Proposals*
- [2018-R-0218](#), *Issue Brief: State Health Reinsurance Programs*
- [2018-R-0170](#), *Issue Brief: Importing Prescription Drugs*

### *Pediatric Mental Health*

According to multiple news sources, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated mental health concerns among children and young adults. The Insurance and Real Estate Committee may consider ways to combat these pandemic effects by increasing access to mental health providers or reducing the financial burdens preventing care.

Read OLR Report:

- [2021-R-0210](#), *Connecticut’s Mental Health Parity Law*

## Judiciary

### *Isolated Confinement, Seclusion, and Restraints*

In the 2021 legislative session, the General Assembly passed, but the governor vetoed, legislation that would have limited the use of isolated confinement, seclusion, and restraints on incarcerated individuals ([PA 21-110](#)). Upon vetoing the act, Governor Lamont [issued](#) an executive order generally

(1) limiting the use of isolated confinement to disciplinary reasons only and (2) requiring incarcerated individuals in isolated confinement to have two hours outside of the cell each day.

The public act would have, among other things, (1) placed new requirements on the use of isolated confinement, seclusion, and restraints (e.g., limiting the amount of time and who can order these methods and requiring various evaluations, documentation, and specific reporting when they are used) and (2) generally required that each incarcerated person have the opportunity to be outside his or her cell for at least 6.5 hours a day. In 2022, the legislature may reconsider similar legislation to [PA 21-110](#) or codify the governor's executive order.

## ***Juvenile Justice***

In 2021, the legislature made it a crime for a person, at least age 23, to entice a minor to commit a criminal act (a first violation is a class A misdemeanor and each subsequent offense is a class D felony). The legislature also required the judicial branch to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of (1) decreasing the time between a child's arrest and initial court appearance and (2) establishing a diversionary program for arrested children where the participants would report to various people (e.g., judge) on a weekly basis ([PA 21-33](#), §§ 12 & 13). The judicial branch reported its findings earlier this month.

During the 2022 session, the legislature may explore more ways to decrease the juvenile crime rate and will likely consider the findings of the judicial branch's feasibility study to reduce juvenile recidivism.

Read OLR Reports:

- [2021-R-0072](#), Connecticut's Raise-the-Age Legislation (2007 – Present)
- [2021-R-0179](#), Serious Juvenile Offenses
- [2021-R-0181](#), Youthful Offenders
- [2021-R-0182](#), Juvenile Delinquency Procedure

## **Labor and Public Employees**

### ***Employee Noncompete Agreements***

Last session, the legislature considered a bill ([SB 906](#)) that would restrict the use of noncompete agreements in employment contracts. At issue is whether it is appropriate for employers to require employees to sign these agreements in order to be hired. The agreements usually ban an employee from seeking work in the same field for a certain amount of time within a specified geographic area.

Current statute restricts these agreements in certain careers (e.g., physicians, security guards, and broadcast employees), but the legislature may once again consider restrictions that apply more broadly.

Read OLR Report:

- [2021-R-0083](#), An Act Concerning Non-Compete Agreements

## ***Unemployment Compensation Overpayments***

With the COVID-19 pandemic drastically increasing unemployment, the state's unemployment system has been overwhelmed in a variety of different ways. According to media [reports](#) from this past fall, the state Department of Labor (DOL) has dealt with over 30,000 cases of people receiving overpayments of unemployment benefits over the past year. Although some are due to fraud, many are due to unintentional mistakes by the claimant or delays with DOL's claims processing. While federal law [generally requires](#) DOL to review all overpayments on a case-by-case basis and recover the money, the legislature may explore ways to make it easier for affected claimants to apply for and receive a waiver from the repayment requirements.

Related Reading:

- OLR Public Act Summary for [PA 21-200](#)
- OLR Report [2020-R-0107](#), *OLR Backgrounder: Unemployment Insurance Provisions in the Federal CARES Act*

## **Planning and Development**

### ***Regionalism***

Proponents of regionalization argue that municipalities can save money and effectively address problems that cross town lines by jointly delivering services and performing administrative functions. Opponents cite the loss of local control and concerns over the expansion of regional government as arguments against regionalism. Throughout the pandemic, the idea of regionalization and interconnectedness continues to resonate. This session, the legislature may look again at ways to encourage municipalities, acting independently or through a regional organization such as a Council of Governments, to collaborate on services to reduce redundancy and expand services in isolated areas of the state. It may also look at various regional entities' powers, both in terms of financing their initiatives and coordinating their policy-making authorities.

## ***Transit Oriented Development (TOD)***

State and local governments around the country are working to create lively, walkable, mixed-income and use communities close to public transportation. Some studies suggest TOD is associated with decreased congestion and increased transit ridership, sustained property values, improved access to jobs and economic opportunities, and increased foot traffic for area businesses. Generally, TOD legislation aims to coordinate land use and transportation planning. Given the state's housing crunch and renewed focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions (see, for example, [EO 21-3](#)), the legislature may consider bills that reduce commutes by encouraging zoning that allows for more housing near transit, including affordable housing and live-work units.

## **Public Health**

### ***Behavioral Health***

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, health care providers have reported significant increases in behavioral health issues among Connecticut residents. During the 2021 interim, legislators hosted forums with state agencies, behavioral health providers, and other stakeholders to evaluate Connecticut's behavioral health system and identify potential improvements. Additionally, the Task Force to Study the Comprehensive Needs of Children in the State, established by [PA 21-46](#), issued its final report in December 2021, which included recommendations regarding children's behavioral health providers and services.

In 2022, the legislature will likely consider proposals based on these groups' recommendations, which may include, among other things, (1) improving access and affordability of children's behavioral health services in schools and communities, (2) incentivizing more behavioral health providers to work in the state, (3) suspending certain licensure requirements to allow out-of-state behavioral health providers to treat residents via telehealth, and (4) enhancing behavioral health provider referral programs, particularly those for pediatricians.

### ***Racial Disparities in Public Health***

Last year, the legislature declared racism to be a public health crisis and established a Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health to (1) make recommendations to decrease racism's effect on public health and (2) create a strategic plan to eliminate health disparities and inequities across several sectors ([PA 21-35](#)). The legislation included several other related measures, such as requiring the Department of Public Health to study and report on developing a program to recruit and retain health care workers of color in the state.

This year, the legislature will likely consider recommendations from the new commission and various other studies required as part of this public act.

## **Public Safety and Security**

### ***Law Enforcement***

In recent years, the legislature has enacted several pieces of legislation concerning changes to police training and practices and considered other bills on this topic, including [a 2021 bill](#) (SHB 6597) which the Public Safety and Security Committee favorably reported and the House adopted. Among other things, that bill generally would have (1) modified the accreditation requirements of law enforcement units, (2) extended protections to certain officers who sought or received mental health care services, and (3) modified statutes on the hiring and certification of officers who were dismissed for malfeasance or serious misconduct. The legislature may consider similar proposals again this session, as well as recommendations in the [recently released report](#) by the [Police Transparency and Accountability Task Force](#).

### ***Gaming***

During the 2021 session, the legislature enacted new frameworks for legalizing and regulating in-person and online gaming, including online sports and casino gaming and lottery draw games ([PA 21-23](#)). This session, the legislature may revisit this issue to, among other things, assess the new regulatory process and its consumer protections and legalized gaming's impact on the state.

Related Reading:

- OLR Public Act Summary for [PA 21-23](#)

## **Transportation**

### ***Electric Vehicles***

The transportation sector is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and nitrogen oxides, and in recent years, Connecticut, like many other states, has sought to increase electric vehicle (EV) adoption. Through the Zero-Emission Vehicle Memorandum of Understanding with seven other states, Connecticut has committed to putting 125,000 to 150,000 EVs on the road by 2025, but there were only 17,217 registered EVs in Connecticut as of July 1, 2021.

The recently adopted federal infrastructure bill includes \$5 billion over five years in state-administered grants for deploying EV charging stations, with about \$52 million going to Connecticut. This session, the legislature may consider a number of proposals aimed at increasing



EV adoption and expanding EV infrastructure, including (1) modifying or expanding the [Connecticut Hydrogen and Electric Automobile Purchase Rebate](#) (CHEAPR) program, (2) allowing direct sales of EVs, (3) providing grants or incentives for EV charging infrastructure, or (4) further electrifying the state's vehicle fleet.

Read Related Reports:

- OLR Report [2021-R-0074](#), *Electric Vehicles*
- OLR Report [2021-R-0201](#), *Electric Vehicle Incentives in Connecticut and Massachusetts*
- [Electric Vehicle Roadmap for Connecticut](#), Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (2020)

## ***Traffic Safety***

Preliminary data indicate that 2021 had the highest number of traffic deaths in the state since 1994, when the state started reporting deaths through the fatality analysis reporting system. Researchers say the uptick is due to a number of different factors, including an increase in speeding during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data show that traffic stops have dropped by more than half since the pandemic began, as has the number of tickets and warnings issued. Given this, the legislature may consider proposals to improve enforcement of speeding and other traffic laws, increase fines, or authorize the use of automated enforcement technology (e.g., speed cameras).

## **Veterans' Affairs**

### ***Veterans' Property Tax Benefits***

During the 2022 legislative session, the legislature may again consider establishing a working group on, or requiring the veterans affairs commissioner to study, the property tax benefits that municipalities must or may provide to veterans. Related legislation from prior years proposed (1) a working group to study expanding the relief to certain veterans and the associated municipal fiscal impact ([HB 6429](#) (2021)) and (2) studies on available veteran tax abatements and if abatement amounts should be increased ([SB 777](#) (2019); [SB 224](#) (2020)).

Read OLR Reports:

- [2021-R-0177](#), *Veterans' Property Tax Exemptions*
- [2021-R-0187](#), *Income-Based Veterans Exemptions Under CGS § 12-81g*
- [2021-R-0173](#), *Local Option Property Tax Relief Programs for Homeowners*
- [2021-R-0172](#), *Mandatory Property Tax Relief for Homeowners*