

**Government Administration and Elections Committee**  
**JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT**

**Bill No.:** HB-5447

AN ACT EXEMPTING THE RESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES OF CERTAIN  
EMPLOYEES FROM DISCLOSURE UNDER THE FREEDOM OF

**Title:** INFORMATION ACT.

**Vote Date:** 3/22/2024

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/13/2024

**File No.:**

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**SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Government Administration and Elections Committee

**REASONS FOR BILL:**

The legislation aims to exempt the residential addresses of employees of the Office of the Attorney General from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, largely in response to concerns regarding the personal safety of such employees.

**RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

William Tong, Attorney General:

Offers support. Residential addresses of judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and employees of the Departments of Children and Families and Corrections are already protected from public disclosure. The same protection should be extended to employees of the Office of the Attorney General. Under the FOIA, an individual may seek the home address for an employee regardless of the circumstances. Each year, employees receive threats and intimidation. There is no reason why the State of Connecticut should hand over an employee's address while knowing it could be used for harassment, threats, intimidation, or violence.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

Joan Andrews, ACAAG President, Supports:

Assistant Attorney Generals have been subject to the same threats, harassment, stalking, death threats, etc. as judges and prosecutors. While the residential addresses of judges and

prosecutors are exempt from disclosure under Connecticut General Statutes, the Assistant Attorney Generals who may represent state agencies, public officials, and state employees, are not. The State of Connecticut should not facilitate providing information to people who may cause harm.

Mary Frances Goldman, Secretary, Attorney General/Public Safety  
Believes home addresses of those in the Office of the Attorney General should not be publicized due to the numerous threats received from past inmates, as it is a valid safety concern.

Ed Hawthorne, CT AFL-CIO President:

Under the Freedom of Information Act, an individual may seek the home address for most public employees, which means that any disgruntled individual could obtain information and potentially threaten the safety of an employee or their family. Employees of the Attorney General's office are often subject to threats and intimidation. This legislation would protect the privacy of these employees while preserving the intent of the FOIA, as the information being exempted is not necessary for matters of government transparency.

John Langmaid, Assistant Attorney General:

Connecticut FOI law requires public agencies to provide residential addresses to anybody, with zero burden on the requester. It requires public employees to live with the knowledge that aggrieved individuals may do them, and their families, harm. Unless FOI law can impose reasonable articulable public purpose requirements on requesters, the law should recognize there is no presumptive public interest in residential addresses of public employees.

Melissa Miller, Paralegal Specialist, AAG/Public Safety:

Believes that a work address is sufficient and home address should be private. Has been personally threatened by a former inmate and had personal safety concerns. Part of keeping the workforce safe on the front lines is making sure individuals are safe at home.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

Michele Jacklin, CT Council on FOI, Opposes:

Offers opposition, stating that the legislation erodes FOIA and creates a false sense of security. Posits that with regards to the residential addresses of public employees, FOIA ensures accountability because an address is an important piece of information in accomplishing that goal. A residential address is a key piece of information that helps the public know if the arrested party is, in fact, the employee in question or someone else with the same name.

Colleen Murphy, FOI Commission Executive Director:

The FOI Commission urges rejection of the bill. Section 1-217 of the General Statutes permitted public agencies not to disclose home addresses of certain public officials directly involved in the criminal justice system but is limited in scope and should not be viewed as a cure for safety and privacy concerns. Providing special protections to certain classes of employees and not others may give rise to constitutional questions.

Jess Zaccagnino, ACLU-CT, Opposes:

Few things ensure that a government effectively serves its people as much as transparency. ACLU-CT believes in making and keeping governmental records open and available to all people in the widest possible range of circumstances, and FOIA is a key tool.

**Reported by: Lindsay de Brito**

**Date: 4/4/24**