



# 2023 Acts Affecting Criminal Justice and Public Safety

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## Notice to Readers

This report provides summaries of new laws (public acts and special acts) significantly affecting crime and public safety enacted during the 2023 regular session. OLR's other Acts Affecting reports, including Acts Affecting First Responders, are, or will soon be, available on OLR's website: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/actsaffecting.asp>.

Each summary indicates the public act (PA) or special act (SA) number. Not all provisions of the acts are included. The report does not include bonding provisions. The report does not include vetoed acts unless the veto was overridden. Complete summaries of public acts are, or will soon be, available on OLR's website: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/olrpasums.asp>.

Readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the Connecticut State Library, House Clerk's Office, or General Assembly's website: <http://www.cga.ct.gov>.

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## Table on Penalties

The law authorizes courts to impose imprisonment, fines, or both when sentencing a convicted criminal. Table 1 displays the range of prison terms and fines that judges may impose for each classification of crime. Some crimes have a mandatory minimum sentence not specified in the table. Also, repeated or persistent offenders may face higher sentences than specified here.

**Table 1: Crime Classifications and their Penalties**

Felony or Misdemeanor	Prison Term	Fine
Class A felony—murder with special circumstances	Life without the possibility of release	Up to \$20,000
Class A felony—murder	25 to 60 years	Up to \$20,000
Class A felony—aggravated sexual assault of a minor	25 to 50 years	Up to \$20,000
Class A felony	10 to 25 years	Up to \$20,000
Class B felony—1st degree manslaughter with a firearm	5 to 40 years	Up to \$15,000
Class B felony	1 to 20 years	Up to \$15,000
Class C felony	1 to 10 years	Up to \$10,000
Class D felony	Up to 5 years	Up to \$5,000
Class E felony	Up to 3 years	Up to \$3,500
Class A misdemeanor	Up to 364 days*	Up to \$2,000
Class B misdemeanor	Up to 6 months	Up to \$1,000
Class C misdemeanor	Up to 3 months	Up to \$500
Class D misdemeanor	Up to 30 days	Up to \$250

\*Effective October 1, 2021, [CGS § 53a-36a](#) reduced the maximum sentence for misdemeanors from one year to 364 days.

## **Crimes and Penalties**

### ***Animal Cruelty Penalty***

Existing law prohibits many abusive behaviors toward animals and has different penalties based on the severity of abuse and the abuser's intent. For any animal cruelty crime, new legislation requires the court to also issue an order prohibiting the offender from (1) harboring, owning, possessing, residing with, adopting, or serving as a foster placement for any animal and (2) being employed by, or volunteering for, any entity in any position that involves care for, or regular contact with, any animal. The order must be for the five-year period beginning on the person's conviction date or release date from imprisonment for the conviction, whichever occurs later ([PA 23-149](#), §§ 2, 7 & 8, effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Assault of Judicial Branch Employees***

Under existing law, the assault penalty is enhanced to a class C felony (see Table on Penalties) if it is committed against a judicial branch employee assigned to provide pretrial secure detention and programming services to juveniles accused of committing a delinquent act. This session the legislature passed a law extending this enhanced penalty to assaults of a judicial branch employee occurring during a post-conviction assignment ([PA 23-46](#), § 9, effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Driver's License-, Registration-, and License Plate-Related Crimes and Violations***

A new law changes the penalties for the unlawful use or transfer or counterfeiting of license plates, registrations, and driver's licenses. Among other things, it increases the maximum penalty for selling a state-issued driver's license to a class D misdemeanor (see Table on Penalties); lowers to an infraction the penalties for using a registration or driver's license issued to someone else or using a registration on a vehicle other than the one for which it was issued; and classifies other violations as either infractions or class D misdemeanors ([PA 23-40](#), §§ 16-18 & 20-22, effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Harmful Communication With a Minor***

A new law establishes a new crime, harmful communication with a minor, as a class A misdemeanor (see Table on Penalties). Anyone who is age 25 or older is guilty of this crime if the person uses an interactive computer service or text message to knowingly persuade, induce, entice, or coerce a "minor" (i.e., anyone under age 18 or whom the actor reasonably believes to be under age 18) to do certain actions (e.g., inappropriate photograph sharing or recording or certain unsuitable communications) ([PA 23-123](#), effective October 1, 2023).



## ***Housing Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation***

A new legislation subjects the rental of certain owner-occupied dwelling units to a state law that prohibits housing discrimination specifically due to a person's sexual orientation or civil union status. Under prior law, these antidiscrimination provisions did not apply to the rental of (1) rooms in a dwelling the owner lives in or (2) units in a dwelling containing up to four units, one of which the owner occupies. The act eliminates this exemption, and in doing so subjects violators to a class D misdemeanor (see Table on Penalties) ([PA 23-207](#), § 26, effective October 1, 2023).

## ***Littering Fine Increase***

State law prohibits littering on public land or property, in state waters, or on private property not owned by the litterer. Littering on public land was previously subject to a fine of up to \$199, plus a 50% surcharge. A new law raises the maximum fine to \$500, excluding the surcharge ([PA 23-33](#), § 6, effective October 1, 2023).

## ***Livestock Statute and Regulation Violations***

A new law changes the general penalty for (1) violating the livestock statutes and related regulations or (2) obstructing the agriculture commissioner or his agents when performing their official duties. Under the new law, a violator is subject to a \$250 fine for a first violation and a class D misdemeanor (see Table on Penalties) for a second (and, presumably, each subsequent) violation. Under prior law, the general penalty for all violations was a class D misdemeanor ([PA 23-187](#), § 25, effective upon passage).

## ***Recurring Motor Vehicle License Violations***

A new law allows the court, in the absence of any court-determined mitigating circumstances, to impose a 90-day minimum prison sentence for (1) motor vehicle operator license violations and (2) operating a motor vehicle without a valid license or registration ([PA 23-47](#), §§ 5 & 6, effective October 1, 2023).

## ***Risk of Injury to a Child***

A new law limits the circumstances under which a parent or guardian may be found guilty a class A misdemeanor (see Table on Penalties) for leaving a minor unattended in a public place or motor vehicle. Under the new law, when determining whether someone committed this violation, the court must consider whether the person exercised judgment that a reasonable person would use to determine if the child was of sufficient age, maturity, and physical and mental ability to be unsupervised under the circumstances. Additionally, the new law prohibits a finding of substantial risk based solely on the person allowing a child who is of sufficient age, maturity, physical

condition, and mental ability to participate in independent activities (e.g., traveling to and from school and unsupervised outdoor play), if a reasonable person would not believe participating creates an obvious danger to the child’s safety ([PA 23-176](#), effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Sexual Assault of an Animal***

This session, the legislature established a new crime, “sexual assault of an animal.” In doing so, it makes it a class A misdemeanor (see Table on Penalties) for anyone to knowingly, and for the purpose of the person’s or another person’s sexual gratification, (1) engage in sexual contact with an animal, or force another person to do so, or (2) create or distribute pornographic images of prohibited sexual contact with an animal. Under prior law, a person who engaged in sexual contact with an animal was guilty of 4th degree sexual assault, which is also a class A misdemeanor. The new law replaces this crime with the new one it creates ([PA 23-149](#), §§ 1-3, effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Sexual Assault in the 4th Degree***

A new law specifies that the crime of 4th degree sexual assault for sexual contact with a dead body pertains to a human body. It also expands the definition of “sexual contact” in this context to include any contact with the intimate parts of a dead human body or any contact of the actor’s intimate parts with a dead human body, for the actor’s sexual gratification ([PA 23-47](#), §§ 9 & 10, effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Simple Trespass on Watershed Land***

The legislature established a new violation specifically for simple trespass of public water supply watershed land that is owned, controlled, or managed by a water company. This violation is separate from the existing simple trespassing violation. Under the new law, a person is guilty of this violation when he or she knowingly enters or remains on the land without lawful authority or the water company’s consent. Violators commit an infraction and are subject to a \$90 fine ([PA 23-40](#), § 31, effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Virtual Currency Regulation***

A new law allows the banking commissioner to adopt regulations, forms, and orders governing the business use of “digital assets” (e.g., virtual currencies and stablecoins) by state-chartered banks and credit unions, generally. The act also (1) explicitly subjects virtual currency kiosk owners and operators to licensing and other existing requirements under the state’s Money Transmission Act and (2) imposes several disclosure and receipt requirements on them. Additionally, it caps daily transaction limits at \$2,500 for each virtual currency kiosk customer and allows the commissioner

to establish a schedule of maximum kiosk fees. By law, engaging in a money transmission business without a license is a Class D felony (see Table on Penalties) ([PA 23-82](#), effective upon passage, except that the virtual currency kiosk provisions take effect October 1, 2023).

## **Criminal and Civil Procedure**

### ***Apprentice Prosecutors***

A new law allows the Criminal Justice Commission, within available appropriations, to interview and appoint as an “apprentice prosecutor” any student from an accredited law school who is within five months of graduation and is a certified legal intern. A student who the commission appoints as an apprentice prosecutor advances to the position of deputy assistant state’s attorney once admitted to the Connecticut bar within one year after graduating law school ([PA 23-55](#), effective upon passage).

### ***CHRO Referral of Sexual Assault Cases to Chief State’s Attorney’s Office***

A new law specifically allows the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO), if it has reason to believe that a party to a discriminatory practice case has engaged or is engaging in conduct that is a criminal sex offense, to refer the matter to the chief state’s attorney’s office. If it receives this referral, the office must investigate the matter as it deems necessary ([PA 23-205](#), §§ 192 & 193, effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Counsel Assigned or Appointed to Represent Children***

In Superior Court child abuse or neglect cases, existing law requires the chief public defender’s office to assign counsel to represent the child and act solely as the child’s attorney. This year, the legislature expanded this law by requiring the child’s appointed or assigned counsel to continue representing the child for the duration of the court proceedings ([PA 23-101](#), § 18, effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Criminal Records Erasure***

Existing law provides a process, not yet fully operational, to erase records of most misdemeanor convictions and certain felony convictions after a specified period following the person’s most recent conviction. This session, the legislature made various changes in this law, such as specifying that (1) for purposes of erasure eligibility for a particular offense, its classification or maximum sentence is determined based on the law in effect when the offense was committed and (2) motor vehicle violations are generally covered by the law in the same way as misdemeanors or felonies. Starting in 2024, the new law also allows people who believe that their records should have been

automatically erased by law under these provisions to seek a determination on the matter from the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) following a hearing.

The act makes other changes affecting criminal record erasure under these procedures and in some other circumstances (e.g., following a dismissal of charges). For example, it does the following:

1. makes it an unfair and deceptive trade practice for data reporting companies and others to fail to remove erased records from their disclosures under specified circumstances; and
2. under certain conditions, establishes liability protections for actions taken based on erased records ([PA 23-134](#), as amended by [PA 23-169](#), § 2, and [PA 23-204](#), § 119, most provisions effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Public Defender Services***

A new law requires the Public Defender Services Commission to annually establish guidelines that public defenders must use when determining whether a person (1) has the financial ability to secure competent legal representation and meet other necessary related expenses or (2) qualifies for representation as an indigent defendant. Under the new law, the guidelines may extend eligibility to a person with an income that is 250% or less of the federal poverty level (currently at or below \$36,450 for an individual) when calculated on the guidelines ([PA 23-204](#), § 201, effective July 1, 2025).

## **Department of Correction (DOC)**

### ***Alcohol Use Disorder Treatment and Mental Illness Pilot Programs***

A new law requires DOC to (1) operate two pilot programs for people in its custody: one for people with alcohol use disorder and one for people with mental illness; (2) spend at least \$500,000 on each pilot program to treat participants with certain medications; and (3) report to the legislature on the programs ([PA 23-204](#), §§ 125 & 126, effective July 1, 2024).

### ***Body Scanning Machines***

The legislature this session required the DOC commissioner, by January 1, 2024, to issue a request for proposals to procure body scanning machines that allow correctional facility staff to conduct full-body x-ray screenings of incarcerated individuals. These screenings are for (1) identifying contraband inside and outside of the body (e.g., weapons, cell phones, or drugs) and (2) reducing the number of strip searches that staff perform ([PA 23-12](#), § 3, effective upon passage).

## ***Commissary Implementation Plan***

A new law requires DOC, in consultation with the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee's (JJPOC's) incarceration subcommittee, to develop and submit a commissary implementation plan to JJPOC by July 1, 2023. The department must fully implement the plan by November 1, 2023, and immediately implement procedures for more equitable commissary options for certain incarcerated youth. The new law specifies what the commissary implementation plan must include, such as the following:

1. an integrated positive behavior motivation system to engage and reinforce positive youth behaviors and expectations that can be used to pay for commissary goods in place of money;
2. increased incentives to promote good health and recognize a diverse range of ethnic groups, races, sexes, and cultural backgrounds;
3. the identification of youth within the institution who do not have equitable access to the commissary and strategies to implement equitable access; and
4. the transition of saved commissary allocations, including how it can be transitioned and accessed when a youth is transferred to an adult facility ([PA 23-204](#), § 127, effective upon passage).

## ***Driver's Licenses or ID Cards for Incarcerated Individuals***

A new law requires the DOC and Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) commissioners to proactively ensure that eligible incarcerated individuals with sentences of at least one year have a state identity card or driver's license when they are released from a correctional facility. It also requires the DMV commissioner, by January 1, 2025, to conduct a feasibility study on expanding the allowable forms of ID an incarcerated individual may use to get an ID card or driver's license. The commissioner must implement any modifications he determines are feasible ([PA 23-88](#), effective April 1, 2024).

## ***Home Confinement for Certain Offenders***

A new law allows the DOC commissioner to release a person to home confinement after a conviction for avoiding, tampering with, or failing to install an ignition interlock device (i.e., a breath-testing device to detect alcohol that is connected to a motor vehicle's ignition system) ([PA 23-47](#), § 3, effective October 1, 2023).

## ***Inmate Compensation***

By law, the DOC commissioner must set a compensation schedule for the pay DOC inmates receive for services they perform on the state's behalf. A new law requires the schedule to set a pay range of at least \$5 per week, but no more than \$10 per week ([PA 23-204](#), § 153, effective October 1, 2023).

## ***Inmates with Gender Incongruence***

By law, DOC must follow certain requirements on the treatment and placement of inmates with a diagnosis of gender dysphoria and a gender identity that differs from their assigned sex at birth. For example, (1) correctional staff must address inmates according to their gender identity and (2) except in limited circumstances, DOC must place inmates with a documented gender identity change in an institution consistent with their gender identity. A new law extends these requirements to include inmates with a gender incongruence diagnosis (i.e., incongruence between someone's experienced gender and the assigned sex) ([PA 23-204](#), § 305, effective January 1, 2024).

## ***Prisoner or Inmate Name Changes***

The budget implementer act requires the DOC commissioner, to chief court administrator, and Board of Pardons and Paroles chairperson to collaborate to determine a method by which inmates or prisoners may change their names within DOC. The commissioner must then report to the Judiciary Committee on the determined method by July 1, 2024 ([PA 23-204](#), § 304, effective upon passage).

## ***Solid Waste Management***

A provision in a solid waste management omnibus act requires correctional facilities annually generating at least 26 tons of source-separated organic materials to either (1) have the materials separated from other solid waste and recycled at an authorized composting facility or (2) compost the materials on site. This requirement begins January 1, 2025, and the act also requires the facilities to report to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection on the amount of food scraps recycled and the recyclers and collectors they used ([PA 23-170](#), § 5, effective upon passage).

## **Departments, Commissions, Councils, and Offices**

### ***Catalytic Converters Regional Agreements***

A new law directs the DESPP and DMV commissioners to pursue, individually or jointly, agreements with other states to create a regional approach to addressing catalytic converter theft. Under the

act, the agreements may have provisions on information sharing, enforcement coordination, and alignment of laws on the sale of convertors and punishment for their theft ([SA 23-20](#), § 1, effective upon passage).

### ***Domestic Violence Criminal Justice Response and Enhancement Advisory Council***

A new law (1) changes the name of the “Family Violence Model Policy Governing Council” to the “Domestic Violence Criminal Justice Response and Enhancement Advisory Council” (“the council”); (2) increases its membership from 19 to 26 members; and (3) expands the scope of its purpose and responsibilities, including by incorporating those of the Domestic Violence Offender Program Standards Advisory Council, which the new law repeals. The new law requires the council to collect and analyze any additional data related to domestic violence and the criminal justice response available from the judicial branch court operations, state’s attorneys, public defenders, domestic violence advocates, or domestic violence offender programs.

Additionally, the new law requires the council to evaluate and advise on specific domestic violence-related issues, such as the (1) domestic violence offender program; (2) pretrial family violence education program; and (3) use of electronic monitoring ([PA 23-136](#), §§ 1-3 & 5, effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Judicial Review Council Report***

By law, the Judicial Review Council investigates and resolves complaints or internal referrals about state judges, family support magistrates, and administrative law judges regarding misconduct, disability, or substance abuse.

Under existing law, if the council issues an admonishment, it must notify the legislature’s Judiciary Committee and provide the committee with the substance of the admonishment, including copies of the complaint file. A new law requires the council to also notify the chief court administrator and provide the same materials to him ([PA 23-46](#), § 21, effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC)***

A new law expands the JJPOC membership by adding five new members: two children, youths, or young adults under age 26 with lived experience in the juvenile justice system; a community member; and two tribal members, one each from the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe and Mohegan Tribe of Indians of Connecticut.

The new law also (1) specifically names JJPOC’s existing subcommittee the “education” subcommittee; (2) establishes new “incarceration” and “enterprise” subcommittees; and (3) requires the subcommittees to help specified state agencies develop a reentry success plan and fulfill other tasks as the committee directs ([PA 23-188](#), § 2, effective upon passage).

### ***Office of the Claims Commissioner***

This year the General Assembly enacted numerous changes in the laws governing the Office of the Claims Commissioner. Among other things, these include (1) adding a deputy claims commissioner position and ensuring that the office has temporary deputies and administrative staff, within available appropriations; (2) extending duties and powers assigned to the claims commissioner under existing law and magistrates under prior law to the deputy commissioner and temporary deputies; (3) requiring that claims be considered as soon as practicable after they are filed; and (4) removing the \$50,000 threshold requirement for a claimant to request legislative review of a decision by the office ordering the denial, dismissal, or immediate payment of certain claims ([PA 23-131](#), effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Prosecutorial Data and Testimony***

By law, the Division of Criminal Justice, in consultation with state government branches, departments, and boards, must collect disaggregated, case-level data by docket number on adult defendants and annually give it to the Office of Policy and Management. A new law requires the Criminal Justice Commission, a constitutionally-established body that appoints state’s attorneys for each judicial district, to require each state’s attorney to appear before it annually to testify and comment on the data collected ([PA 23-26](#), effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Trafficking in Persons Council***

A new law increases the Trafficking in Persons Council’s membership from 35 to 36 by adding the Department of Developmental Services commissioner, or the commissioner’s designee. By law, among other things, the council coordinates human trafficking data collection and consults with government and non-government organizations to develop recommendations to strengthen state and local efforts to prevent trafficking, protect and assist victims, and prosecute traffickers ([PA 23-20](#), § 2, effective October 1, 2023).

## **Domestic Violence**

### ***Court-Ordered Alimony Payments by Injured Spouse***

A new law prohibits the court from ordering an injured spouse (i.e., a victim of certain crimes committed by the other spouse) to pay the following after the marriage date: (1) temporary or



permanent alimony payments to the convicted spouse and (2) the convicted spouse's attorney's fees. This prohibition applies to the following crimes: (1) criminal attempt or conspiracy to commit murder, murder with special circumstances, felony murder, or arson murder of the other spouse; (2) 1st degree sexual assault and 1st degree aggravated sexual assault of the other spouse; (3) a class A or B felony offense of 2nd degree sexual assault or 3rd degree sexual assault with a firearm of the other spouse; (4) a class A or B felony family violence crime; or (5) any crime in another state, with essential elements that are substantially the same as the crimes listed above ([PA 23-106](#), § 2, effective October 1, 2023).

Another new law requires the court, upon the motion of an injured spouse, to terminate any orders it entered requiring the injured spouse to make alimony payments if the recipient spouse is subsequently convicted of any of the above crimes against the injured spouse ([PA 23-136](#), § 4, effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Electronic Monitoring***

A new law expands the Judicial Department's electronic monitoring pilot program for family violence offenders by removing its pilot status and requiring the department to establish the program in each judicial district by October 1, 2025. (The pilot program has operated in the Bridgeport, Danielson, and Hartford judicial districts since 2010.) By law, the court can order electronic monitoring for anyone charged with violating a restraining or protective order and who has been determined to be a high-risk offender by the family violence intervention unit, if the court finds it necessary to protect the victim. The new law also eliminates a requirement that the person who is subject to the monitoring pay its cost, subject to the chief court administrator's guidelines ([PA 23-106](#), § 1, effective July 1, 2023).

## **Firearms**

### ***Commission on Community Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention***

A new law specifically allows the Commission on Community Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention to establish a subcommission, advisory group, or other entity to evaluate the (1) challenges associated with providing home health care to victims of gun violence and (2) ways to unite community service providers with adults and juveniles needing supports and services to address gun violence trauma ([PA 23-97](#), § 24, effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Fingerprinting for Handgun Permits***

A new law repeals a provision allowing a handgun permit issuing authority to forgo taking an applicant's fingerprints if (1) it determines that the applicant's fingerprints were already taken and

(2) the applicant presents identification that it determines is valid ([PA 23-130](#), § 3, effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Firearm Credentials and Security Officer License Expiration Notices by Email***

Under a new law, anyone holding a handgun permit or eligibility certificate, long gun eligibility certificate, or security officer license may now opt to receive the expiration notices for these credentials by first class mail or email. The new law also authorizes DESPP to send these notices and related renewal forms by email, rather than only by first class mail as prior law allowed ([PA 23-73](#), effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Firearm Permits Issued by Tribal Police Departments***

During the 2022 session, the General Assembly allowed the Mohegan and Mashantucket Pequot police chiefs to issue temporary state handgun permits under the statutory permit approval process to applicants who are bona fide permanent residents of the tribal reservations. A new law makes numerous conforming changes throughout the firearm permitting statutes to extend the statutory permit approval process to these police chiefs ([PA 23-130](#), effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Firearm Permitting Functions Performed by Municipal CEOs***

Under a 2022 act, the chief executive officer (CEO) of any municipality (i.e., town, city, consolidated town and city, borough, or consolidated town and borough) without a police chief may perform various firearms permitting and administrative functions or designate the resident state trooper or relevant state police officer to do so. (Under prior law, only a town's first selectman or borough's warden were authorized to perform these functions.) A new law defines a municipal CEO for these purposes as the (1) first selectman; (2) chief administrative officer appointed by the board of selectmen or mayor; (3) mayor; (4) borough warden; or (5) appointed town, city, or borough manager ([PA 23-130](#), § 1 & 2, effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Firearm Possession or Credentials Following Commitment Under a Physician's Emergency Certificate***

A new law bars people from obtaining a handgun carry permit, handgun eligibility certificate, or long gun eligibility certificate if, on or after October 1, 2023, they were committed to a psychiatric hospital under a physician's emergency certificate (PEC) within the prior six months for psychiatric treatment and not just for alcohol or drug abuse. It also extends existing criminal penalties for unlawful possession of handguns or other firearms, electronic defense weapons, or ammunition to people possessing these items if they were committed to a hospital within the prior six months

under a PEC as specified above. The act makes conforming changes related to psychiatric commitments under PECs and the responsibilities of psychiatric hospitals, DESPP, and Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) ([PA 23-89](#), §§ 4-11, effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Firearm Risk Protection Orders and Risk Warrants***

The state's "red flag" law allows courts to (1) prevent people who may pose a danger to themselves or other people from acquiring firearms or other deadly weapons (through a risk protection order) and (2) authorize the temporary seizure of these weapons that the person already possesses (through a risk warrant). This year, the legislature enacted changes to this law, such as (1) allowing a single police officer to apply for a risk protection order that does not include a risk warrant, instead of requiring two as under prior law, and (2) limiting the existing process to adults and creating a new, separate risk warrant process for children (under age 18) who possess firearms or other deadly weapons and pose an imminent risk of injuring other people ([PA 23-89](#), §§ 1-3, most provisions effective upon passage).

### ***Gun Law Changes***

This session, the legislature made various changes in the state's gun (firearm) laws, including the following:

1. generally prohibiting anyone from (a) knowingly carrying a firearm with intent to display it (i.e., open carry) and (b) having a ghost gun beginning January 1, 2024;
2. generally limiting a person to purchasing only three handguns in a 30-day period;
3. requiring various gun safety measures, including expanding existing law's requirements for trigger locks and safe storage of firearms to cover all retail firearm sales;
4. expanding the assault weapons ban to include more firearms and providing a process for those who lawfully own these weapons to get a certificate of possession or transfer or sell them;
5. establishing reduced penalties for possessing ghost guns and undeclared large capacity magazines for violators who are eligible under state and federal law to possess firearms;
6. specifying that firearm safety training for gun credentials must be completed within two years before applying and expanding the required content of the training courses (e.g., safe firearm storage);
7. setting stricter release conditions for serious firearm offenders;
8. establishing firearm-related crime dockets in certain courts;

9. requiring a police officer or prosecutor, when aware that someone released on parole or probation is a threat to public safety, to file an emergency petition to take specified steps;
10. increasing the penalty for a first-time, unintentional failure to report the loss or theft of a firearm from an infraction to a class A misdemeanor;
11. requiring DESPP to make a decision on a handgun permit application if the applicant presents an affidavit that the local authority failed to expressly deny or approve a temporary state permit application after a specified period; and
12. requiring law enforcement units to post public notices informing people of various firearm-related rights, including specified information about the permit process, and how to apply for a risk-protection order ([PA 23-53](#) as amended by [PA 23-203](#), various effective dates).

### ***Gun Violence Community Roundtables***

New legislation generally requires, by October 1, 2023, and on a quarterly basis afterwards, each municipal law enforcement unit to hold an open public meeting with stakeholders (e.g., prosecutors and representatives from social service and mental health agencies) who also serve the municipality to work towards reducing gun violence and crime ([PA 23-146](#), effective upon passage).

### ***Project Longevity***

By law, the “Project Longevity Initiative” is a comprehensive, community-based initiative to reduce gun violence in the state’s cities. A new law expands this initiative by (1) broadening its goal to reduce gun violence in the state’s cities to include all municipalities and (2) requiring its implementation in Norwich and New London in addition to Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, and Waterbury.

As under existing law, the new law requires the chief court administrator, in her duties and responsibilities pertaining to the initiative, to (1) provide planning and management assistance to municipal officials and (2) do anything necessary to apply for and accept federal funds allotted or available to the state under any federal act or program ([PA 23-204](#), § 56, effective July 1, 2023).

## **Grant Programs**

### ***Free Legal Assistance to Restraining Order Applicants***

A law passed in 2021 established a grant program to give free legal assistance to indigent people applying for temporary restraining orders. The program is administered by the organization that administers the interest on lawyers’ trust accounts (IOLTA) program. By December 1, 2023, a new law requires IOLTA to submit a report to the Judiciary Committee on the potential statewide expansion of the program ([PA 23-106](#), § 3, effective July 1, 2023).

## ***Health Care Provider Safety Grant Programs***

A new law requires the Department of Public Health, by January 1, 2024, to develop a marketing campaign and make monthly public service announcements on its website and social media accounts for at least two years that (1) discourage aggressive or violent behavior towards health care providers in any health care setting and (2) provide information on grant opportunities for building security infrastructure through the DESPP's nonprofit organization security infrastructure competitive grant program or any other programs that offer nonprofit hospitals the opportunity to enhance patient and employee safety ([SA 23-29](#), effective October 1, 2023).

## ***Rural Speed Enforcement Grant Program Expansion***

Existing law requires DESPP to administer a municipal grant program for speed enforcement activities on rural roads. Municipalities eligible for grants under prior law were those with a population of less than 25,000 that have a law enforcement unit or resident state trooper. New legislation removes the requirement that these municipalities have a law enforcement unit or resident state trooper. Program grants are capped at \$5,000, but eligible municipalities may receive up to 10 grants ([PA 23-204](#), § 52, effective July 1, 2023).

## **Juvenile Justice**

### ***Access to Juvenile Delinquency Records for Firearms Transfers***

A new law gives municipal, state, and federal agency employees and authorized agents access to juvenile delinquency case records to evaluate a proposed firearm transfer to someone under age 21, as the federal Bipartisan Safer Communities Act requires. By law, juvenile delinquency case records are generally confidential with certain exceptions ([PA 23-25](#), effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Juvenile Proceedings and Records Confidentiality***

A new law (1) expands access to juvenile and youthful offender proceedings to include the victim's next of kin (i.e., a spouse, an adult child, a parent, an adult sibling, an aunt, an uncle, or a grandparent); (2) makes risk and behavioral health screening information and results confidential and limited to being used solely for determining the child's eligibility for community diversion and nonjudicial handling; and (3) grants access to certain juvenile delinquency and youthful offender records to the Department of Children and Families' (DCF's) education unit (i.e., the department's administrative unit established to oversee the education of any child residing in a juvenile justice facility and any incarcerated child) ([PA 23-46](#), §§ 5-7, 22 & 23, effective July 1, 2023).

## ***Minimum Age to Marry***

A new law prohibits anyone under age 18, including emancipated minors, from being issued a marriage license under any circumstances. It does so by removing an exception in prior law that generally allowed a 16- or 17-year-old to get a marriage license if the probate court approved a petition filed by the minor's parent or guardian ([PA 23-44](#), effective July 1, 2023).

## ***Prearrest Diversion Plan***

A new law creates an implementation team to develop a prearrest diversion plan for low-risk children. The implementation team must include the DCF, DOC, and State Department of Education (SDE) commissioners and the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) executive director, or their designees; local and regional boards of education representatives; and a juvenile review board representative. By January 1, 2024, the implementation team must develop a plan for automatic prearrest diversion of children to the community-based diversion system or other community-based service providers instead of arrest for first or second offenses of certain low-level crimes ([PA 23-188](#), § 1, effective upon passage).

## ***Reentry Success Plan***

By November 1, 2023, a new law requires various state agencies (i.e., CSSD, DCF, DOC, and SDE) in consultation with designated JJPOC subcommittees, to develop a (1) reentry success plan for youth released from DOC and the Judicial Department's facilities and (2) program to successfully reintegrate them into their communities. The plan must incorporate restorative and transformative justice principles, include a quality assurance framework, and consider reentry models and best practices around the country ([PA 23-188](#), § 3, effective upon passage).

## ***Secure Housing Implementation Plan***

A new law requires the judicial branch, by July 1, 2023, to begin reviewing and updating the implementation plan developed under [PA 21-174](#), § 13, to securely house in the branch's custody anyone under age 18 who is arrested and detained ([PA 23-188](#), § 4, effective upon passage).

## **Law Enforcement**

### ***Address Verification for Registered Sex Offenders***

Under a new law, registered sex offenders may return their address verification forms by fax or email, in addition to by mail as existing law allows. The new law also requires local police departments or the state police troop in whose jurisdiction a registered sex offender resides to

verify a registrant's residential address in person every 90 days if he or she resides at an address where there is no mail delivery ([PA 23-193](#), effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Animal Abuse Cases***

A new law authorizes law enforcement officers and animal control officers investigating an allegation of a person committing "sexual assault of an animal" (see above) to lawfully take possession of an animal when the officer has a reasonable belief that the animal was sexually assaulted. The officer may do so to protect the animal's or other persons' health or safety and to obtain evidence of the alleged offense. The officer must promptly transport the animal, whether dead or alive, to an animal shelter or veterinary hospital to be examined by a licensed veterinarian for care and treatment and to preserve evidence of the alleged crime ([PA 23-149](#), §§ 1, 4 & 5, effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Collaboration Between Police Officers and Social Workers***

New legislation builds off social worker feasibility evaluations required by [PA 20-1](#), July Special Session. Under that law, DESPP and each municipal police department had to submit to the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) an evaluation of the feasibility and potential impact of social workers responding to calls for assistance (either remotely or in person) or joining a police officer on calls where a social worker's experience and training could provide help. The new law requires POST, by January 1, 2024, to (1) examine these evaluations and any programs and strategies used in Connecticut or other jurisdictions on police officer and social worker collaborations and (2) issue guidance to law enforcement units with recommendations on how police officers may collaborate with social workers ([PA 23-104](#), § 2, effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Crisis Intervention Training for Police Officers***

Under existing law, each police basic or review training program conducted or administered by POST, the State Police, or a municipal police department must include POST-developed curricula for police officers on interacting with people who (1) have mental or physical disabilities and (2) are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind. A new law requires POST, by July 1, 2024, to add to these curricula crisis intervention strategies for police officers to use when interacting with people with mental illness in crisis ([PA 23-104](#), § 1, effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Deceptive or Coercive Interrogation Tactics***

A new law generally presumes any written or oral admission, confession, or statement is involuntary and inadmissible in any proceeding if it was made by someone during a custodial interrogation in which a law enforcement agency official or the official's agent used deception or coercive tactics.

The new law defines certain tactics that apply to everyone and specific ones that only apply when interrogating a minor (e.g., using false facts about evidence or making false statements or misrepresentations of the law) ([PA 23-27](#), effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Delayed Release of Body and Dashboard Camera Footage***

By law, an officer has the right to review recordings from officer-worn body cameras or dashboard cameras under specified circumstances. This recorded footage must be disclosed to the public upon request within either of the following timeframes, whichever is earlier: (1) 48 hours after the officer reviews it or (2) if the officer does not review the recording, either 96 hours after the disciplinary investigation begins or, for officers not subject to investigation, within 96 hours after the request for public disclosure.

A new law allows delayed public disclosure for up to 144 hours after the recorded event if the officer is not reasonably able to review the recording due to a medical or physical response or an acute psychological stress response to the incident ([PA 23-47](#), § 8, effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Emergency Medical Services for People in Peace Officer Custody or in Direct Contact With a Peace Officer***

A new law gives anyone who experiences an emergency medical condition or is medically unstable the right to be provided emergency medical services if this occurs while the person is (1) in direct audio or video contact with a peace officer or (2) under a peace officer's custody or control.

It correspondingly requires a peace officer to immediately request emergency medical services for this person, whether the person communicates to the officer that he or she is in this situation or officer observes that to be the case. However, the act exempts a peace officer from this requirement if he or she (1) has made a reasonable determination that the person is not in this situation and (2) knows that the person was seen by a medical professional within the last 24 hours and was released from care after the medical professional made the same determination ([PA 23-192](#), effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Local Emergency Operations Plans***

By law, every town must have a current emergency operations plan approved by the DESPP commissioner every two years to be eligible for certain state or federal emergency management benefits. Under a new law, plans submitted on or after January 1, 2025, must include a domestic terrorism prevention strategy. The strategy must be described in a domestic terrorist prevention plan annex, based on standards provided by the DESPP's Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security ([PA 23-24](#), effective October 1, 2023).



## ***Local Voluntary Public Safety Registration System for Children With IDD***

A new law creates a voluntary public safety registration system that municipal police departments may implement for parents and guardians of children with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD), including autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairments, and nonverbal learning disorders. It requires DESPP, within available appropriations, to develop a form that municipal police departments may distribute to these parents and guardians to collect specified information that can help emergency services personnel (i.e., police, firefighting, medical, ambulance, and others) interact with the children. Participating municipal police departments must record the information collected in a database that police officers and emergency dispatchers can access in specified situations ([PA 23-137](#), §§ 7 & 8, as amended by [PA 23-204](#), § 170, effective upon passage).

## ***Police Informing Drivers the Purpose of a Traffic Stop***

The Alvin W. Penn Racial Profiling Prohibition Act requires police officers to record the statutory reason for stopping a vehicle for every stop. A new law further requires them to verbally tell the vehicle's driver the purpose for the stop before it is completed. Police officers under the act 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 ([PA 23-95](#), effective upon passage).

## ***Police Recording Equipment Reporting***

A new law requires (1) POST to create a form for law enforcement units to use to report on their compliance with state law's body and dashboard camera requirements; (2) the units to annually submit a report on the form; and (3) UConn's Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy to review the submissions and report findings and recommendations to specified entities ([PA 23-204](#), § 58, July 1, 2023).

## ***Racial Profiling***

This session the legislature broadened the applicability of the state's racial profiling law by generally prohibiting members of the State Police, municipal police departments, and any other law enforcement agency from detaining, interdicting, or engaging in other disparate treatment of anyone based in whole or in part, rather than solely, on the person's racial or ethnic status. The act also specifies that the determination is based on the person's perceived racial or ethnic status.

Additionally, the act creates an exception by allowing police officers to take these actions when the perceived racial or ethnic status is used in combination with other information when the officer is seeking to apprehend a specific suspect whose racial or ethnic status is part of the suspect's description. These changes apply to laws governing traffic stops as well ([PA 23-9](#), effective upon passage).

### ***Seat Belt Safety in Municipal Police Vehicles***

The legislature requires POST, by December 31, 2023, to develop and promulgate a model policy that has guidelines on required seat belt use in municipal police vehicles and standardized procedures for municipal police officers to ensure that anyone being transported in their vehicles is secured by a seat belt.

This law then requires each municipal law enforcement unit to adopt and maintain a written policy that meets or exceeds the model policy standards by April 1, 2024. It also provides for procedures for disciplinary measures for officers who violate the policy and undermines public confidence in the law enforcement unit ([PA 23-87](#), effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Sensory Kits for Emergency Services Personnel***

A new law requires the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to develop and acquire sensory kits for DESPP to distribute to emergency services personnel who interact with children and adults with autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairments, or nonverbal learning disorders. DAS must do so in consultation with the E-911 Commission and the DESPP Coordinating Advisory Board, which advises the department on ways to improve emergency response communications and related issues. Municipalities may apply to DESPP for these sensory kits, as the department prescribes, by September 1, 2025 ([PA 23-137](#), § 10, effective upon passage).

### ***State Police Sting Operations Unit Regarding Online Sexual Abuse of Minors***

A new law requires the DESPP commissioner, for FYs 25 and 26, to establish an investigative unit within the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force to conduct sting operations relating to the online sexual abuse of minors. Among other things, the task force, utilizing the investigative unit, must (1) perform undercover and investigative operations to prevent and detect these criminal, or suspected criminal, activities and (2) compile, monitor, analyze, and share related data.

By November 1, 2024, the new law requires POST, in consultation with the DESPP commissioner, to develop: (1) a standardized form or other reporting system for law enforcement to report to the investigative unit; (2) best practices to investigate online sexual abuse of minors and to facilitate

information sharing between the investigative unit and law enforcement units; (3) a model policy for investigating online sexual abuse of minors; and (4) ways to inform the public on how to report these criminal activities ([PA 23-204](#), §§ 326 & 327, most provisions effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Use of Opioid Settlement Funds to Equip Police With Opioid Antagonists***

The FY 24-25 budget and implementer act expands the purposes for which the Opioid Settlement Fund may be used to include providing funds to municipal police departments to equip officers with opioid antagonists. Under the act, priority for these funds must be given to departments that do not currently have a supply of them ([PA 23-204](#), § 184, effective July 1, 2023).

### **Sentencing, Immunities, Parole, and Erasures**

#### ***Commutation of Punishment, Release, or Pardon***

A new law requires the Board of Pardons and Paroles to give copies of a convicted person's application for commutation, pardon, or release and related materials to the state's attorney before holding a session to consider the application. It also requires the board to allow the state's attorney to make a statement at the session ([PA 23-47](#), § 11, effective October 1, 2023).

#### ***Immunity From Illegal Cannabis Possession Penalties***

A new law grants immunity from illegal cannabis possession penalties to people seeking medical assistance in good faith for themselves or others during a drug- or alcohol-induced overdose ([PA 23-47](#), § 4, effective October 1, 2023).

#### ***Parole Eligibility for Certain Offenders Ages 18-20***

A new law broadens parole eligibility for certain offenders who were under age 21 when they committed the crime. Under existing law, an offender sentenced on or after October 1, 2015, and serving a definite or total effective sentence of more than 10 years for crimes committed before, on, or after October 1, 2015, when the person was under age 18 is eligible for parole under certain circumstances. The new law extends parole eligibility to offenders who (1) were under age 21 when the crime was committed; (2) are serving a definite or total effective sentence of more than 10 years for crimes committed on or before October 1, 2005; and (3) were sentenced on or before October 1, 2005. It correspondingly applies to this new age group existing law's parole eligibility rules and requirements on parole hearing and release decisions ([PA 23-169](#), § 1, effective October 1, 2023).

## ***Presentencing Psychiatric Exams***

By law, if a court believes that a convicted defendant has psychiatric disabilities and is a danger to self or others, it may order the DMHAS commissioner, before sentencing, to examine a convicted defendant using qualified hospital personnel. Under prior law, this applied to any defendant convicted of (1) specified sex offenses or (2) an offense that may carry the penalty of imprisonment at the Connecticut Correctional Institution at Somers (known as the Osborn Correctional Institution since 1994). A new law broadens the court’s authority to order a defendant’s examination for an offense that may result in imprisonment at any Connecticut correctional institution, not just Osborn ([PA 23-47](#), § 2, effective October 1, 2023).

## ***Sentence Modification Requests***

A new law prohibits a defendant from filing a motion for a (1) sentence reduction or discharge from incarceration within five years after the most recent decision granting the defendant relief in full or (2) sentence reduction within three years after the most recent decision granting relief in part. It also requires a defendant to give the state a copy of a motion he or she files to reduce or suspend a sentence, along with any supporting materials ([PA 23-47](#), § 1, effective October 1, 2023).

## ***State Officers’ and Employee’s Indemnification***

A new law extends state employees’ and officers’ hold harmless and indemnification protections to any member of an employee’s or officer’s immediate family who is named or included in the claim demand, suit, or judgment solely because the family member is the officer’s or employee’s relative. Under the new law, “immediate family” means any spouse, child, or dependent relative who resides in the individual’s household ([PA 23-46](#), § 38, effective upon passage).

## ***Veterinarians’ Civil Immunity for Mandatory Reporting***

A new law requires a licensed veterinarian to report to local law enforcement or animal control when he or she, in the course of employment, has reasonable cause to suspect that an animal is being or has been harmed, neglected, or treated cruelly due to participating in an animal fighting exhibition for amusement or gain. The new law also gives the veterinarian immunity from civil liability for making the report ([PA 23-149](#), § 6, effective October 1, 2023).

## **Studies, Task Forces, and Working Groups**

### ***Catalytic Converters Task Force***

A new law creates a nine-member task force to study Connecticut’s catalytic convertor laws, including evaluating the impact from [PA 22-43](#). The task force must submit a report with its findings

and recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2024 ([SA 23-20](#), § 2, effective upon passage).

### ***Connecticut Sentencing Commission Study***

A new law requires the Connecticut Sentencing Commission to study the experiences of people with IDD or autism spectrum disorder who are in the criminal justice system. Among other things, the study must include incarceration rates for these people compared to their overall population in the state and an examination of pre-sentencing behavioral assessments. To complete the study, the law grants the commission access to databases in the statewide criminal justice technology system and any offender-based tracking systems ([PA 23-137](#), § 15, effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Cybersecurity Task Force***

New legislation creates a 14-member task force to study and develop a strategic plan on cybersecurity, including on coordinating initiatives with other states and the federal government and promoting personal computer and mobile application security for residents. The task force must submit a report with its findings and recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2024 ([SA 23-23](#), effective upon passage).

### ***DESPP Emergency Contact Study***

A new law requires the DMV and DESPP commissioners to study the feasibility of establishing and maintaining an emergency contact information database or, alternatively, revising motor vehicle records to add emergency contact information. The database or revised record must allow Connecticut driver's license, permit, and identity card holders to provide information for at least one emergency contact and be accessible to police officers when they need to notify the contact in the case of an accident or emergency. The study is due to the Appropriations, Public Safety, and Transportation committees by February 1, 2024 ([PA 23-40](#), § 19, effective upon passage).

### ***Firefighter and EMS Personnel Shortage Task Force***

A new 13-member task force is charged with studying the shortage of firefighters and EMS personnel in Connecticut and making recommendations to address it. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2024 ([SA 23-1](#), effective upon passage).

### ***Illegal Roadway Traffic Activity Task Force***

A new law requires the DESPP commissioner to establish a regional task force to combat illegal traffic activities in the Greater Hartford area committed by organized groups riding motor vehicles,

motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, and other vehicles. This Greater Hartford Regional Law Enforcement Task Force to Combat Illegal Roadway Traffic Activity comprises state and local law enforcement officers in the Greater Hartford area. It may ask for and receive from any federal, state, or local agency cooperation and help, including temporary assignment of any necessary personnel. The DESPP commissioner may also, within available appropriations, appoint a commanding officer and other personnel that he finds necessary to carry out task force duties ([PA 23-112](#), effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Motor Vehicle Accident Report Form Task Force***

A new law extends appointment, meeting, and reporting deadlines for a 13-member task force responsible for examining the uniform motor vehicle accident report form and considering changes to address its length and completion time for investigators, among other issues. Under the act, the task force must submit a report with its findings and recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2024, rather than January 1, 2023, as under prior law ([SA 23-2](#), effective upon passage).

### ***Police Recruitment and Retention Task Force***

A new nine-member task force will study police recruitment and retention in Connecticut and make recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2024. The task force is composed of the DESPP commissioner, or his designee, and eight appointees, appointed one each by the six legislative leaders and two by the governor ([PA 23-69](#), § 2, effective upon passage).

## **Transportation-Related Violations**

### ***Automated Traffic Enforcement***

The legislature passed a law allowing municipalities to use speed and red light cameras if they (1) adopt an ordinance meeting the law's requirements and (2) get a speed and red light camera plan approved by the Department of Transportation (DOT) every three years. DOT must develop guidelines and evaluation criteria that ensure that (1) cameras are installed only where they are likely to improve traffic safety and (2) their distribution is equitable. A municipality must hold a public hearing and get approval from its legislative body before submitting to DOT for approval. The new law also addresses other related matters such as public awareness, privacy, and enforcement ([PA 23-116](#), §§ 10-14 & 16-18, most provisions effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Car Seat Violation Fine Cancellation***

By law, people transporting children must secure them as the law requires (e.g., in a car seat or booster seat), and a first violation of this requirement is an infraction. A new law allows the court,

within 14 days after the violation but before imposing the fine, to not impose the fine on a first-time violator if he or she shows proof of acquiring, renting, or buying a car seat or booster seat appropriate for the child he or she transports ([PA 23-40](#), §15, effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Commercial Vehicles on Parkways***

A new law (1) increases the fine for driving commercial motor vehicles on state parkways and (2) prohibits commercial vehicle owners or lessees from allowing these vehicles to be driven on these parkways. Under prior law, a violation was an infraction. The new law makes violations punishable by a fine of \$500 for a first violation and \$1,000 for any subsequent violation. The fines must be assessed against the (1) commercial vehicle owner, when the owner, owner’s agent, or owner’s employee was the driver, or (2) commercial vehicle lessee, when the lessee, lessee’s agent, or the lessee’s employee was the driver ([PA 23-135](#), §§ 14 & 15, effective October 1, 2023).

### ***“Move Over” Law Expansion***

The state’s “move over” law requires drivers approaching emergency vehicles that are stationary or moving slowly in the shoulder, lane, or breakdown lane to immediately slow down and, if traveling in the adjacent lane, move over one lane unless doing so is unsafe. The legislature expanded this law by (1) requiring drivers approaching emergency vehicles on two-lanes roads (those with two lanes proceeding in opposite directions) to slow down until safely clear of the emergency vehicle (under prior law, it only applied on roads with at least two lanes proceeding in the same direction) and (2) applying the enhanced penalties for violations that cause the death of or injury to an emergency vehicle driver to include emergency vehicle occupants ([PA 23-40](#), § 32, effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Safety Course After Traffic Violations***

By law, people charged with motor vehicle infractions and specified violations that are processed by the Centralized Infractions Bureau may either (1) pay the fine and any additional fees or (2) plead not guilty and be scheduled for a hearing. If a person pleads not guilty, he or she may reach an agreement with a prosecutorial official on the fine amount and elect to pay the fine without appearing before a judicial authority. A new law allows prosecutorial officials, as a part of this agreement, to require that the person attend a driving safety course. Any course required must address the nature of the violation or infraction and be offered or approved by the chief state’s attorney ([PA 23-116](#), § 4, effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Street Takeovers***

The legislature incorporated “street takeovers” into the law prohibiting street racing. Under the new law, a “street takeover” means taking over a portion of a public road or parking area by blocking or

impeding regular traffic flow with intent to cause disorder or create a nuisance for other road or parking area users. Operating a motor vehicle on a public highway or in a parking area for a street takeover is a class A misdemeanor for a first offense and a class D felony for a subsequent offense (see Table on Penalties).

Among its other changes, the new law adds a prohibition on knowingly inciting or recruiting by any means (including social media) anyone to participate in the performance of a street race, contest, demonstration of skill or speed, or street takeover. Violations of this prohibition are class B misdemeanors (see Table on Penalties) ([PA 23-135](#), § 39, as amended by [PA 23-203](#), § 4, both effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Wrong-Way Driving Countermeasures***

A new law addresses the recent uptick in wrong-way driving accidents and deaths. Among other things, it requires DOT to expand its installation of systems that alert drivers with flashing lights when they are going the wrong way to at least 120 additional exit ramps that the department determines are high risk for wrong-way driving incidents. The new law also addresses wrong-way driving public awareness and education by requiring that information on ways to reduce wrong-way driving incidents and information on actions drivers should take when encountering a wrong-way driver be included in (1) a DOT public awareness campaign and (2) driver education program curriculum ([PA 23-51](#), most provisions effective October 1, 2023).

This year's bond bill also authorizes up to \$20 million in special tax obligation (STO) bonds in each of FYs 24 and 25 (\$40 million total) for purchasing, installing, and implementing advanced wrong-way driving technology and other wrong-way driving countermeasures ([PA 23-205](#), §§ 40 & 46, effective July 1, 2023 for FY 24 authorization and July 1, 2024 for FY 25 authorization).

## **Victim Services and Rights**

### ***Notice of Incarcerated Individuals' Transfer***

This session, the legislature required the DOC commissioner, upon request and when transferring an incarcerated individual from one correctional facility to another, to notify the (1) victims of the crime for which the person is incarcerated and (2) transferred person's immediate family members ([PA 23-12](#), § 1, effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Notice of Special Parole Termination***

Under prior law, before the Board of Pardons and Paroles terminated a person's period of special parole (see below), the judicial branch's Office of Victim Services (OVS) was required to notify the



victim of that person's crime of the board's intent to consider doing so. It required OVS to do this regardless of whether the victim registered for notification with OVS or DOC's Victim Services Unit (VSU).

Under a new law, if the victim is registered with VSU, that unit, rather than OVS, is required to notify the victim of the above information ([PA 23-46](#), § 8, effective October 1, 2023). (By law a judge can require a period of special parole under parole supervision after an offender completes his or her maximum prison sentence ([CGS § 54-125e](#).)

### ***Protections for Human Trafficking Victims***

A new law expands protections human trafficking victims. It prohibits hotel, motel, or similar lodging operators that offer or provide a room with sleeping accommodations from offering or providing a financial discount or benefit that is based on an (1) hourly rate or (2) occupancy period that is for 12 hours or less ([PA 23-20](#), § 1, effective October 1, 2023).

## **Miscellaneous**

### ***Antidiscrimination Law***

This session, the General Assembly passed a law adding "age" to the list of protected classes in the state's antidiscrimination laws. This authorizes CHRO to investigate claims of discrimination based on age and makes a violation generally a class A misdemeanor with a minimum \$1,000 fine (or less as determined by the court).

The legislature also redefined "sexual orientation" to mean a person's identity in relation to the gender or genders to which they are romantically, emotionally, or sexually attracted, including any identity that a person may have previously expressed or is perceived by another person to hold. This new definition specifically applies to antidiscrimination laws subject to enforcement by CHRO, as well as laws prohibiting nondiscrimination in awarding agency, municipal public works, and quasi-public agency project contracts ([PA 23-145](#), effective July 1, 2023).

### ***Criminal Justice Information System***

By law, the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) Governing Board oversees the Connecticut Information Sharing System (CISS), a comprehensive, statewide criminal justice informational database and records system accessible by the police and criminal justice agencies. A new law requires any third-party vendor or contractor assisting in the system's design and implementation, if it needs access to criminal history record information in the system, to first get the CJIS Governing Board's written approval. Under the act, contracts or subcontracts between the board and these

vendors or contractor must include board-established specifications ensuring that all contractor policies, procedures, processes, and control systems are compatible with, and support, the state's system.

Additionally, the act decreases the required frequency, from twice to once annually, for the CJIS Governing Board to report on the CISS status to the Appropriations and Judiciary committees ([PA 23-36](#), effective October 1, 2023).

### ***Mandated Reporters for Elderly People***

By law, mandated reporters must report to the Department of Social Services within 24 hours when they have reasonable cause to suspect that an elderly person needs protective services or has been abused, neglected, exploited, or abandoned. A new law adds several professions and titles to the mandated reporter list, including adult probation officers and adult parole officers ([PA 23-168](#), effective July 1, 2023).

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