

## Board of Pardons and Paroles

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### Issue

Describe the structure of the Board of Pardons and Paroles, including its members' term length and compensation.

This report updates OLR Report [2007-R-0533](#).

### Summary

The Board of Pardons and Paroles (“the board”) has independent authority to grant or deny parole or special parole, set parole or special parole supervision conditions, rescind or revoke parole or special parole, grant releases and commute punishments, discharge any person on parole or inmate eligible for parole from Department of Correction (DOC) custody, and end special parole. The board is housed within DOC for administrative purposes only.

State law determines the board’s membership, including the members’ number, term length, appointment process, qualifications, training, and compensation. It also governs the board’s structure ([CGS § 54-124a](#)).

### Membership

#### *Number and Term*

The board consists of 10 full-time members and up to five part-time members. Each member’s term is coterminous with the governor’s term, or until a successor is chosen, whichever is later ([CGS § 54-124a\(a\)\(1\) & \(b\)](#)).

## ***Appointment Process***

The governor appoints all members with the legislature's advice and consent. He must specify at the time of appointment whether a member is full- or part-time. When making appointments, the governor must also make a good faith effort to ensure that the members are qualified and closely reflect the state's gender and racial diversity according to recent U.S. census data. Each appointment must be referred to the Judiciary Committee, which must then report on each one within 30 legislative days ([CGS § 54-124a\(a\)\(1\)](#)).

The governor must fill any membership vacancy that arises for the unexpired portion of the term ([CGS § 54-124a\(b\)](#)).

## ***Qualifications***

Board members must have education, experience, or training in any of the following areas: (1) community corrections administration, (2) parole or pardons, (3) criminal justice, (4) criminology, (5) offender evaluation or supervision, or (6) offender mental health services provision ([CGS § 54-124a\(a\)\(1\)](#)).

## ***Training***

Each board member must annually complete a formal training program that the board chairperson and executive director establish. At a minimum, the training must include an overview of (1) the criminal justice system; (2) the parole system, including factors to be considered in granting parole; (3) victim rights and services; (4) reentry strategies; (5) risk assessment; (6) case management; and (7) mental health issues ([CGS § 54-124a\(l\)\(3\)](#)).

Additionally, each member must annually complete a formal training on the pardons process. This training must include information about collateral consequences that someone with a criminal record may face, such as when applying for housing or employment ([CGS § 54-124a\(l\)\(4\)](#)).

## ***Compensation***

The 10 full-time board members receive compensation in an amount set by the Department of Administrative Services. The part-time members receive \$110 per day for their services, plus reimbursement for necessary expenses ([CGS § 54-124a\(c\)](#)).

## Structure

### *Leadership*

The governor appoints a board chairperson from among the board's membership ([CGS § 54-124a\(a\)\(1\)](#)). The chairperson must be present at all board meetings and participate in all decisions. If the chairperson is absent or unable to act, then he or she must choose a member to serve temporarily as chairperson ([CGS § 54-124a\(c\)](#)). The chairperson must adopt an annual budget and operation plan, adopt rules necessary for the board's internal affairs, and submit an annual report to the governor and General Assembly ([CGS § 54-124a\(o\)](#)).

Additional chairperson responsibilities include, among other things, (1) establishing procedural rules for hearings, (2) reviewing board employees' recommendations, (3) adopting policies for granting pardons and commutations, (4) consulting with DOC and the judicial branch on shared issues, and (5) signing and issuing subpoenas to compel witness testimony at parole proceedings ([CGS § 54-124a\(d\)](#)).

### *Panels*

The board has two types of panels: parole release panels and pardons panels. The board chairperson appoints board members to panels ([CGS § 54-124a\(d\)\(2\)](#)).

*Parole Release Panels.* Each parole release panel must have three members. At least one of the three members must be the board chairperson or a full-time board member of the chairperson's choosing who serves as a temporary chair ([CGS § 54-124a\(e\)\(1\)](#)). If a parole panel discharges someone from DOC custody or terminates a special parole period, the panel membership requirements are the same ([CGS § 54-124a\(e\)\(3\)](#)).

*Pardon Panels.* Each pardon panel must have three members. The board chairperson may serve as one of the three ([CGS § 54-124a\(e\)\(2\)](#)).

### *Staff*

*Executive Director.* The board chairperson must appoint an executive director to oversee the board's administration and perform various tasks at the chair's discretion, including organizing release hearing calendars and preparing the board's budget and annual operation plan ([CGS § 54-124a\(i\)](#)).

*Psychologist.* The board must employ at least one psychologist with expertise in criminal offender risk assessment and recidivism. The psychologist, who is supervised by the board chairperson, must help the board with its parole release decisions ([CGS § 54-124a\(m\)](#)).

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