



**PA 22-64**—sHB 5420

*Public Safety and Security Committee*  
*Appropriations Committee*

**AN ACT CONCERNING MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF AND SERVICES FOR POLICE OFFICERS, CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS REGARDING POLICE TRAINING AND CERTAIN REPORTS**

**SUMMARY:** This act makes several changes in state law affecting law enforcement and related agencies, including the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST), mainly about mental health (for both police officers and those with whom they interact). Principally, it does the following:

1. extends existing employment protections to certain police officers who seek or receive mental health care services after undergoing a required behavioral health assessment (§ 1);
2. eliminates police basic and review training on handling incidents involving a person affected with a serious mental illness and replaces it with training on interacting with people who (a) have mental or physical disabilities or (b) are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind (§§ 2 & 7);
3. sets up a task force to study law enforcement officers' mental health needs (§ 3);
4. requires UConn's Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy, in consultation with the United Way of Connecticut, to submit a report to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2023, that includes a study of a representative sample of 9-1-1 calls and analyzes the percentage of the calls that would be more appropriately directed to the 2-1-1 Infoline program (which the United Way of Connecticut operates) (§ 4);
5. requires a report on the use of online or remote technology by POST for police officer training after initial certification (§ 5); and
6. requires the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to report to the legislature about the Community and Law Enforcement for Addiction Recovery project's status (§ 6).

The act also makes technical and conforming changes.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Upon passage, except the repeal of incident training involving individuals with serious mental illness takes effect on October 1, 2023.

**§ 1 — EMPLOYMENT PROTECTIONS**

Existing law generally prohibits a law enforcement unit from discharging, disciplining, discriminating against, or penalizing a police officer it employs only because the officer, among other things, seeks or receives mental health care services. The act extends this protection to officers who seek or receive services due to a required behavioral health assessment. (By law police officers must submit

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to a behavioral health assessment at least every five years as a condition of continued employment (CGS § 7-291e.)

Under existing law and the act, the protection does not apply to officers who seek or receive mental health care services to avoid disciplinary action.

By law and under the act, a “law enforcement unit” is any state or municipal agency or department (or tribal agency or department created and governed under a memorandum of agreement) whose primary functions include enforcing criminal or traffic laws; preserving public order; protecting life and property; or preventing, detecting, or investigating crime (CGS § 7-294a(8)).

“Police officers” are sworn members of an organized local police department or the State Police; appointed constables who perform criminal law enforcement duties; special police officers appointed under law (e.g., public assistance fraud investigators); or any members of a law enforcement unit who perform police duties (CGS § 7-294a(9)).

### §§ 2 & 7 — OFFICER TRAINING CURRICULA

The act eliminates a requirement that state and local police basic and review training include a course on handling incidents involving a person affected with a serious mental illness (CGS § 7-294r). It instead requires POST to develop training curricula, by July 1, 2023, for police officers on interacting with people who (1) have mental or physical disabilities and (2) are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind. In developing both curricula, POST must first consult with individuals with these characteristics and advocates on their behalf. Beginning October 1, 2023, each police basic or review training program conducted or administered by POST, the State Police, or a municipal police department must include the new curricula.

Existing law, unchanged by the act, requires police basic and review training programs to include training on handling incidents involving juveniles and adults with autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairment, or nonverbal learning disorder (CGS § 7-294h).

### § 3 — MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

#### *Purpose*

The act creates an 11-member task force to study law enforcement officers’ mental health needs. The task force must do the following:

1. examine these officers’ mental health needs;
2. list the programs that serve or could be available to serve them;
3. identify barriers to accessing those programs, such as issues of confidentiality and disclosure of treatment information; and
4. make recommendations for policies, practices, and legislation to address these officers’ mental health needs, encourage officers to access programs, and eliminate access barriers.

Under the act, the task force must submit a report with its findings and recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2023.

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## *Membership*

The task force consists of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and DMHAS commissioners and POST chairperson, or their respective designees; two gubernatorial appointments; and six legislative appointments. The table below provides the qualifications for the appointed members.

**Task Force Appointments and Appointee Qualifications**

<b><i>Appointing Authority</i></b>	<b><i>Appointee Qualifications</i></b>
Governor	A municipal police chief representing the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association  A labor organization representative for sworn members of municipal police departments
House speaker	A representative from the Honor Wellness Center or another nonprofit organization that provides mental health treatment for police officers
Senate president pro tempore	A representative from the Connecticut Alliance to Benefit Law Enforcement or another nonprofit organization that trains police officers on mental health issues
House majority leader	A labor organization representative for sworn members of the State Police
Senate majority leader	A police officer from a municipal police department
House minority leader	A representative from the Police Officers Association of Connecticut
Senate minority leader	A police officer from a municipal police department

Under the act, the appointing authorities must make their appointments within 30 days after the act's passage (i.e., by June 22, 2022) and fill any vacancies. The legislative appointments may be legislators.

The act requires the House speaker and the Senate president pro tempore to select the task force's chairpersons from among its members. The chairpersons must schedule the task force's first meeting, which must be held within 60 days after the act's passage (i.e., by July 22, 2022).

## *Administration*

The Public Safety and Security Committee's administrative staff serves as task force staff. The task force terminates when it submits its report or on January 1, 2023, whichever is later.

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### § 5 — ONLINE POLICE TRAINING REPORT

Under existing law, POST may (1) develop an interactive electronic computer platform to administer training courses and (2) authorize police officers to complete certified review training at a local police department facility using the platform (CGS § 7-294d(a)(9)). The act requires POST, by January 1, 2023, to submit a report to Public Safety and Security Committee that does the following:

1. provides the implementation status of its interactive electronic computer platform;
2. describes any criteria it used to determine when officers may use the platform to complete certified review training;
3. determines whether any other police officer training that is required after initial certification may be done through the platform or another online or remote format without compromising training quality; and
4. recommends any legislation necessary to carry out its findings.

### § 6 — COMMUNITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT FOR ADDICTION RECOVERY REPORT

The act requires DMHAS to submit a report to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2023, that examines its Community and Law Enforcement for Addiction Recovery project. The report must include (1) an analysis of whether the project has successfully achieved its goals, (2) recommendations on improving the project, and (3) whether it should be expanded throughout the state.