



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 223

February Session, 2024

Senate Bill No. 421

Senate, April 3, 2024

The Committee on Public Safety and Security reported through SEN. GASTON of the 23rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING LAW ENFORCEMENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (*Effective July 1, 2024*) Not later than January 1, 2025, the
2 Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection shall
3 develop a state-wide campaign to promote the law enforcement
4 profession. In developing such campaign, the commissioner may
5 consult with the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association and any other
6 entities the commissioner deems appropriate. The commissioner shall
7 use a variety of media, including social media, as part of such campaign.

8 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2024*) (a) The Department of Emergency
9 Services and Public Protection shall employ a full-time cadet or explorer
10 program coordinator, who shall coordinate and oversee police cadet or
11 explorer programs, implement state standards and a best practices
12 guide for such programs and encourage establishment and expansion
13 of such programs throughout the state.

14 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, and each fiscal year
15 thereafter, the department shall allocate five thousand dollars to each
16 municipal police department that operates, or plans to operate in the
17 following fiscal year, a cadet or explorer program.

18 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2024*) For the fiscal year ending June 30,
19 2025, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Department of Emergency
20 Services and Public Protection shall establish a grant program to
21 reimburse municipal police departments for the cost of basic training of
22 police officers. Not later than October 1, 2024, the department shall post
23 in a conspicuous place on the department's Internet web site a
24 description of the grant program, including, but not limited to,
25 eligibility criteria and the application process for the program. A
26 municipal police department shall apply for such grants on such forms
27 and in such manner as determined by the department.

28 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2024*) For the purposes of this section,
29 "academy" and "basic training" have the same meanings as provided in
30 section 7-294a of the general statutes. The Police Officer Standards and
31 Training Council shall examine criminal justice courses offered by
32 colleges and universities in the state, and determine (1) whether any
33 such courses are equivalent to courses required as part of basic training
34 at the academy, and (2) under what conditions an individual attending
35 the academy for basic training need not complete a course at the
36 academy because the individual completed an equivalent course at a
37 college or university in the state. Not later than January 1, 2025, the
38 council shall submit a report of its examination and determination, in
39 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes,
40 to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
41 cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security.

42 Sec. 5. Subsection (b) of section 7-294d of the general statutes is
43 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
44 *2024*):

45 (b) (1) No person may be employed as a police officer by any law
46 enforcement unit for a period exceeding one year unless such person

47 has been certified under the provisions of subsection (a) of this section
48 or has been granted an extension by the council. No person may serve
49 as a police officer during any period when such person's certification
50 has been cancelled or revoked pursuant to the provisions of subsection
51 (c) of this section. In addition to the requirements of this subsection, the
52 council may establish other qualifications for the employment of police
53 officers and require evidence of fulfillment of these qualifications. No
54 law enforcement unit shall deny employment as a police officer to a
55 prospective employee, and the council shall not deny certification under
56 the provisions of subsection (a) of this section to an individual, solely on
57 the basis of such prospective employee's or such individual's status as a
58 noncitizen of the United States, provided such prospective employee or
59 such individual is lawfully admitted for permanent residence of the
60 United States under federal law and regulations.

61 (2) The certification of any police officer who is not employed by a
62 law enforcement unit for a period of time in excess of two years, unless
63 such officer is on leave of absence, shall be considered lapsed. Upon
64 reemployment as a police officer, such officer shall apply for
65 recertification in a manner provided by the council, provided such
66 recertification process requires the police officer to submit to a urinalysis
67 drug test that screens for controlled substances, including, but not
68 limited to, anabolic steroids, and receive a result indicating no presence
69 of any controlled substance not prescribed for the officer. The council
70 shall certify any applicant who presents evidence of satisfactory
71 completion of a program or course of instruction in another state or, if
72 the applicant is a veteran or a member of the armed forces or the
73 National Guard, as part of training during service in the armed forces,
74 that is equivalent in content and quality to that required in this state,
75 provided such applicant passes an examination or evaluation as
76 required by the council. For the purposes of this [section] subdivision,
77 "veteran" and "armed forces" have the same meanings as provided in
78 section 27-103.

79 Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2024*) For the fiscal year ending June 30,
80 2025, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Commissioner of Emergency

81 Services and Public Protection shall provide a grant to each of the top
82 ten most populous municipalities in the state in order to increase the
83 salaries of police officers serving such municipalities. A municipality
84 receiving such a grant shall not use the grant for any purpose other than
85 increasing the salaries of such officers.

86 Sec. 7. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Not later than January 1, 2025,
87 the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and the
88 Police Officer Standards and Training Council shall jointly submit a
89 report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general
90 statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly
91 having cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security. Such
92 report shall include recommendations for a schedule of bonuses to be
93 awarded to individuals upon entering service as a police officer, as
94 defined in section 7-294a of the general statutes, and to be awarded to
95 such officers based on years of service, in order to encourage individuals
96 to begin and continue careers as police officers. The department and
97 council may consult with chiefs of municipal police departments and
98 any other individuals or entities in developing such recommendations.

99 Sec. 8. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) Not later than January 1, 2025,
100 the Board of Regents for Higher Education, the Board of Trustees of The
101 University of Connecticut and the Police Officer Standards and Training
102 Council shall jointly develop a career pathway to assist police officers in
103 obtaining higher education degrees. Such pathway shall include a
104 schedule of credits that officers may receive at each constituent unit of
105 higher education, as defined in section 10a-1 of the general statutes, for
106 the training such officers received in order to be certified, and maintain
107 their certification, as police officers pursuant to section 7-294d of the
108 general statutes, as amended by this act. Such boards and council shall
109 promote such pathway in order to encourage police officers to earn
110 higher education degrees.

111 (b) Not later than January 1, 2025, the Board of Regents for Higher
112 Education, the Board of Trustees of The University of Connecticut and
113 the Police Officer Standards and Training Council shall jointly submit a

114 report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general
115 statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly
116 having cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security. Such
117 report shall include the pathway and schedule developed pursuant to
118 subsection (a) of this section and a description of plans to promote such
119 pathway.

120 Sec. 9. Subsection (d) of section 10a-77 of the general statutes is
121 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
122 *2024*):

123 (d) Said board of trustees shall waive the payment of tuition at any of
124 the regional community-technical colleges (1) for any dependent child
125 of a person whom the armed forces of the United States has declared to
126 be missing in action or to have been a prisoner of war while serving in
127 such armed forces after January 1, 1960, which child has been accepted
128 for admission to such institution and is a resident of the state at the time
129 such child is accepted for admission to such institution, (2) subject to the
130 provisions of subsection (e) of this section, for any veteran, as defined in
131 section 27-103, who performed service in time of war, as defined in
132 section 27-103, except that for purposes of this subsection, "service in
133 time of war" shall not include time spent in attendance at a military
134 service academy, which veteran has been accepted for admission to such
135 institution and is domiciled in this state at the time such veteran is
136 accepted for admission to such institution, (3) for any resident of the
137 state sixty-two years of age or older, provided, at the end of the regular
138 registration period, there are enrolled in the course a sufficient number
139 of students other than those residents eligible for waivers pursuant to
140 this subdivision to offer the course in which such resident intends to
141 enroll and there is space available in such course after accommodating
142 all such students, (4) for any student attending the Connecticut State
143 Police Academy who is enrolled in a law enforcement program at said
144 academy offered in coordination with a regional community-technical
145 college which accredits courses taken in such program, (5) for any active
146 member of the Connecticut Army or Air National Guard who (A) has
147 been certified by the Adjutant General or such Adjutant General's

148 designee as a member in good standing of the guard, and (B) is enrolled
149 or accepted for admission to such institution on a full-time or part-time
150 basis in an undergraduate degree-granting program, (6) for any
151 dependent child of a (A) police officer, as defined in section 7-294a, or
152 supernumerary or auxiliary police officer, (B) firefighter, as defined in
153 section 7-323j, or member of a volunteer fire company, (C) municipal
154 employee, or (D) state employee, as defined in section 5-154, killed in
155 the line of duty, (7) for any resident of the state who is a dependent child
156 or surviving spouse of a specified terrorist victim who was a resident of
157 this state, (8) for any dependent child of a resident of the state who was
158 killed in a multivehicle crash at or near the intersection of Routes 44 and
159 10 and Nod Road in Avon on July 29, 2005, [and] (9) for any resident of
160 the state who is a dependent child or surviving spouse of a person who
161 was killed in action while performing active military duty with the
162 armed forces of the United States on or after September 11, 2001, and
163 who was a resident of this state, (10) for a police officer, as defined in
164 section 7-294a, who has been employed as such an officer in the state for
165 not less than two years, and (11) for any dependent child of a police
166 officer, as defined in section 7-294a, who has been employed as such an
167 officer in the state for not less than five years. If any person who receives
168 a tuition waiver in accordance with the provisions of this subsection also
169 receives educational reimbursement from an employer, such waiver
170 shall be reduced by the amount of such educational reimbursement.
171 Veterans and members of the National Guard described in subdivision
172 (5) of this subsection shall be given the same status as students not
173 receiving tuition waivers in registering for courses at regional
174 community-technical colleges. Notwithstanding the provisions of
175 section 10a-30, as used in this subsection, "domiciled in this state"
176 includes domicile for less than one year.

177 Sec. 10. Subsection (d) of section 10a-99 of the 2024 supplement to the
178 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
179 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

180 (d) Said board shall waive the payment of tuition fees for
181 undergraduate and graduate degree programs at the Connecticut State

182 University System (1) for any dependent child of a person whom the
183 armed forces of the United States has declared to be missing in action or
184 to have been a prisoner of war while serving in such armed forces after
185 January 1, 1960, which child has been accepted for admission to such
186 institution and is a resident of the state at the time such child is accepted
187 for admission to such institution, (2) subject to the provisions of
188 subsection (e) of this section, for any veteran, as defined in section 27-
189 103, who performed service in time of war, as defined in section 27-103,
190 except that for purposes of this subsection, "service in time of war" shall
191 not include time spent in attendance at a military service academy,
192 which veteran has been accepted for admission to such institution and
193 is domiciled in this state at the time such veteran is accepted for
194 admission to such institution, (3) for any resident of the state sixty-two
195 years of age or older who has been accepted for admission to such
196 institution, provided (A) such resident is enrolled in a degree-granting
197 program, or (B) at the end of the regular registration period, there are
198 enrolled in the course a sufficient number of students other than those
199 residents eligible for waivers pursuant to this subdivision to offer the
200 course in which such resident intends to enroll and there is space
201 available in such course after accommodating all such students, (4) for
202 any student attending the Connecticut Police Academy who is enrolled
203 in a law enforcement program at said academy offered in coordination
204 with the university which accredits courses taken in such program, (5)
205 for any active member of the Connecticut Army or Air National Guard
206 who (A) has been certified by the Adjutant General or such Adjutant
207 General's designee as a member in good standing of the guard, and (B)
208 is enrolled or accepted for admission to such institution on a full-time
209 or part-time basis in an undergraduate or graduate degree-granting
210 program, (6) for any dependent child of a (A) police officer, as defined
211 in section 7-294a, or supernumerary or auxiliary police officer, (B)
212 firefighter, as defined in section 7-323j, or member of a volunteer fire
213 company, (C) municipal employee, or (D) state employee, as defined in
214 section 5-154, killed in the line of duty, (7) for any resident of this state
215 who is a dependent child or surviving spouse of a specified terrorist
216 victim who was a resident of the state, (8) for any dependent child of a

217 resident of the state who was killed in a multivehicle crash at or near the
218 intersection of Routes 44 and 10 and Nod Road in Avon on July 29, 2005,
219 [and] (9) for any resident of the state who is a dependent child or
220 surviving spouse of a person who was killed in action while performing
221 active military duty with the armed forces of the United States on or
222 after September 11, 2001, and who was a resident of this state, (10) for a
223 police officer, as defined in section 7-294a, who has been employed as
224 such an officer in the state for not less than two years, and (11) for any
225 dependent child of a police officer, as defined in section 7-294a, who has
226 been employed as such an officer in the state for not less than five years.
227 If any person who receives a tuition waiver in accordance with the
228 provisions of this subsection also receives educational reimbursement
229 from an employer, such waiver shall be reduced by the amount of such
230 educational reimbursement. Veterans and members of the National
231 Guard described in subdivision (5) of this subsection shall be given the
232 same status as students not receiving tuition waivers in registering for
233 courses at Connecticut state universities. Notwithstanding the
234 provisions of section 10a-30, as used in this subsection, "domiciled in
235 this state" includes domicile for less than one year.

236 Sec. 11. Subsection (e) of section 10a-105 of the 2024 supplement to
237 the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
238 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

239 (e) Said board of trustees shall waive the payment of tuition fees for
240 any undergraduate or graduate degree program at The University of
241 Connecticut (1) for any dependent child of a person whom the armed
242 forces of the United States has declared to be missing in action or to have
243 been a prisoner of war while serving in such armed forces after January
244 1, 1960, which child has been accepted for admission to The University
245 of Connecticut and is a resident of the state at the time such child is
246 accepted for admission to said institution, (2) subject to the provisions
247 of subsection (f) of this section, for any veteran, as defined in section 27-
248 103, who performed service in time of war, as defined in section 27-103,
249 except that for purposes of this subsection, "service in time of war" shall
250 not include time spent in attendance at a military service academy,

251 which veteran has been accepted for admission to said institution and is
252 domiciled in this state at the time such veteran is accepted for admission
253 to said institution, (3) for any resident of the state sixty-two years of age
254 or older who has been accepted for admission to said institution,
255 provided (A) such resident is enrolled in a degree-granting program, or
256 (B) at the end of the regular registration period, there are enrolled in the
257 course a sufficient number of students other than those residents eligible
258 for waivers pursuant to this subdivision to offer the course in which
259 such resident intends to enroll and there is space available in such
260 course after accommodating all such students, (4) for any active member
261 of the Connecticut Army or Air National Guard who (A) has been
262 certified by the Adjutant General or such Adjutant General's designee
263 as a member in good standing of the guard, and (B) is enrolled or
264 accepted for admission to said institution on a full-time or part-time
265 basis in an undergraduate or graduate degree-granting program, (5) for
266 any dependent child of a (A) police officer, as defined in section 7-294a,
267 or supernumerary or auxiliary police officer, (B) firefighter, as defined
268 in section 7-323j, or member of a volunteer fire company, (C) municipal
269 employee, or (D) state employee, as defined in section 5-154, killed in
270 the line of duty, (6) for any resident of the state who is the dependent
271 child or surviving spouse of a specified terrorist victim who was a
272 resident of the state, (7) for any dependent child of a resident of the state
273 who was killed in a multivehicle crash at or near the intersection of
274 Routes 44 and 10 and Nod Road in Avon on July 29, 2005, [and] (8) for
275 any resident of the state who is a dependent child or surviving spouse
276 of a person who was killed in action while performing active military
277 duty with the armed forces of the United States on or after September
278 11, 2001, and who was a resident of this state, (9) for a police officer, as
279 defined in section 7-294a, who has been employed as such an officer in
280 the state for not less than two years, and (10) for any dependent child of
281 a police officer, as defined in section 7-294a, who has been employed as
282 such an officer in the state for not less than five years. If any person who
283 receives a tuition waiver in accordance with the provisions of this
284 subsection also receives educational reimbursement from an employer,
285 such waiver shall be reduced by the amount of such educational

286 reimbursement. Veterans and members of the National Guard
287 described in subdivision (4) of this subsection shall be given the same
288 status as students not receiving tuition waivers in registering for courses
289 at The University of Connecticut. Notwithstanding the provisions of
290 section 10a-30, as used in this subsection, "domiciled in this state"
291 includes domicile for less than one year.

292 Sec. 12. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2024*) (a) For the fiscal year ending
293 June 30, 2025, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Office of Higher
294 Education, in collaboration with the Department of Emergency Services
295 and Public Protection, shall administer a police officer loan
296 reimbursement grant program for individuals who have been employed
297 as a police officer, as defined in section 7-294a of the general statutes, in
298 the state for not less than ten years.

299 (b) Any individual who satisfies the eligibility requirements
300 prescribed by the office may receive an annual grant for reimbursement
301 of federal or state educational loans (1) in an amount up to ten per cent
302 of such individual's federal or state educational loans but not exceeding
303 five thousand dollars in any year, and (2) for a period not to exceed ten
304 years. Such individual shall only be reimbursed for loan payments made
305 while such person is employed as a police officer in the state.

306 (c) Individuals may apply to the Office of Higher Education for grants
307 under this section at such time and in such manner as the executive
308 director of the Office of Higher Education prescribes.

309 (d) Any unexpended funds appropriated for purposes of this section
310 shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal year but shall be available for
311 expenditure during the next fiscal year.

312 (e) The Office of Higher Education may accept gifts, grants and
313 donations, from any source, public or private, for the police officer loan
314 reimbursement grant program.

315 Sec. 13. Section 12-81 of the 2024 supplement to the general statutes
316 is amended by adding subdivision (83) as follows (*Effective October 1,*

317 2024, and applicable to assessment years commencing on or after October 1,
318 2024):

319 (NEW) (83) Property to the amount of ten thousand dollars belonging
320 to, or held in trust for, any resident of this state who is a police officer,
321 as defined in section 7-294a, and resides in a distressed municipality, as
322 defined in section 32-9p.

323 Sec. 14. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2024*) The Connecticut Housing
324 Finance Authority shall enhance assistance available to police officers
325 who seek to purchase a house as such officer's principal residence in the
326 community served by such officer. Such assistance shall prioritize first-
327 time homebuyers and include mortgage assistance, down payment
328 assistance or any other appropriate housing subsidies. The terms of any
329 mortgage assistance shall allow the mortgagee to realize a reasonable
330 portion of the equity gain upon sale of the mortgaged property.

331 Sec. 15. (*Effective from passage*) The State Retirement Commission shall
332 (1) study deferred retirement option plans and make recommendations
333 for development of such a plan that (A) is administered by the state, and
334 (B) permits any police officer, as defined in section 7-294a of the general
335 statutes, in the state to participate in the plan, and (2) study the types
336 and levels of retirement medical benefits provided to such officers and
337 the spouses of such officers in the state and make recommendations
338 regarding the provision of such benefits. The commission may consult
339 with the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection,
340 municipal police departments and any other entities the commission
341 deems appropriate. Not later than January 1, 2025, the commission shall
342 report the results of such studies and any recommendations, in
343 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes,
344 to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
345 cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security.

346 Sec. 16. (*Effective from passage*) Not later than October 1, 2024, the
347 Governor shall enter into negotiations with the employee organization
348 that is the representative of state police officers to seek amendments to
349 any collective bargaining agreement to establish conditions under

350 which a state police officer who retired from service as such an officer
351 may return to such service and (1) resume earning credit toward
352 retirement benefits, in the same manner as such officer earned such
353 credit prior to such officer's retirement, and (2) be eligible for earning
354 the same benefits as such officer was eligible for prior to such officer's
355 retirement.

356 Sec. 17. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Each collective bargaining
357 agreement entered into on or after July 1, 2024, or amended on or after
358 July 1, 2024, between a municipality and an employee organization that
359 is the representative of police officers in the municipality shall permit
360 police officers who retire and remain certified by the Police Officer
361 Standards and Training Council pursuant to section 7-294d of the
362 general statutes, as amended by this act, to return to part-time or full-
363 time employment as a police officer with the municipality while
364 collecting such officer's pension, to the maximum extent permissible
365 under state and federal law and regulations.

366 Sec. 18. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force to
367 study the volunteer police auxiliary force authorized under section 29-
368 22 of the general statutes and make recommendations for improving the
369 organization of such auxiliary force and maximizing the services that
370 may be provided by auxiliary state police and municipal police officers.

371 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

372 (1) One appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;

373 (2) One appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate;

374 (3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of
375 Representatives;

376 (4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

377 (5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of
378 Representatives;

- 379 (6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;
- 380 (7) The Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection,
381 or the commissioner's designee; and
- 382 (8) Two persons appointed by the Governor.
- 383 (c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (1),
384 (2), (3), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member
385 of the General Assembly.
- 386 (d) All initial appointments to the task force shall be made not later
387 than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall
388 be filled by the appointing authority.
- 389 (e) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro
390 tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the task force from
391 among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons shall schedule
392 the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later than sixty
393 days after the effective date of this section.
- 394 (f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
395 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public safety
396 and security shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.
- 397 (g) Not later than January 1, 2025, the task force shall submit a report
398 on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of
399 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public
400 safety and security, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a
401 of the general statutes. The task force shall terminate on the date that it
402 submits such report or January 1, 2025, whichever is later.
- 403 Sec. 19. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) For purposes of this section,
404 "law enforcement unit" has the same meaning as provided in section 7-
405 294a of the general statutes.
- 406 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, the Department of
407 Emergency Services and Public Protection shall develop a pilot program

408 to provide law enforcement units with unmanned aerial vehicles to
409 respond to requests for service, assist such units in assessing the dangers
410 and needs at the scene where service is requested prior to the arrival of
411 a police officer and enhance the safety of police officers and the services
412 such units provide to the public. In identifying units for participation in
413 the pilot program, the department shall give priority to units that would
414 most benefit from such program, including those with reduced staffing
415 levels.

416 (c) Not later than October 1, 2024, the department shall (1) develop
417 eligibility criteria to be used in selecting among applicants for
418 participation in the pilot program, (2) develop application forms and
419 deadlines, (3) post in a conspicuous location on the department's
420 Internet web site a description of the pilot program that includes, but is
421 not limited to, such criteria, forms and deadlines, and (4) notify law
422 enforcement units of the opportunity to apply for participation in such
423 program.

424 (d) (1) Not later than January 1, 2026, each law enforcement unit
425 participating in the pilot program pursuant to subsection (b) of this
426 section shall submit a report to the department describing the unit's use
427 of unmanned aerial devices, their impact on the unit's ability to provide
428 services to the public and any recommendations for the continuation of
429 or improvements to such pilot program.

430 (2) Not later than July 1, 2026, the department shall submit a report,
431 in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes,
432 to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
433 cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security. Such report
434 shall include (A) information on the law enforcement units that applied
435 for participation in the pilot program, which units were chosen for
436 participation and the reasons for choosing such units, (B) a summary of
437 the reports submitted by units pursuant to subdivision (1) of this
438 subsection and an analysis of the results of the pilot program, and (C)
439 recommendations regarding the continuation or expansion of the pilot
440 program, funding needs and any necessary legislation.

441 Sec. 20. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) For purposes of this section,
442 "law enforcement unit" and "police officer" have the same meanings as
443 provided in section 7-294a of the general statutes.

444 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, the Department of
445 Emergency Services and Public Protection shall, within available
446 appropriations, administer a pilot program to enhance programs and
447 initiatives that address the mental health needs of police officers at one
448 or more law enforcement units with more than three hundred police
449 officers. Such pilot program may include, but need not be limited to, the
450 development or enhancement of peer-to-peer support programs,
451 programs that train officers to help themselves and fellow officers deal
452 with mental health issues associated with their jobs, programs that
453 employ a psychologist or other mental health professionals within the
454 unit to assist officers with their mental health needs, employee
455 assistance programs and any other programs and resources that may
456 address the mental health needs of police officers.

457 (c) Not later than October 1, 2024, the department shall (1) develop
458 eligibility criteria to be used in selecting among applicants for such pilot
459 program, (2) develop application forms and deadlines, (3) post in a
460 conspicuous location on the department's Internet web site a description
461 of the pilot program that includes, but is not limited to, such criteria,
462 forms and deadlines, and (4) notify each law enforcement unit with
463 more than three hundred police officers of the opportunity to apply for
464 participation in such program.

465 (d) (1) Not later than January 1, 2026, each law enforcement unit
466 participating in the pilot program shall submit a report to the
467 department describing the programs, services and resources provided
468 pursuant to the pilot program and evaluating the impact of such
469 programs, services and resources on the mental health of the police
470 officers employed by such unit. In evaluating such impact, each unit
471 shall provide a recommendation as to whether such programs, services
472 or resources should be continued and whether any modifications could
473 improve the impact of such programs, services or resources on the

474 mental health of police officers.

475 (2) Not later than July 1, 2026, the department shall submit a report,
 476 in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes,
 477 to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
 478 cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security. Such report
 479 shall include (A) information on the number of applications for the pilot
 480 program that were received and the law enforcement units chosen for
 481 participation, (B) an analysis of the programs, services and resources
 482 provided by units and their effectiveness in addressing the mental
 483 health needs of officers, (C) a list of programs, services and resources
 484 identified as best practices that could be implemented by units across
 485 the state to address the mental health needs of officers, and (D)
 486 recommendations regarding the pilot program under this section,
 487 funding for specific programs, services and resources to address the
 488 mental health needs of police officers and any necessary legislation.

489 Sec. 21. (*Effective July 1, 2024*) The sum of five hundred thousand
 490 dollars is appropriated to the Department of Emergency Services and
 491 Public Protection from the General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June
 492 30, 2025, for the state-wide campaign developed pursuant to section 1
 493 of this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	7-294d(b)
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	New section
Sec. 7	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 8	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 9	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	10a-77(d)
Sec. 10	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	10a-99(d)
Sec. 11	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	10a-105(e)
Sec. 12	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	New section

Sec. 13	<i>October 1, 2024, and applicable to assessment years commencing on or after October 1, 2024</i>	12-81(83)
Sec. 14	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	New section
Sec. 15	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 16	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 17	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 18	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 19	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 20	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 21	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	New section

PS *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 25 \$	FY 26 \$
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection	GF - Cost	7.5 million - 15 million	7.5 million - 15 million
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection	GF - Cost	Potential Significant	Potential Significant
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Appropriation	500,000	None
Higher Education Constituent Units	Tuition Funds - Revenue Loss	Potential Significant	Potential Significant
Higher Ed., Off.	GF - Cost	Significant	Significant
CHFA	CHFA - Potential Cost/Revenue Impact	See Below	See Below
Comptroller	GF - Cost	50,000	None
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Cost	At least 100,000	At least 100,000

Note: GF=General Fund; CHFA=Resources of CHFA

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 25 \$	FY 26 \$
Hartford; New Haven; Waterbury; Bridgeport; Stamford; Greenwich; Norwalk; Danbury; New Britain; West Hartford	Revenue Gain	See Below	See Below
Various Municipalities	Grand List Reduction	None	See Below
Various Municipalities	Potential Revenue Gain	See Below	See Below
Various Municipalities	Potential Savings	See Below	See Below

¹The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 41.25% of payroll in FY 25.

Various Municipalities	Potential Cost	See Below	See Below
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Explanation

The bill makes various changes regarding the recruitment and retention of law enforcement officers, resulting in the various impacts described below.

Section 1 requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to develop a state-wide campaign to promote the law enforcement profession. Section 21 appropriates \$500,000 in FY 25 to DESPP for this purpose.

Section 2 requires DESPP to employ a full-time cadet or explorer program coordinator, resulting in an estimated cost of \$116,000 annually beginning in FY 25. The starting salary of the program coordinator is approximately \$75,000, with associated fringe benefits of \$31,000. There is also an estimated cost of \$10,000 for other expenses, including educational supplies and promotional materials.

This section also requires DESPP to allocate \$5,000 to each municipal police department that operates or plans to operate a cadet or explorer program each year, resulting in a potential cost to the state of up to \$475,000² in FY 25 and FY 26. There is a corresponding potential revenue gain of \$5,000 to each municipal police department that operates or plans to operate a cadet or explorer program each year.

Section 3 requires DESPP to establish a grant program to reimburse municipal police departments for the cost of basic training for police officers, resulting in a cost to the state and savings to municipalities ranging from about \$5,000 to \$70,000 per officer.³ Costs will vary widely depending on which expenses the grant covers and how many officers attend basic training. For every 100 officers that attend basic training,

²As of October 2023, Connecticut has 95 municipal police departments.

³The cost of tuition and fees for a police officer to attend basic training may potentially be as low as \$5,000 per student, while including the cost of uniforms, equipment, and salary while attending training can result in a cost of up to \$70,000 per student.

the cost can range from \$500,000 to \$7 million each year.

Section 4 requires the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) to examine criminal justice courses offered by colleges and universities in the state, resulting in no fiscal impact to the state because POST has the expertise to meet the requirements of the section.

Section 5 prohibits POST from denying police officer certification and law enforcement units from denying someone employment as a police officer solely because they are a lawful permanent resident noncitizen, resulting in no fiscal impact to the state or municipalities.

Section 6 requires DESPP to provide a grant to each of the top ten most populous municipalities in the state to increase the salaries of police officers serving such municipalities, resulting in a cost to the state ranging from \$7.3 million to \$14.6 million in FY 25 and FY 26. It is estimated that each of these approximately 2440 officers⁴ will receive an additional \$3,000 to \$6,000 annually to make their salaries competitive with surrounding communities. The cost may be reduced if these grants are only applied to starting salaries. The following table shows the estimated revenue gain by municipality:

Municipality	Officers ⁴	Revenue Gain Estimate \$
Hartford	382	1,146,000 - 2,292,000
New Haven	352	1,056,000 - 2,112,000
Waterbury	293	879,000 - 1,758,000
Bridgeport	289	867,000 - 1,734,000
Stamford	273	819,000 - 1,638,000
Greenwich	182	546,000 - 1,092,000
Norwalk	179	537,000 - 1,074,000
Danbury	178	534,000 - 1,068,000
New Britain	162	486,000 - 972,000
West Hartford	150	450,000 - 900,000
Total:	2440	7,320,000 - 14,640,000

Section 7 requires DESPP and POST to jointly submit a report to the Public Safety and Security Committee with recommendations on giving bonuses to encourage people to begin and continue careers as police officers, resulting in no fiscal impact because the agencies have the

⁴From Office of Legislative Research Report 2023-R-0265.

expertise to meet the requirements of the section.

Section 8 requires the Board of Regents for Higher Education, UConn's Board of Trustees, and POST to jointly submit a report that includes a career pathway and schedule of credits to help police officers earn higher education degrees, resulting in no fiscal impact because the agencies have the expertise to meet the requirements of the section.

Sections 9-11 result in a potentially significant annual revenue loss beginning in FY 25 to the higher education constituent units, associated with waiving tuition for certain police officers and their dependents. The tuition waivers will be available to: (1) a police officer who has at least two years of service as an officer in Connecticut and (2) any dependent child of a police officer who has at least five years of service as an officer in the state.

There are an estimated 8,092 state and local police officers in Connecticut. It is unknown how many individuals will be eligible for the tuition waivers and take advantage of it, or which constituent unit they would choose to attend. The scope of the revenue loss will vary based on the number of waivers and the institution waiving tuition. For example, 500 additional tuition waivers at UConn for the undergraduate level results in a revenue loss of approximately \$8.5 million annually while 1,000 additional community college waivers results in a revenue loss of approximately \$4.6 million annually. To the extent that some of the waiver beneficiaries enrolling in Connecticut State Colleges and Universities institutions might not have otherwise attended, these institutions may experience higher fee and other revenue (e.g., room and board) due to the bill. The exact number of additional waivers that will occur because of the bill is unknown, but the revenue loss to the constituent units may be significant.

Examples of Tuition Waiver Value, FY 25			
# of Students	UConn	CSUs	CT State Community College
Per-Student Value of Undergraduate Tuition Waiver, FY 25	17,012	6,998	4,608
100	1,701,200	699,800	460,800
500	8,506,000	3,499,000	2,304,000
1,000	17,012,000	6,998,000	4,608,000

Section 12 results in a significant annual cost to the Office of Higher Education (OHE) beginning in FY 25 associated with a loan reimbursement program for individuals employed as police officers in Connecticut for at least ten years. Eligible participants may receive an annual grant for up to ten years. The grant may equal up to 10% of their loans and is capped at \$5,000 per year.

OHE does not currently have the funds available to operate this program. The scope of the costs is dependent upon the number of reimbursements awarded annually and the amount of gifts, grants, and donations received for the program (if any). OHE would require one full-time program administrator, resulting in annual salary expenses of approximately \$92,250 and corresponding fringe benefit costs of approximately \$38,053, beginning in FY 25. Additionally, OHE would require up to \$50,000 in FY 25, associated with software and information technology upgrades.

Section 13 exempts \$10,000 in property taxes on property belonging to or held in trust for a police officer who resides in a distressed municipality. This results in a grand list reduction to distressed municipalities beginning in FY 26. A grand list reduction results in a revenue loss given a constant mill rate, however it is likely that a municipality will adjust its mill rate to offset any predicted revenue loss.

According to a 2023 report, 16 of the distressed municipalities had

municipal police departments.⁵ If every one of these police officers received the full exemption, it would result in a cumulative grand list reduction of approximately \$18.9 million. There would be an additional grand list reduction for any state police that also qualified for the exemption.

Section 14 results in potential marketing costs and a minimal revenue impact for the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA), beginning in FY 25, to enhance its assistance to police officers who seek to purchase a home in the community where they serve.⁶ To the extent CHFA further reduces home mortgage interest rates for that group beyond the 0.125% discount already offered through its Police Homebuyer Program, CHFA would collect less revenue for each loan. However, such losses may be offset by increased interest income from additional loans to the extent lower interest rates increase demand for CHFA's mortgage products. Regardless, the revenue impact is anticipated to be minimal as the existing police officer program originated just four loans in the years 2017 to 2023. CHFA may incur marketing costs, from its own resources, to promote the program. The actual impact will depend on the way the authority decides to enhance its current assistance and on the number of police officers taking advantage of such assistance per year.

Section 15 will result in a cost of approximately \$50,000 to the Office of the State Comptroller in FY 25 in consulting fees to study retirement options and make police health care coverage recommendations.

Section 16 directs the Governor to enter negotiations to amend any

⁵ According to the Department of Economic and Community Development's 2023 distressed municipalities and Police Office Standards and Training Council data; (1) towns with a municipal police department consist of: Ansonia, Bridgeport, Derby, East Hartford, East Haven, Hartford, Meriden, New Britain, New London, Norwich, Plymouth, Putnam, Torrington, Waterbury, West Haven, and Winchester; and (2) towns without a municipal police department consist of: Chaplin, Griswold, Lisbon, Mansfield, Montville, Sprague, Sterling, Voluntown, and Windham.

⁶ CHFA is a quasi-public authority that issues its own federally tax-exempt and taxable mortgage revenue bonds. The authority primarily pays its operating expenses using funds derived from the excess of interest income from loans over bond interest expenses.

collective bargaining agreement with state police officers to establish conditions for retired officers to return to service, resulting in no fiscal impact to the state or municipalities.

Section 17 requires collective bargaining agreements between municipalities and municipal police officers to allow retired, POST-certified officers to return to part or full-time employment, while collecting a pension, resulting in a potential cost or potential savings to municipalities in FY 25, depending on the extent to which the addition of these officers defrays the current overtime costs of municipalities.

Section 18 creates a task force to study the volunteer police auxiliary force resulting in no fiscal impact to the state because the task force has the expertise to meet the requirements of the bill.

Section 19 requires DESPP to develop a pilot program to provide law enforcement units with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), resulting in a one-time cost in FY 25 that will vary widely depending on the scale of the program and number of participating law enforcement units. To administer the program, DESPP will need to hire one emergency management program specialist, resulting in a total cost of \$122,000 (\$83,000 salary, \$34,000 fringe benefits, \$5,000 other expenses).

UAVs used by law enforcement typically cost approximately \$10,000 each but may range in price from \$5,000 to over \$50,000. There are also additional training, software, and equipment expenses that are incidental to purchasing a UAV. The bill does not limit which law enforcement units are eligible to participate in this program, but should ten law enforcement units participate, it is estimated to cost the state at least \$500,000.

Section 20 requires DESPP to administer a police mental health pilot program, resulting in a potential one-time cost in FY 25. DESPP will need to hire consultants or durational staff to develop suitable programming as the agency lacks the required subject matter expertise. The total cost will vary widely based on the scale of the program, which

may be required to address the needs of over 1,500 officers.⁷ The bill requires this program be administered within available resources and does not specify a funding source.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the number of grants administered, tuition waivers granted, and property tax exemptions granted, as well as employee wage increases.

The impacts identified in sections 15 and 19-21 are one-time costs and have no out years effect.

Sources: Office of Legislative Research Report 2023-R-0265

⁷The bill limits which law enforcement units are eligible to those with over 300 officers, which currently include Hartford Police Department, New Haven Police Department, and the State Police.

OLR Bill Analysis**SB 421****AN ACT CONCERNING LAW ENFORCEMENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.**

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Directs the governor to enter negotiations to amend the state police officers collective bargaining agreement to set conditions for retired officers to return to service

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Generally, requires collective bargaining agreements between municipalities and municipal police officers to allow retired, POST-certified officers to return to part- or full-time employment

§ 18 — VOLUNTEER POLICE AUXILIARY TASK FORCE

Creates a nine-member task force to (1) study the volunteer police auxiliary force and (2) make recommendations for improving and maximizing the force

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Provides drones to law enforcement units in FY 25 through a DESPP pilot program

§ 20 — POLICE MENTAL HEALTH PILOT PROGRAM

Increases police officer mental health assistance for FY 25 through a DESPP pilot program, within available appropriations

BACKGROUND

§§ 1 & 21 — LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFESSION PROMOTION CAMPAIGN

Requires DESPP to develop a statewide campaign promoting the law enforcement profession and appropriates \$500,000 for this purpose

This bill requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) commissioner, by January 1, 2025, to develop a

statewide campaign to promote the law enforcement profession that uses a variety of media, including social media. In developing the campaign, the commissioner may consult with the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association and any other entities he deems appropriate.

The bill appropriates \$500,000 from the General Fund for FY 25 to DESPP for the campaign.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 2 — POLICE CADET/EXPLORER PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Requires DESPP to (1) employ a full-time program coordinator to oversee police cadet and explorer programs and (2) allocate \$5,000 each fiscal year to every municipal police department that operates or plans to operate these programs

The bill requires DESPP to employ a full-time program coordinator to coordinate and oversee police cadet and explorer programs, implement state standards and a best practices guide for them, and encourage creating and expanding the programs throughout the state.

Starting with FY 25, the department must annually allocate \$5,000 to each municipal police department that operates, or plans to operate, a cadet or explorer program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 3 — POLICE BASIC TRAINING REIMBURSEMENT GRANTS

Requires DESPP to reimburse municipal police departments for the cost of police officer basic training through an annual grant program

The bill requires DESPP to create a grant program for reimbursing municipal police departments for the cost of police officer basic training. The department must (1) set the grant application process and forms and (2) post a description of the program that includes the eligibility criteria and application process. The posting must be in a conspicuous place on DESPP's website by October 1, 2024. Grants must be provided annually starting FY 25.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 4 — STUDY ON SUBSTITUTING COLLEGE COURSES FOR POLICE BASIC TRAINING

Requires POST to study whether college-level criminal justice courses can be substituted for its police basic training courses

The bill requires the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) to examine the criminal justice courses offered by colleges and universities in Connecticut and determine (1) if the courses equal those required as part of a police officer's minimum basic law enforcement training at the Connecticut Police Academy and (2) under what conditions a police trainee would not need to complete an academy course because he or she had already completed an equivalent college-level course. By January 1, 2025, POST must submit a report of its examination and determination to the Public Safety and Security Committee.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 5 — LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENT NONCITIZENS AS POLICE OFFICERS

Prohibits denying someone certification or employment as a police officer only because he or she is a lawful permanent resident noncitizen

The bill prohibits POST from denying police officer certification and law enforcement units from denying someone employment as a police officer only because he or she is a lawful permanent resident noncitizen. (See BACKGROUND for the bill's definition of "law enforcement units" and "police officer.")

The bill also makes a technical change.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 6 — POLICE SALARY INCREASE GRANTS

Requires DESPP, starting FY 25, to provide annual grants to the top 10 most populous municipalities to increase their police officers' salaries

The bill requires DESPP to create a grant program for increasing police officer salaries in the top 10 most populous municipalities. Grants must be provided annually starting FY 25. The bill prohibits recipients from using the grant for any purpose other than increasing their police

officers' salaries.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 7 — RECOMMENDATIONS ON POLICE BONUSES

Requires DESPP and POST to create a report with recommendations on providing bonuses to new and existing police officers

By January 1, 2025, the bill requires DESPP and POST to jointly submit a report to the Public Safety and Security Committee with recommendations on providing bonuses to encourage individuals to begin and continue careers as police officers. Specifically, the report must include recommendations for a schedule of bonuses to be awarded to (1) new officers when they begin service and (2) existing officers based on years of service.

Under the bill, DESPP and POST may consult with municipal police chiefs and any other individuals or entities in developing their recommendations.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 8 — HIGHER EDUCATION DEGREES PATHWAY

Requires the Board of Regents, UConn Board of Trustees, and POST to take specific actions towards helping police officers earn higher education degrees

By January 1, 2025, the bill requires the Board of Regents for Higher Education, UConn's Board of Trustees, and POST to jointly submit a report to the Public Safety and Security Committee that includes a career pathway and schedule that they must develop. The pathway must help police officers earn higher education degrees and include a schedule of credits that officers may receive at UConn (and all its campuses) and the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities for the training they received in order to be certified, and maintain their certification, as police officers.

The boards and POST must promote this pathway to encourage police officers to earn higher education degrees, and their report must describe their plans for promoting it.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 9-11 — TUITION WAIVERS FOR POLICE OFFICERS AND DEPENDENT CHILDREN

Provides tuition waivers for the state's public colleges and universities to police officers employed for at least two years and any dependent child of an officer employed for at least five years

The bill requires UConn, the Connecticut State University System, and the regional community-technical colleges to waive tuition for (1) a police officer who has at least two years of service as an officer in Connecticut and (2) any dependent child of a police officer who has at least five years of service as an officer in the state. The waivers apply to tuition fees for any undergraduate or graduate degree programs as applicable.

Under existing law, the schools must waive tuition for certain other categories of students (e.g., surviving children of people who died while serving in active duty in the armed forces).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 12 — LOAN REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM FOR POLICE OFFICERS

Requires OHE to create an annual grant program to give up to \$5,000 a year, for up to 10 years, to police officers who have been employed for at least 10 years to reimburse their federal or state educational loans

The bill requires the Office of Higher Education (OHE), in collaboration with DESPP, to create a loan reimbursement program for individuals employed as police officers in Connecticut for at least 10 years and who otherwise satisfy OHE's eligibility criteria.

Under the program, eligible officers may receive an annual grant to help reimburse their federal or state educational loan payments for up to 10 years. The grant may be for up to 10% of their loans, but no more than \$5,000 in any year, and only to reimburse loan payments made while the person is employed as a police officer.

Under the bill, the OHE executive director sets the program application process. The office may accept gifts, grants, and donations

from any source, public or private, for the program. Grants must be awarded annually starting FY 25. The bill prohibits unexpended funds from lapsing at the end of a fiscal year and instead requires that they be available for the next fiscal year.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 13 — PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

Exempts \$10,000 in property taxes for police officers residing in distressed municipalities

The bill exempts \$10,000 in property taxes on property belonging to, or held in trust for, a police officer who resides in a Connecticut distressed municipality. (See BACKGROUND for the bill’s definition of “distressed municipality.”)

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2024, and applicable to assessment years starting on or after that date.

§ 14 — CHFA ASSISTANCE FOR HOME PURCHASES

Requires enhanced assistance by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority to police officers seeking to buy a house in the communities they serve

The bill requires the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority to enhance assistance available to police officers who seek to purchase a house as an officer’s principal residence in the community he or she serves. This assistance must prioritize first-time homebuyers and include mortgage or down payment assistance or any other appropriate housing subsidies. The terms of any mortgage assistance must allow the mortgagee to realize a reasonable portion of the equity gain when the mortgaged property is sold.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 15 — STUDIES ON DEFERRED RETIREMENT OPTION PLANS AND RETIREMENT MEDICAL BENEFITS

Requires the State Retirement Commission to study (1) deferred retirement option plans towards developing one for police officers and (2) existing retirement medical benefits provided to police officers and their spouses

The bill requires the State Retirement Commission to study:

1. deferred retirement option plans, and make recommendations for developing a state-administered plan open to any police officer in Connecticut; and
2. the types and levels of retirement medical benefits provided to police officers and their spouses in the state and make recommendations on providing the benefits.

As part of its studies, the commission may consult with DESPP, municipal police departments, and any other entities it deems appropriate. The commission must report its findings and recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2025.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 16 — STATE POLICE OFFICER RETIREES RETURNING TO SERVICE

Directs the governor to enter negotiations to amend the state police officers collective bargaining agreement to set conditions for retired officers to return to service

By October 1, 2024, the bill requires the governor to start negotiating with the state police officers union to seek amendments to their collective bargaining agreement that would set conditions under which a retired state police officer may return to service and (1) resume earning credit toward retirement benefits, in the same way as the retired officer earned credit before retirement, and (2) be eligible for earning his or her pre-retirement benefits.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 17 — MUNICIPAL POLICE OFFICER RETIREES RETURNING TO SERVICE

Generally, requires collective bargaining agreements between municipalities and municipal police officers to allow retired, POST-certified officers to return to part- or full-time employment

The bill requires each collective bargaining agreement entered into or amended on or after July 1, 2024, between a municipality and a union that represents the municipality's police officers to allow officers who

retire and remain POST-certified to return to part- or full-time employment as a police officer with the municipality while collecting his or her pension, to the maximum extent allowed under state and federal law.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 18 — VOLUNTEER POLICE AUXILIARY TASK FORCE

Creates a nine-member task force to (1) study the volunteer police auxiliary force and (2) make recommendations for improving and maximizing the force

The bill creates a nine-member task force to study the volunteer police auxiliary force and recommend ways to improve its organization and maximize the services that auxiliary state police and municipal police officers may provide.

The task force members must be appointed within 30 days after the bill passes. The members and their appointees are as follows:

1. two appointments by the governor;
2. one appointment each by the top six legislative leaders; and
3. the DESPP commissioner, or his designee.

The bill allows legislative appointees to be General Assembly members. The House speaker and Senate president pro tempore must select the task force's chairpersons from the members. The chairpersons must schedule the first task force meeting, to be held within 60 days after the bill passes, and the Public Safety and Security Committee administrative staff must serve as the task force's administrative staff.

The bill requires the task force to report its findings and recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2025. The task force terminates on that date or when it submits the report, whichever is later.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 19 — DRONE PILOT PROGRAM

Provides drones to law enforcement units in FY 25 through a DESPP pilot program

For FY 25, the bill requires DESPP to develop a pilot program to give law enforcement units unmanned aerial vehicles (i.e., drones) to respond to service requests, assist units in assessing the dangers and needs at the scene of a request before a police officer arrives, and enhance police officer safety and the services that units provide to the public.

By October 1, 2024, the department must (1) develop the program's eligibility criteria, application forms, and deadlines; (2) post a description of the program on DESPP's website that includes the criteria, forms, and deadlines; and (3) notify units about the opportunity to apply for the program. In identifying units for participation, DESPP must give priority to those that would most benefit from the program, including those with reduced staffing levels.

By January 1, 2026, each participating unit must submit a report to DESPP describing the unit's use of its drones, their impact on its ability to provide services to the public, and any recommendations for the continuation or improvement of the pilot program.

DESPP must also report, by July 1, 2026, to the Public Safety and Security Committee on the program. The report must include (1) information on the units that applied, which ones were chosen to participate, and the reasons for choosing them; (2) a summary of the reports submitted by participating units; (3) an analysis of the pilot program's results; and (4) recommendations on the continuation or expansion of the pilot, funding needs, and any necessary legislation.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 20 — POLICE MENTAL HEALTH PILOT PROGRAM

Increases police officer mental health assistance for FY 25 through a DESPP pilot program, within available appropriations

For FY 25, the bill requires DESPP to administer, within available appropriations, a pilot program to enhance programs and initiatives addressing the mental health needs of police officers at one or more law

enforcement units with more than 300 officers.

The program may include the development or enhancement of peer-to-peer support programs, programs that train officers to help themselves and fellow officers deal with mental health issues associated with their jobs, programs that employ a psychologist or other mental health professionals within the unit to help officers with their mental health needs, employee assistance programs, and any other programs and resources that may address officers' mental health needs.

By October 1, 2024, the department must (1) develop the program's eligibility criteria, application forms, and deadlines; (2) post a description of the program on DESPP's website that includes the criteria, forms, and deadlines; and (3) notify units with more than 300 officers about the opportunity to apply for the program.

By January 1, 2026, each participating unit must submit a report to DESPP describing the programs, services, and resources it provided through the pilot program, their impact on the mental health of its officers, and recommendations for the continuation or improvement of the programs, services, and resources.

DESPP must also report, by July 1, 2026, to the Public Safety and Security Committee on the program. The report must include (1) information on the number of units that applied and which ones were chosen to participate; (2) an analysis of the programs, services, and resources provided by units and their effectiveness in addressing officers' mental health needs; (3) a list of programs, services, and resources identified as best practices that could be implemented by units across the state to address the mental health needs of officers; and (4) recommendations on the pilot program, funding for specific programs, services, and resources to address the mental health needs of police officers, and any necessary legislation.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

BACKGROUND

Police Officer and Law Enforcement Unit Definitions

By law and under sections 5, 7-13, 15 and 19-20 of the bill, “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)). 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)).

Distressed Municipality

The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) annually ranks municipalities based on their relative economic and fiscal distress and designates the top 25 as “distressed municipalities” (CGS § 32-9p(b)). Most recently, in 2023, DECD designated the following municipalities as distressed: Ansonia, Bridgeport, Chaplin, Derby, East Hartford, East Haven, Griswold, Hartford, Lisbon, Mansfield, Meriden, Montville, New Britain, New London, Norwich, Plymouth, Putnam, Sprague, Sterling, Torrington, Voluntown, Waterbury, West Haven, Winchester, and Windham.

Related Bills

SB 231 (File 138), favorably reported by the Public Safety and Security Committee, requires DESPP to administer a grant program for law enforcement units and municipal and volunteer fire departments to buy drones. The department must do this within available appropriations, starting in FY 25 and each fiscal year after.

sSB 3, § 4, favorably reported by the General Law Committee, among other things, prohibits public entities (including police and fire departments) from operating drones assembled or manufactured by certain foreign entities (e.g., China and Russia) starting October 1, 2025.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 25 Nay 0 (03/19/2024)