

# Labor and Public Employees Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No:** HB-5274 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

**Title:** AN ACT CONCERNING THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION SYSTEM.

**Vote Date:** 3/12/2026

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 2/24/2026

**File No.:**

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor & Public Employees Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

The reason for this bill is to ensure that state marshals receive appropriate workers' compensation coverage, as their line of work is particularly dangerous, and several have been badly injured on the job in recent years.

### SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

The substitute language for this bill, LCO 3174, updated the language in the state workers' compensation statutes to accurately reflect the current job title for state marshals, as opposed to the antiquated term of "deputy sheriff", thus ensuring that state marshals are eligible workers' compensation if injured while discharging their duties on behalf of the state. This coverage would not extend to private jobs.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None provided.

### NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

**Marshal Brian Mezick, President, State Marshal Association of Connecticut:** Mr. Mezick is in support of the bill because public officers have a dangerous and unpredictable line of work. He describes an incident where a state marshal was shot in the arm, he was not covered by workers' compensation which caused severe impacts on his family and finances. He adds another incident in which a state marshal went to carry out an eviction, this officer was entering into an unknown environment, it escalated and resulted in a fatal police

shootout with another occupant. Mr. Mezick would also like the committee to consider correcting an outdated reference by replacing “deputy sheriff” with “state marshal,” to clarify that marshals injured or killed while performing duties are properly covered. He respectfully encourages the committee to modernize this statute to reflect coverage the legislature created.

**Kim Novak, First Responder, and Anonymous testifier:** Ms. Novak expresses support of the bill. She and other trauma therapists have collaborated on a list of changes they would like to see implemented. Workers compensation form 30C and First Report forms should change the listing of 'PTSD' to 'Traumatic Critical. The Workers Compensation Commission should also remove PTSD from public viewing on online lookup. This being available is a violation of the privacy of the first responder. First responders should be exempt from PTSI claims on FOIA requests. Emergency hearing through the Workers Compensation Commission should be held within 10-14 days of the request. All licensed psychiatrist or psychologist should be allowed to treat first responders and not have to take the lengthy specialized trauma training. Prior therapy notes should not have to be released to insurers as a condition to authorizing treatment. She also stated automatic denial of claims and establishing a stricter timeframe workers compensation must pay providers for. Establishing a fund to help first responders financially who are awaiting the authorization process would help and including Department of Corrections Directive 6.6 as a qualifying event for corrections officers. She also asked why do AAG's attend hearings involving corrections officers' claims? Ms. Novak calls for WC insurers to stop collecting the SSN's of first responders and for an investigation to be had financial incentives for denials and delays. Having workers compensation adjusters who handle PTSD claims receive training on first responder culture and PTSD among other things would be helpful.

**Anonymous, Anonymous:** They are in support of the bill. In their experience that worker's compensation will handle claims regarding PTSD, and PTSI in ways that conflict with current legislation. They list several examples including demanding all previous therapy notes for the affected person, immediately deny claims, decline clinical findings by providers first responders were encouraged to see by support programs. They add that they have been told that first responders who are suffering have been denied but witnesses to an event have been granted a claim. They believe this has been a tactic used by the WC to discourage filing a claim.

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

**Eric George, President of the Insurance Association of Connecticut; Kristina Baldwin, Vice President of the American Property and Casualty Insurance Association; Sean McLaughlin, Regional Vice President, State Affairs Northeast of the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies:** Mr. George, Ms. Baldwin, and Mr. McLaughlin do not testify in support of the bill because of they worry the study the bills' purpose will undermine the current functioning of the workers' compensation system. They state that Connecticut workers' compensation system is one of the best functioning in the country, because of its efforts employers and insurers have benefited. They add that there is a noticeable decrease in filling rates of workers' compensation which shows improvements of workplace safety. They go on to list the reasons why ensuring stability and predictability are important to employers and insurers, lower premium costs. Improved worker safety and

reduced administrative uncertainty. They note that any changes to the 1990s reforms should be evaluated with the idea of system stability and long-term affordability. They close with asking the committee to consider maintain the balance between benefits for workers and costs for employers, avoid making changes that will hurt progress previously made to reduce costs while creating improvements for workers, and ensure that any modifications do not disrupt any current trends.

**Reported by: Lawrence Sanchez & Olivia Buczak    Date: 3/24/2026**