
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 5283 (as amended by House "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING THE CLASSIFICATION OF PAROLE OFFICERS AS PEACE OFFICERS.

SUMMARY

This bill expands the definition of “peace officer” to include parole officers when performing their duties. Parole officers are Department of Correction (DOC) employees who supervise inmates in the community after being released from prison on parole or another prison release program.

Under current law, parole officers have certain, but not all, powers and protections of peace officers. For example, parole officers, in certain situations, may use deadly or physical force in making arrests or preventing escape, and if someone were to assault them, the perpetrator would be subject to enhanced penalties for assaulting certain public safety personnel (CGS §§ 53a-22 & -167c).

By designating them as peace officers, the bill specifically allows parole officers, when performing their duties, to do the following, among other things:

1. make arrests in their jurisdiction without a warrant (a) of a person apprehended while committing an offense or (b) on the speedy information of others (CGS § 54-1f);
2. use a hand-held cellphone while driving and performing official duties within the scope of their employment (CGS § 14-296aa);
3. be considered peace officers under the state’s Blue Alert system, which can be used to apprehend anyone suspected of killing or seriously injuring a peace officer or to locate a missing officer (CGS § 29-1k);

4. obtain a motor vehicle's event data recorder under a search warrant (CGS § 14-164aa); and
5. be considered peace officers subjected to a substantial risk of bodily injury at the scene of 1st degree arson (CGS § 53a-111).

*House Amendment "A" limits the underlying bill's designation of parole officers as peace officers to when the parole officers are doing their duties.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2024

BACKGROUND

Peace Officers

By law, the following individuals are designated peace officers: state and local police, Division of Criminal Justice inspectors, state marshals exercising statutory powers, judicial marshals performing their duties, conservation or special conservation officers, constables who perform criminal law enforcement duties, appointed special policemen, adult probation officers, DOC officials authorized to make arrests in a correctional institution or facility, investigators in the State Treasurer's Office, certified Department of Motor Vehicles inspectors, U.S. marshals and deputy marshals, U.S. special agents authorized to enforce federal food and drug laws, and certified police officers of a law enforcement unit created and governed under a state-tribal memorandum (CGS § 53a-3(9)).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 23 Nay 0 (03/12/2024)