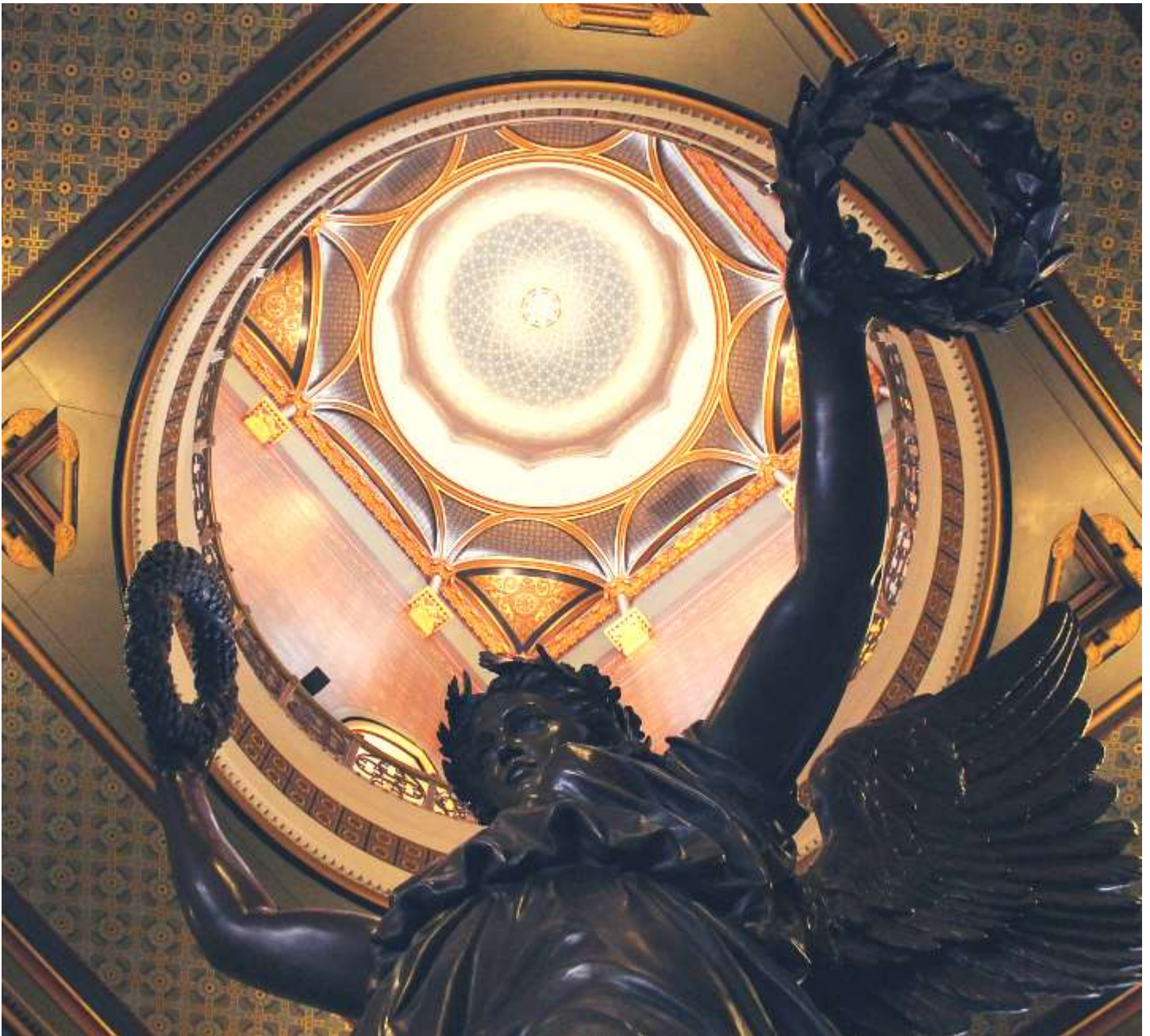


# MAJOR ISSUES

2023 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

### *Homemaker-Companion Agencies*

Last year, [SA 22-12](#) established a task force to study issues concerning homemaker-companion agencies, including (1) whether any changes are needed to these agencies' qualifications or registration criteria, (2) whether the system for resolving complaints about these agencies is adequate, and (3) what services these agencies advertise and whether additional limitations are needed on the advertisements. During the 2023 session, the legislature may consider recommendations from the task force, which are due to the legislature by January 1, 2023, as well as other related proposals.

Related Reading:

- [Homemaker Companion Task Force Webpage](#)

## Appropriations

### *Current Fiscal Year*

OFA is projecting a General Fund surplus of \$931.7 million in the current fiscal year (FY 23). The surplus is a result of multiple factors, including (1) strong growth in revenues, primarily in sales and use tax as well as investment income; (2) a budgeted surplus; and (3) various projected lapses that exceed anticipated deficiencies.

### *Future Fiscal Years*

OFA is projecting positive General Fund balances in FY 24 (\$6.7 million), FY 25 (\$436.7 million), and FY 26 (\$822 million) using the required Fiscal Accountability Report methodology. In FY 24, the total revenues expected (i.e., net of revenue policy adjustments and underlying revenue growth) are lower than FY 23 but sufficient to exceed projected spending. Revenue growth is also expected to surpass fixed cost growth in FY 24, creating a positive structural balance, which continues and is more clearly reflected in the FY 25 and FY 26 projections. However, there may be pressure in the FYs 24–25 biennial budget cycle to replace some of the FY 23 carryforward and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. There is also a measure of uncertainty in the economic outlook.

### *Budget Reserve Fund*

The current Budget Reserve Fund (BRF) balance of approximately \$3.3 billion is at the statutory maximum level (i.e., the cap) of 15% of General Fund net appropriations. It is anticipated that the BRF will surpass the cap by over \$2.7 billion at the close of FY 23. OFA is projecting that the BRF will continue to exceed the cap in the out-years based on expected volatility deposits. State law

requires that funds beyond the cap are transferred to the State Employees Retirement System and Teachers' Retirement System to reduce unfunded liabilities. The transfers lower required out-year expenditures for these systems (which are also affected by other factors).

Related Report:

- OFA, [Fiscal Accountability Report FY 23-FY 26](#)

## Banking

### *Consumer Information and Financial Disclosures*

In recent years, the Banking Committee has considered several proposals aimed at increasing the availability of financial information for consumers and businesses. It may continue in this vein by revisiting proposals that (1) require disclosures for certain virtual currency or commercial financing transactions (see [sHB 5320](#) (2022) and [sSB 272](#) (2022)) or (2) further financial literacy programming (see [sHB 5315](#) (2022)). Additionally, the committee may consider proposals related to bank mergers and conversions and how these transactions affect Connecticut consumers and employees, particularly with respect to notification and access to associated information.

Related OLR Report:

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

## Children

### *Mental Health Resources and Task Force Studies*

Last session, the legislature passed multiple bills addressing the mental health of Connecticut's youth. These included [PA 22-80](#), which focused on the provision of additional resources for schools, and [PA 22-81](#), which expanded preschool access and mental and behavioral services for children. These acts also established or modified several task forces, including a teacher shortage and retention task force, a task force to study children's needs, one to study the governance structure and internal procedures of the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference, and another to combat ableism. During the 2023 session, the legislature may explore ways to expand upon the services previously established and consider the findings and recommendations of the task forces.

Related Reading:

- [Task Force to Study the Comprehensive Needs of Children in the State Webpage](#)



- [Task Force to Study the Governance Structure and Internal Procedures of the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference Webpage](#)

## Commerce

### *Worker Shortage*

The legislature enacted several workforce development initiatives last session and may consider additional proposals this coming session to address the state's current need for workers. According to the Connecticut Business and Industry Association's (CBIA) [2022 Survey of Businesses](#), while the U.S. labor force has recovered and now exceeds pre-pandemic levels, Connecticut's labor force shrank between February 2020 and August 2022. Additionally, 85% of respondent employers reported difficulty finding and retaining employees, while 39% said that a lack of skilled applicants was their greatest obstacle to growth.

Related OLR Report:

- [2022-R-0117](#), *Acts Affecting Business and Jobs* (see "Workforce Development" on pages 16–19)

## Education

### *Education Funding Formulas*

This upcoming session, the legislature may consider revisions to the state's education funding programs. Last year, the legislature considered [sHB 5283](#) (2022), which would have made significant changes to the following education grants: Education Cost Sharing (ECS), interdistrict magnet schools, regional agricultural science and technology centers (i.e., "vo-ag centers"), and state charter schools. The bill contained many changes, including a provision that used a faster-paced schedule than under current law to implement full funding for towns underfunded by the ECS formula. Also, by making changes to different programs at the same time, the bill's impact varied by town and by school operator (i.e., magnet, charter, vo-ag program).

Related Reading:

- OLR Bill Analysis for [sHB 5283](#) (2022)
- OFA Fiscal Note for [sHB 5283](#) (2022)

### *School Air Quality Improvements*

Last session, the legislature made \$150 million available (\$75 million in ARPA funds and \$75 million in state bonds) for the Department of Administrative Services to administer a grant program

to improve school indoor air quality ([PA 22-118](#), §§ 10, 360, & 367). Beginning in FY 23, the program will reimburse school districts for costs associated with the installation, replacement, or upgrade of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems or other air quality improvements.

In the upcoming session, the legislature may consider proposals to increase school districts' ease of access to the grant funds, such as extending the application deadline or expanding how districts may fund their local share of project costs. Additionally, the legislature's Indoor Air Quality Working Group is expected to have recommendations for bills on this topic (see [PA 22-118](#), § 370).

Related Reading:

- [Indoor Air Quality Working Group Webpage](#)

## **Energy and Technology**

### ***Electric Rates***

Beginning January 1, 2023, standard service electric rates will rise significantly. The legislature may consider (1) further increasing energy assistance or limiting shut-offs, (2) enhancing and marketing matching payment or arrearage forgiveness programs, (3) exploring or revisiting changes to rate setting methodologies, (4) changes to laws concerning electric suppliers, or (5) long-term planning on energy supply.

Related Reading:

- OLR Report [2022-R-0211](#), *Comprehensive Energy Strategy*
- OLR Report [2020-R-0344](#), *Public Policy Components of Electric Bills*
- OLR Report [2020-R-0050](#), *PURA Evaluation of Electric Supplier Solvency*
- OLR Public Act Summary for [PA 20-5](#), September Special Session (i.e., the “Take Back Our Grid Act”)

### ***Waste-to-Energy (WTE)***

During this past year, the state's quasi-public Materials Innovations and Recycling Authority (MIRA) closed its trash-to-energy facility. In response, the legislature created a solid waste management working group to develop a strategic plan for solid waste management and disposal (SA 22-11). In conjunction with the working group, the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) opened a docket to study WTE issues such as (1) how to optimally value WTE to balance public interests with viable business models and (2) what WTE contract structures can best support potential WTE purchases

and sales. The legislature may act on recommendations from the working group and PURA this session.

Related Reading:

- [Solid Waste Management Working Group Webpage](#)
- PURA Docket No. [22-10-07](#)

## Environment

### *Black Bear Population*

According to the [Department of Energy and Environmental Protection](#) (DEEP), Connecticut's resident black bear population is both increasing and expanding. Concerns about conflicts between humans and bears, including the bears' impact to farmers, have resulted in several proposals related to the state's bear population. In the last five years, these proposals have included such things as (1) authorizing regulations on hunting black bears in Litchfield County, (2) expanding the circumstances under which DEEP may issue permits to landowners or lessees for taking (e.g., capturing, trapping, killing) nuisance wildlife, and (3) requiring DEEP to report on the best nonlethal management practices for deterring bears from habituating in areas densely populated by people. The legislature may consider similar proposals in 2023.

Related OLR Reports:

- [2022-R-0240](#), *Issue Brief: Connecticut's Black Bear Population*
- [2018-R-0274](#), *Feeding Black Bears on Private Property*

### *Solid Waste Management*

Solid waste management is a perennial issue before the legislature. With the closure of MIRA's trash-to-energy facility this year and the prospect of increasing municipal disposal costs, the legislature will likely consider proposals to reduce waste and increase recycling in the state. Prior concepts that may again receive consideration include (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., batteries or packaging materials), and (3) expanding requirements for organics separation and composting. Recommendations from the Solid Waste Management Working Group (see Energy and Technology above) may also be the basis for legislation.

Related OLR Reports:

- [2022-R-0229](#), *Food Waste Diversion Law*
- [2022-R-0220](#), *Solid Waste Management Legislation, 2018-2022*
- [2019-R-0087](#), *Food Waste Policies*
- [2018-R-0254](#), *Banning Plastic Straws*

## **Finance, Revenue and Bonding**

### ***State Fiscal Controls***

Connecticut has several laws designed to limit state spending or borrowing and increase deposits to the Budget Reserve Fund (BRF). They include a (1) spending cap, which limits the year-to-year growth in general budget expenditures; (2) “revenue” cap, which limits the percentage of estimated revenues that may be spent in any fiscal year; and (3) volatility cap, which requires that certain revenues be transferred to the BRF. Each of these spending and borrowing laws is subject to a “bond lock” that runs through FY 23. This bond lock generally pledges to bondholders that the state will comply with these fiscal controls while the bonds are outstanding. This session, the legislature may consider proposals to (1) modify these fiscal controls upon the bond lock’s expiration and (2) impose a new bond lock that extends this bondholder pledge to future fiscal years.

Related OLR Reports:

- [2022-R-0256](#), *Issue Brief: Budget Reserve Fund*
- [2022-R-0214](#), *State Spending Cap*
- [2022-R-0213](#), *State Fiscal Controls*

### ***State Tax Relief and Restructuring Proposals***

Considering the positive fiscal outlook for the state’s General Fund and BRF (see Appropriations above), the legislature is likely to consider proposals to provide tax relief to residents and businesses. This may include proposals to (1) adjust the state’s personal income tax brackets and thresholds to reflect inflationary increases, (2) extend and expand the one-time child tax rebate, (3) expand eligibility for certain retirement income exemptions, and (4) 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 them to balance their budgets.

Related Reading:

- OFA, [Fiscal Accountability Report FY 23-26](#)
- Office of Policy and Management (OPM), [Fiscal Accountability Report FY 23-26](#)



## General Law

### *Cannabis*

With the sale of recreational adult-use cannabis beginning in 2023, the legislature may consider changes to the law governing its regulation and licensing. The legislature may consider proposals to (1) differentiate the medical marijuana industry, (2) integrate the hemp industry, and (3) establish new license categories.

Related OLR Reports:

- [2022-R-0246](#), *Cannabis Advertising*
- [2022-R-0107](#), *Backgrounder: Connecticut's State and Municipal Taxes on Recreational Cannabis*

## Government Administration and Elections

### *Early Voting*

In the November 2022 general election, voters approved a constitutional amendment that allows the General Assembly to pass legislation establishing in-person, early voting. This session, the legislature may consider implementing a statutory framework allowing voters to cast a ballot in-person prior to election day.

Related OLR Reports:

- [2022-R-0157](#), *Ballot Question and Explanatory Text for 2022 Proposed Constitutional Amendment on Early Voting*
- [2021-R-0098](#), *State Laws Governing Early Voting*

### *No-Excuse Absentee Voting*

This year, the legislature may consider a referred constitutional amendment, initially passed in 2021, that removes the state constitution's restrictions on absentee voting ([RA 21-2](#)). Currently, the constitution allows the legislature to pass a law allowing electors to cast their vote by absentee ballot if they are unable to appear at their polling place because of absence from the town where they reside, sickness or physical disability, or the tenets of their religion prohibit secular activity on election day ([Conn. Const. Art. VI, § 7](#)). If the resolution passes by a majority of the membership in both chambers, it will appear on the 2024 general election ballot. If voters approve the amendment in the general election, it will become part of the state constitution.

Related OLR Report:

- [2022-R-0260](#), *Issue Brief: Amending the State Constitution*

## ***Quasi-Public Agencies***

In recent years, the Government Administration and Elections Committee has reported favorably multiple bills concerning quasi-public agencies. These bills addressed, among other things, quasi-public agencies' bidding procedures ([sHB 6194](#) (2021)); oversight of the agencies by the State Contracting Standards Board ([sHB 6194](#) (2021) and [sSB 473](#) (2022)); and oversight by the executive and legislative branches ([sHB 6664](#) (2021)). In 2023, the legislature may consider these or other proposals relating to quasi-public agency oversight and procedures.

Related OLR Reports:

- [2022-R-0175](#), *Quasi-Public Agency Boards of Directors*
- [2022-R-0176](#), *Quasi-Public Agencies*

## **Higher Education and Employment Advancement**

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

For the third year in a row, the [National Student Clearinghouse Research Center](#) has reported that college and university enrollment declined in the 2022 fall semester. As of September 29, 2022, the center reports that although the decline in postsecondary enrollment has slowed to nearly pre-pandemic enrollment rates, institutions are still facing an approximate 4.2% decline in undergraduate enrollment since 2020. Last session, the legislature considered bills addressing access to postsecondary education that included student loan reimbursement for state students who graduated from a state university ([sSB 250](#) (2022)) and increasing the number of child care centers on or near each regional community-technical college and state university campus ([sHB 5115](#) (2022)). The legislature may continue to explore barriers to enrollment and retention in the upcoming session.

Related OLR Reports:

- [2021-R-0044](#), *Student Loan Forgiveness and Repayment Programs*
- [2020-R-0178](#), *Issue Brief: Open Educational Resources*

### ***Workforce Development***

The [U.S. Chamber of Commerce states](#) that businesses added 3.8 million jobs in 2021, but workforce participation remains below pre-pandemic levels. Many industries are reporting a high number of job openings, including in education, health care, and manufacturing. According to the

Connecticut Business and Industry Association's [2022 Survey of Businesses](#), 44% say a lack of skilled applicants is their greatest obstacle to growth. In 2023, the legislature may consider proposals toward developing the state's workforce to meet the needs of these in-demand sectors.

Related OLR Report:

- [2020-R-0335](#), *Student Loan Forgiveness Programs for Health Care Professionals*

## Housing

### ***Housing Affordability and Availability and Eviction Protections***

In Connecticut and across the country, rent costs and home values have remained high compared to pre-pandemic levels. Additionally, with the expiration of federal and state COVID-19-related eviction protections, recent data generally show above-average monthly eviction filings in Connecticut. Last session, the legislature (1) required all municipalities with populations of at least 25,000 to establish fair rent commissions ([PA 22-30](#)) and (2) increased the amount of assistance families may receive under a Department of Housing rental assistance program ([PA 22-118](#), § 482). This session, the legislature may consider proposals aimed at (1) ensuring housing affordability, particularly for low- and moderate-income households; (2) growing the state's overall housing stock; and (3) mitigating the recent increase in eviction filings.

Related OLR Reports:

- [2022-R-0115](#), *Protections Against Rent Increases*
- [2021-R-0211](#), *States with Rent Control*
- [2021-R-0189](#), *Eviction Process, Time Frame, and Impact of COVID-19 Executive Orders*

## Human Services

### ***Benefit Access***

The legislature may consider expanding access to public assistance programs. Options include expanding eligibility for programs like Medicaid for Employees with Disabilities (MED-Connect) or Temporary Family Assistance by eliminating asset tests or revisiting energy assistance benefit levels. The legislature may also consider recommendations from the Food is Medicine Work Group to expand access to healthy foods for low-income households.

Related Reading:

- OLR Report [2022-R-0102](#), *Benefit Eligibility and Marriage for People with Disabilities*

- OLR Report [2022-R-0259](#), *Questions on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families*
- OLR Report [2022-R-0190](#), *Produce Prescription Programs in Select States*
- OLR Report [2020-R-0317](#), *Qualifying for Medicaid for Employees with Disabilities (MED-Connect)*
- [Food is Medicine Work Group Webpage](#)

## **Insurance and Real Estate**

### ***Prescription Drug Pricing***

Prescription drugs are a major health insurance cost-driver, and the General Assembly has recently focused on lowering prescription drug pricing and out-of-pocket costs for individuals and families. For example, last session, it passed legislation requiring the Office of Health Strategy executive director to identify drug manufacturers that significantly contribute to health care cost growth ([PA 22-118](#), §§ 217-223). The Insurance and Real Estate Committee will likely consider further prescription drug pricing reform and may also explore whether any of the prescription drug cost savings adopted in the recently passed federal Inflation Reduction Act can be adopted at the state level.

Related OLR Reports:

- [2021-R-0160](#), *Issue Brief: Connecticut Health Insurance Reform 2016-2021*
- [2020-R-0202](#), *Issue Brief: Health Insurance Coverage for Insulin and Diabetes Under PA 20-4 (JSS)*
- [2019-R-0248](#), *Maryland Prescription Drug Affordability Board*

### ***Additional Industry Reforms***

The committee may consider additional health insurance reforms, including those related to association health plans, contracts between health insurers and providers, and the health insurance rate review process. Additionally, it may revisit other industry practices, including those related to travel insurance and structured settlements.

Related OLR Report:

- [2022-R-0251](#), *Issue Brief: Connecticut's Health Insurance Rate Review Process*

## Judiciary

### *Bail System*

Based partly on the recommendations of the Connecticut Sentencing Commission, the legislature enacted [PA 17-145](#). This act made changes to the pretrial detention-related laws such as (1) barring courts from requiring cash-only bail for certain crimes and (2) requiring courts to remove financial conditions at certain bail review hearings. The commission has continued to study the state's bail system and has recently released a report that includes (1) a description of other states' bail reform legislation, (2) the commission's framework to further reduce the detained pretrial population and eliminate the use of money bail in Connecticut, and (3) recent recommendations from the Office of the Chief Public Defender and the Division of Criminal Justice. In the 2023 session, the legislature may consider proposals on this topic.

Related Reading:

- Connecticut Sentencing Commission, [2022 Report on Pretrial Justice](#)

### *Criminal Records Erasure (“Clean Slate”)*

In the upcoming session, the legislature may consider further changes to the criminal records erasure laws ([CGS § 54-142a, et seq.](#)) to facilitate the implementation of recently enacted legislation on this topic. Starting in 2023, records of certain convictions generally become eligible for erasure seven years (for misdemeanors) or 10 years (for felonies) after the person's most recent conviction ([PA 21-32](#), §§ 3, 4, & 8, as amended by [PA 21-33](#), § 10). A 2022 law made conviction records ineligible for erasure until the defendant has completed serving the sentence imposed ([PA 22-26](#), §§ 34-36).

Related Reading:

- Criminal Justice Information System Governing Board, [Clean Slate Implementation Letter to the Judiciary Committee Chairs](#)

### *Firearms*

Growing concern about the increase in gun violence throughout the country may lead the legislature to review the state's gun laws. The legislature could consider proposals to (1) ban “grandfathered” assault weapons, (2) update the risk protection order and warrant law procedure, (3) expand the state's ban on ghost guns, (4) require a gun permit holder to show his or her permit to a law enforcement officer who asks for it after seeing that the person is openly carrying a handgun, and (5) reestablish and fund the state's task force on firearm tracing. Some of these proposals were



part of a 2022 governor’s bill ([SB 16](#) (2022)). The [governor has stated his intention](#) to introduce a similar bill this year.

Related OLR Reports:

- [2022-R-0257](#), *Issue Brief: Connecticut’s “Red Flag” Firearm Law*
- [2020-R-0025](#), *Summary of State Gun Laws*

## Labor and Public Employees

### *Workforce Shortage*

With workforce shortages [reported](#) across the state and nation, the legislature could explore various ways to make it easier for workers to return to, and remain in, the workforce. Proposals could include expanding the state’s paid sick leave law to cover more workers, limiting the use of non-compete agreements, and restricting certain employers from changing employee work shifts without minimum advance notice, all of which have been considered in previous sessions. The legislature may also look at various ways to better align the state’s workforce training programs with employer’s needs (see Higher Education and Employment Advancement above).

Related Reading:

- OLR Report, [2022-R-0208](#), *Connecticut’s Family and Medical Leave Act*
- OLR Bill Analysis for [HB 5249](#) (2022)
- OLR Bill Analysis for [sHB 5353](#) (2022)
- OLR Bill Analysis for [sSB 312](#) (2022)

## Planning and Development

### *Housing Opportunities*

In recent sessions, the legislature has considered bills aimed at increasing fair and equal housing opportunities for all Connecticut residents. In 2023, it will likely continue to explore this issue, including proposals (1) requiring the state to take a central role in assessing and allocating responsibility for needed housing construction among municipalities, (2) providing property tax relief to new homeowners or landlords struggling to keep rents affordable, and (3) requiring municipalities to permit greater housing density near existing infrastructure.

Related OLR Reports:

- [2022-R-0254](#), *Issue Brief: CGS § 8-30g The Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure*
- [2021-R-0173](#), *Local Option Property Tax Relief Programs for Homeowners*
- [2021-R-0172](#), *Mandatory Property Tax Relief for Homeowners*

## Public Health

### *Emergency Medical Services*

This session, the legislature is likely to consider legislation on the emergency medical services (EMS) system, including the EMS workforce, system capacity, payment mechanisms, and related issues. Among other sources, these proposals may draw upon discussion from (1) an [informational forum](#) held this July, coordinated by the Public Health Committee, and (2) a recent working group required by law, coordinated by the Department of Public Health in collaboration with the Department of Social Services.

Related Reading:

- *Sustainability and Capacity of EMS Services in CT Informational Forum Materials* (in the Related Information section of the [Public Health Committee Webpage](#))
- [EMS Working Group Webpage](#)

### *Health Care Workforce*

In Connecticut and nationally, there have been increasing challenges related to staffing within the health care sector, across various professions (e.g., nursing) and specialties (e.g., childhood behavioral health). In recent years, the General Assembly has taken various measures on this issue, such as establishing a new loan reimbursement program for eligible providers ([PA 22-118](#), § 79) and a grant program for hiring and retaining child and adolescent psychiatrists ([PA 22-47](#), § 38). There will likely be additional proposals in 2023 on ways to attract and retain more health care providers in needed fields.

### *Prescription Opioid Drug Abuse*

Connecticut continues to face an increase in the number of emergency room visits and drug overdose deaths involving opioid analgesics (e.g., prescription painkillers such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, and fentanyl). In recent years, the legislature has passed several measures to address prescription opioid drug abuse, such as (1) increasing access to opioid antagonists (i.e., medication to treat a drug overdose); (2) enacting “Good Samaritan” laws for people who prescribe

or administer opioid antagonists to a person experiencing a drug overdose; and (3) establishing a seven-day limit on certain opioid drug prescriptions.

This session, the legislature may consider additional proposals to address this issue, such as (1) expanding locations where people can access opioid antagonists (e.g., vending machines, college and university housing, and nightclubs), (2) mandating opioid use education for high school athletic programs, (3) creating pilot programs to administer overdose protection sites, and (4) improving access to substance use outpatient detoxification services.

Related OLR Report:

- [2022-R-0168](#), Connecticut's Opioid Drug Abuse Law

## Public Safety and Security

### *Gaming*

Expanded in-person and online gaming, including online sports and casino gaming and lottery draw games have been operational in Connecticut for over a year. During the 2022 session, the legislature made several gaming-related changes, including transferring responsibility for a statutorily mandated study on legalized gambling's effects on Connecticut residents to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) and requiring the next study to be completed by August 1, 2023. This session, the legislature may continue to assess the current regulatory process, its consumer protections, and legalized gaming's impact on the state.

Related Reading:

- OLR Public Act Summaries for [PA 21-23](#); [PA 22-113](#); [PA 22-118](#), § 76; and [PA 22-120](#)
- OLR Report [2022-R-0178](#), *CGS § 12-572b Prohibition on Advance Deposit Wagers*
- OLR Report [2022-R-0206](#), *Problem Gambling Laws and Services in Certain Northeastern States*

## Transportation

### *Traffic Safety*

According to the Department of Transportation (DOT), 2022 has been one of the deadliest years in recent memory for both pedestrians and motorists. In 2021, the legislature enacted a number of policies aimed at increasing the safety of pedestrians and cyclists on the roads, including establishing a Vision Zero Council charged with developing a statewide policy and interagency approach to eliminate all transportation-related fatalities ([PA 21-28](#)). The council's initial

recommendations are due in early 2023. To improve the safety of the traveling public, the legislature may consider proposals related to traffic law enforcement (e.g., automated enforcement technology), educating and training drivers and other road users, and road design (e.g., “complete streets” plans).

Related Reading:

- OLR Public Act Summary for [PA 21-28](#)
- [Vision Zero Council Webpage](#)

### ***Transportation Projects and Increased Federal Funding***

In late 2021, Congress passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which authorized five more years of federal transportation funding and represents a significant increase in federal transportation investment. According to DOT, Connecticut anticipates receiving \$5.38 billion in federal formula funds over five years, which is a \$1.6 billion increase over the previous federal investment. Additionally, IIJA provides about \$100 billion in various competitive grants that states may be able to access. In light of this, the legislature may consider proposals related to processes for selecting and prioritizing capital projects and enhancing DOT’s capacity to get funding and deliver projects.

Related Reading:

- DOT, [Transportation Capital Infrastructure Program Capital Plan Update Report 2022-2026](#)

## **Veterans’ Affairs**

### ***Military Spouses***

In recent years, the General Assembly has enacted legislation to remove professional barriers, such as certain credentialing and licensing requirements, for military spouses who relocate to Connecticut (e.g., [PA 21-152](#), §§ 1 & 4). This session, the legislature may consider additional ways to facilitate this transition, such as helping those who ran day care centers in other states establish centers here.

### ***Property Tax Relief***

Last session, the legislature established a task force to evaluate the property tax relief currently offered to veterans, including the optional benefits each municipality provides, and make recommendations about whether there should be tax relief adjustments ([PA 22-34](#), § 31). This

session, the legislature may consider recommendations from the task force, which are due to the legislature by January 1, 2023, as well as other related findings and proposals.

Related OLR Reports:

- [2022-R-0219](#), *Backgrounder: Veterans' Property Tax Exemptions*
- [2022-R-0186](#), *Backgrounder: State Veterans' Benefits*
- [2022-R-0155](#), *Benefits for Veterans Without Wartime Service*