

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 23-145—HB 6638

Judiciary Committee

AN ACT REVISING THE STATE'S ANTIDISCRIMINATION STATUTES

SUMMARY: This act adds “age” to the list of protected classes in the state’s antidiscrimination laws. (Several other laws already prohibit age discrimination in various contexts.) It also repeals the definition of the term “sexual orientation” and replaces it with a new one.

The act also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 1 — AGE AS A PROTECTED CLASS

By law, it is a discriminatory practice to deprive someone of any rights, privileges, or immunities secured or protected by Connecticut or federal laws or constitutions, or cause such a deprivation, because of religion, national origin, alienage, color, race, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, blindness, mental or physical disability, veteran status, or status as a domestic violence victim. The act adds “age” to this list of protected classes. By doing so, it allows the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) to investigate claims of discrimination based on age.

The act also makes a conforming change in existing law that makes it a crime to place a noose on property with the intent to harass someone because of any protected class listed above, adding “age” to the list of protected classes.

By law, a violation of these provisions is generally a class A misdemeanor; but, if the violation results in more than \$1,000 in property damage, then it is a class D felony (see [Table on Penalties](#)). In either case, there is a minimum \$1,000 fine unless the court states on the record its reasons for reducing it.

§§ 2-6 — SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Under prior antidiscrimination law, “sexual orientation” was generally defined as having a preference for heterosexuality, homosexuality, or bisexuality or having a history of or being identified with this preference. This definition also expressly excluded any behavior that is a sex offense crime.

The act redefines “sexual orientation” to mean a person’s identity in relation to the gender or genders to which they are romantically, emotionally, or sexually attracted, including any identity that a person may have previously expressed or is perceived by another person to hold. This new definition specifically applies to antidiscrimination laws subject to CHRO enforcement, as well as laws prohibiting nondiscrimination in awarding agency, municipal public works, and quasi-public agency project contracts.