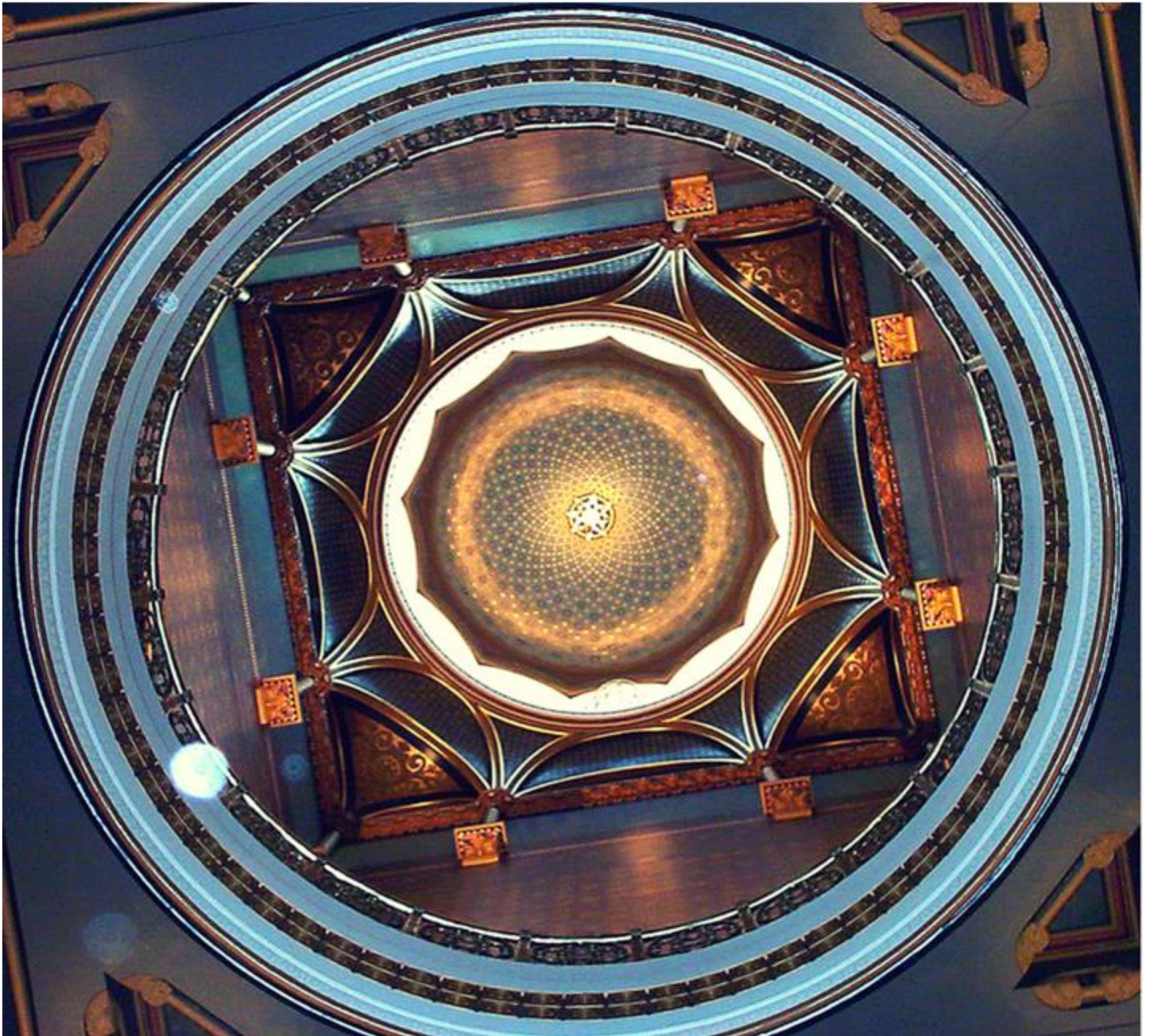


MAJOR PUBLIC ACTS

2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION



OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH

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Notice to Readers

These summaries, composed by the Office of Legislative Research (OLR) with the assistance of the Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA), briefly describe the most significant, far-reaching, and publicly debated acts adopted by the General Assembly in its 2024 regular session. Acts that have been assigned a public act (PA), special act (SA), or resolution act (RA) number are identified by that number; otherwise, we refer to the bill or resolution number.

Not all provisions of the acts are included. More detailed summaries can be found at <https://cga.ct.gov/olr/>. Summaries of the major acts and all other public acts will be provided in our 2024 Public Act Summary Book, which will be available later this year.

OLR also produces several “Acts Affecting” reports highlighting legislation in the following policy areas: agriculture, banks, business and jobs, children, criminal justice and public safety, education, energy, environment, first responders, health professionals, housing and real estate, insurance, municipalities, people with disabilities, seniors, taxes, town clerks and elections, transportation, and veterans and military. These reports will be available online later this summer.

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Aging

Aging in Place

A new law contains various provisions to help seniors safely remain in their homes as they age. Beginning January 1, 2025, the law requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) to maintain a home care provider registry for people receiving Medicaid home- and community-based services in order to help connect them with qualified home care providers that meet certain criteria (e.g., language proficiency or special skills).

Among other things, the legislation also requires (1) home care workers to wear an identification badge with their name and picture during client appointments and (2) DSS to create a presumptive Medicaid eligibility system that allows certain Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders applicants to access home care services while undergoing a full Medicaid eligibility determination ([PA 24-39](#), various effective dates).

Nursing Home Quality of Care

This session, the legislature enacted laws intended to help improve the quality of care in the state's nursing homes. One act requires the Department of Public Health (DPH) to create a Center of Excellence Program to (1) award this designation to participating nursing homes that meet certain standards for providing person-centered, evidence-based care and (2) incentivize nursing homes to participate. The act also requires DPH to establish a nursing home consumer online dashboard with industry-leading practices as well as comprehensive information on the quality of care for those in need of nursing homes ([PA 24-39](#), §§ 25 & 26, effective July 1, 2024).

A second law, among other things, (1) prohibits nursing homes from placing newly admitted residents in rooms with more than two beds, starting July 1, 2026, and (2) authorizes DPH to take disciplinary action against nursing homes (and other health care institutions) for failing to comply with corrective action plans ([sHB 5046](#), §§ 1 & 6, as amended, effective upon passage).

Banking

Attorney General and Consumer Protection

A new law expands the attorney general's pre-trial investigative authority to enforce the federal Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act ("Dodd-Frank Act") by, among other things, authorizing him to issue subpoenas for documentary material, testimony, or responses to written interrogatories. It requires the attorney general to coordinate subpoenas with the banking commissioner and sets out several procedures for this process. It also allows him to apply to a

superior court to enforce a subpoena, including requesting that the court impose a civil penalty of up to \$10,000 ([PA 24-75](#), effective October 1, 2024).

Virtual Currency Regulation

Building on [PA 23-82](#), the legislature passed a law this session further regulating virtual currency. Principally, the act (1) explicitly adds nonfungible tokens (“NFTs”) to the non-exhaustive list of digital assets the banking commissioner may regulate; (2) caps the total amount of service fees and commission charges for virtual currency kiosks at 15% per transaction; (3) modifies and bifurcates the current maximum daily kiosk transaction limit, based on whether the person is a new or existing customer; (4) imposes several safeguard duties on kiosk owners and operators, including that they identify and speak by telephone with a customer over age 60 before he or she completes his or her first virtual currency transaction; and (5) limits the availability of kiosk refunds to fraudulent transactions ([sHB 5211](#), as amended, effective October 1, 2024).

Children and Families

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

This session, the legislature passed legislation making various changes to laws relating to the protection of children from sexual abuse. Primarily, it (1) requires DPH to include a sexual abuse and assault awareness prevention survey for high school administrators in the existing Connecticut School Health Survey, starting July 1, 2026; (2) replaces the term “child pornography” with “child sexual abuse material” in statutes and criminalizes the possession, importation, and transmission of this material; (3) establishes a task force to study the responsiveness of certain state agencies and the judicial branch to child sexual abuse issues; and (4) requires the Office of the Child Advocate to review and report on state agency practices and procedures for ensuring the care and protection of minors in probate court guardianship proceedings ([sHB 5262](#), as amended, various effective dates).

Disconnected Youth

This session the legislature enacted several measures relating to “disconnected youth” (generally, people ages 14-26 who are neither employed nor enrolled in school). It required the Connecticut Preschool through Twenty and Workforce Information Network (P20 WIN) to develop a plan to establish a statewide data intermediary to provide technical support, create data-sharing agreements, and build and maintain the infrastructure needed to share data between nonprofit organizations serving disconnected youth. The P20 WIN executive board must submit (1) the plan to the Education Committee by January 1, 2025, and (2) a report on disconnected youth annually

beginning by January 1, 2025, to various legislative committees ([PA 24-45](#), §§ 21 & 22, effective upon passage).

The legislature also allocated \$175,000 each for grants to the Hartford and New Haven boards of education in FY 25 to purchase bus passes for state-owned or -controlled bus public transportation service for public high school students ([PA 24-81](#), § 120, effective July 1, 2024).

Early Childhood Care and Education and Early Start CT

New laws make various changes relating to early childhood care and education. One new law makes the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) responsible for operating and administering a state-funded early care and education system to coordinate and facilitate efficient delivery of early childhood care (i.e., “Early Start CT”). It requires OEC, under the program, to (1) provide open access for infants and toddlers and pre-school age children to high-quality early care and education programs that promote the health and safety of children and prepare them for school and (2) prevent or minimize the potential for developmental delay in children under age five.

Among other things, the law also (1) generally requires any program receiving financial assistance under Early Start CT to be accredited within three years of entering into an OEC contract, and (3) sets a schedule for OEC-funded early care and education programs to require certain qualifications for designated staff members ([PA 24-78](#), §§ 24-33, effective July 1, 2025).

Another new law renames the Early Childhood Education Fund, created in the FY 24-25 budget act, the Early Childhood Care and Education Fund and establishes a framework for the fund’s deposits and investments and the state treasurer’s authority and powers on behalf of the fund. It also requires the OEC commissioner to do the following:

1. within available appropriations, establish a Tri-Share Child Care Matching Program serving New London County in which child care costs are shared equally among participating employers, employees, and the state;
2. for FY 25, set up and administer a wage supplement payment program that provides one-time payments of at least \$1,800 to eligible early childhood education teachers and assistants; and
3. consult with a nonprofit organization to develop a document explaining the benefits of childcare centers and homes maintaining liability insurance coverage and the potential consequences of not having coverage ([sHB 5002](#), as amended, most provisions effective July 1, 2024).

Criminal Justice and Public Safety

State Building Code and Fire Safety Code Amendments Affecting Residential Housing Projects

The next versions of the State Building Code and the Fire Safety Code are in development and are expected to go into effect in 2025. A new law requires them to include amendments (1) allowing additional residential homes, including ones with family-sized units, to be served by a single exit stairway under certain conditions and (2) encouraging the construction of three- and four-unit residential buildings by subjecting them to similar requirements already applying to certain one- and two-unit residential buildings. Among other requirements, these amendments must be consistent with safe occupancy and egress. By law, the new codes will apply to projects with permits applied for after the codes' effective dates ([HB 5524](#), § 117, effective upon passage).

Wrongful Incarceration Compensation Eligibility

This session, the legislature made various changes in the law governing wrongful incarceration compensation, including expanding eligibility by allowing compensation when the complaint or information is dismissed on “grounds consistent with innocence.” Under the act, this includes a situation where the conviction was vacated or reversed and there is substantial evidence of innocence (whether available at the time of the investigation or trial or newly discovered).

Among other things, the act also does the following:

1. requires the claims commissioner to determine whether a claimant meets the eligibility requirements within 90 days after the hearing;
2. calculates the award based on the “median family income” instead of the “median household income”;
3. eliminates the General Assembly’s authority to modify awards but allows it to remand the matter to the claims commissioner; and
4. allows a deceased claimant’s estate to receive compensation under certain conditions ([sSB 439](#), as amended, effective upon passage and applicable to claims pending before the claims commissioner on the act’s passage or filed with the commissioner on or after that date).

Economic and Community Development

Concentrated Poverty Pilot Program

This session, the legislature created a pilot program to reduce the levels of concentrated poverty in participating “concentrated poverty census tracts” (i.e., tracts in which at least 30% of the households have incomes below the federal poverty level). To achieve this aim, a new office within the state’s Department of Economic and Community Development must develop a 10-year plan along with certain state agencies and local officials as well as a community development corporation established by community members to help implement the plan. Additionally, it creates a seven-member working group to develop a guidance document that sets a framework that must be incorporated into the plan.

Among other things, the plan must include a list of possible projects determined to be the most appropriate and effective to eliminate concentrated poverty in the tract. The legislation also gives these projects priority for specified state grants. In addition, this new law adds incentives to the JobsCT tax rebate program for hiring individuals residing in concentrated poverty census tracts ([HB 5524](#), §§ 118-123, effective upon passage).

Education and Higher Education

Mandate Review Council

New legislation establishes a 10-member Education Mandate Review Advisory Council to advise and provide annual reports to the Education Committee on the (1) cost and implementation of existing education mandates on local and regional boards of education and (2) impact of proposals to add to or revise these mandates. The council’s annual reports may include a review of education mandates on school boards in state law and regulations to identify those that may be burdensome or limit or restrict providing student instruction or services. The council must also make recommendations on repealing or amending any statutes or regulations ([PA 24-45](#), § 1, and [PA 24-81](#), § 108, effective July 1, 2024).

New FY 25 Grant for Magnets and Vo-Ag Centers

A new law replaces grants for (1) interdistrict magnet schools and (2) regional agricultural science and technology centers (i.e., “vo-ag centers”) with grants under the new choice program for FY 25. The legislation also replaces the existing grant for any magnet school operated by an entity that is not a board of education, such as an independent institution of higher education.

Generally, the new law uses student need weightings in the new grants, mirroring existing law's weighting for education cost sharing (ECS) grants and charter school grants. This gives additional weight (and funding) for students eligible for free or reduced-priced meals or free milk or designated as an English language learner.

The new law also includes a hold-harmless provision intended to guarantee that magnet schools and vo-ag operators receive at least the same grant amount that they did in FY 24. The grants are for FY 25 only; the act does not make them ongoing annual grants and the law does not revert to the old grants for the following years.

In a related provision, the same act specifies how \$150 million in education funds that were appropriated in last year's budget act will be spent in FY 25. As under prior law, the funds primarily go to the new choice grants, ECS, and charter school grants. But it also allocates specific smaller amounts to a variety of programs, schools, and towns ([PA 24-81](#), §§ 112-121, effective July 1, 2024).

Pledge to Advance CT (PACT) Program

A new law extends eligibility for the state's debt-free community college program to transition program students who are (1) state residents, (2) have not graduated from high school, (3) are enrolled in a transition program under their individualized education program, and (4) enroll in one or more courses at a regional community-technical college. The act also increases the PACT program's minimum awards from \$250 to \$500 for full-time students and from \$150 to \$300 for part-time students ([PA 24-81](#), § 75, effective July 1, 2024).

Teacher Certification Changes

This session, the legislature made significant changes to the teacher certification laws that, among other things, (1) simplify how certain applicants qualify for an initial educator certification and (2) reduce the number of teacher certification levels from three to two.

The new law does so by eliminating the provisional educator certificate, the middle level of Connecticut's three levels of certification, while retaining the initial and professional levels. It makes an initial educator certification valid for 10 years, rather than three as under the prior law, and allows an educator who holds this certification to apply for professional certification if they have certain teaching experience and either (1) a master's degree or (2) completed an alternate pathway to professional certification.

The legislation also expands those eligible for the alternate route to certification (ARC) program certification to candidates with a bachelor's degree or advanced degree from an accredited higher education institution after completing an ARC program. It eliminates prior law's requirement that ARC program graduates also satisfy the requirements of a temporary 90-day certificate or a resident teacher certificate ([PA 24-41](#), §§ 1-6, effective July 1, 2024).

Elections and Voting

Absentee Ballots

This session, the legislature passed a law making several changes to absentee balloting laws, including requiring municipalities to make video recordings of absentee ballot drop boxes during elections and release these recordings to the public. Additionally, town clerks must track how they receive absentee ballots (e.g., by mail, in a drop box, or in person) and report this information to the secretary of the state.

The act also, among other changes, modifies the procedures for acquiring absentee ballot applications, including (1) requiring voters to request applications personally if they have already requested one for that election, (2) limiting the number of applications a person may request 90 days or more before an election, and (3) requiring application forms to expire at the end of each year ([sHB 5498](#), as amended, various effective dates).

Foreign Spending for Political Campaigns

The legislature passed a law prohibiting foreign nationals from making contributions or expenditures under the state's campaign finance laws. It also prohibits a person from soliciting, accepting, or receiving contributions from foreign nationals. To implement these measures, the law makes these actions illegal campaign finance practices and establishes additional reporting requirements to ensure compliance ([PA 24-28](#), effective upon passage).

Energy

Energy Procurements

New legislation expands and modifies the state's energy procurement authorizations, including for renewable energy and zero-emission resources. Existing law authorizes the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to solicit proposals from energy providers and direct the electric distribution companies (i.e., Eversource and United Illuminating) to enter into contracts for selected projects. Among other things, the act (1) requires DEEP to coordinate new zero-carbon procurements for nuclear facilities with other states, (2) authorizes DEEP to solicit proposals from

certain hydropower providers, and (3) adds requirements to the existing offshore wind procurement authorization and extends the maximum term length for agreements entered into under it from 20 to 30 years ([PA 24-38](#), most provisions effective upon passage).

Solar Facilities

This year, the legislature passed a law to expand and study solar facility deployment in the state. Among other things, the act (1) authorizes more capacity, under certain circumstances, for two programs under the state's capped renewable energy tariffs (i.e., the Non-Residential Energy Solutions program and the Shared Clean Energy Facility program); (2) modifies eligibility for the Green Bank's Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy Program; and (3) requires DEEP to include information on the potential siting of solar projects in the state in its next Integrated Resource Plan.

The act also has several study requirements, including that (1) the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority examine whether the existing tariff programs should be extended and (2) the DEEP commissioner study the feasibility and potential cost-related impacts of establishing a uniform capacity tax for solar facilities in the state ([PA 24-31](#), various effective dates).

The Siting Council

A new law makes changes to the Public Utility Environmental Standards Act (PUESA), which governs the Connecticut Siting Council's authority and procedures and gives it jurisdiction over siting various energy facilities (e.g., generation and transmission projects). Among other things, the act (1) adds requirements to transmission line certificate applications, (2) requires the applicant to consult with state legislators and a municipality's legislative body for certain applications, (3) increases municipal participation account payments, and (4) requires the council to consider additional factors before approving an application for a transmission line or a solar facility.

The new law also establishes new procedures for (1) violations, penalties, and enforcement of PUESA's provisions and certificate requirements and (2) property acquisitions through eminent domain. Additionally, it expands restrictions on council members' affiliations with utilities and facilities and requires the council to hire employees it needs to perform its duties ([sHB 5507](#), as amended, most provisions effective October 1, 2024).

Environment

PFAS Regulation

The legislature passed a law regulating the sale and use of certain products containing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFAS are a class of man-made chemicals that are resistant to heat, water, and oil and are persistent in the environment and the human body (i.e., they bioaccumulate and do not break down).

Beginning January 1, 2026, the new law requires disclosure to purchasers of (1) outdoor apparel for severe wet conditions and (2) turnout gear used by firefighters and emergency medical services personnel, that PFAS was intentionally added. Beginning July 1, 2026, it requires manufacturers to label the following 12 product categories if they contain intentionally added PFAS: apparel, carpets or rugs, cleaning products, cookware, cosmetics, dental floss, fabric treatments, children's products, menstruation products, ski wax, textile furnishings, and upholstered furniture. Further, starting January 1, 2028, it bans manufacturing, selling, or offering or distributing for sale, all of these products if they contain intentionally added PFAS ([PA 24-59](#), § 1, effective October 1, 2024).

Railway Pesticide Applications

In 2024, the legislature expanded the law's requirements for and restrictions on pesticide applications by railroads on their rights-of-way. First, the law expands the types of information that railroads must include in the vegetation management plans they must annually submit to the Department of Transportation (DOT) and each town in which they will apply pesticide in the next year.

The act also requires the railroads to develop, subject to a 45-day public comment period, yearly operational plans that include, among other things, maps showing the rights-of-way and difficult-to-identify sensitive areas and information about the herbicides to be applied. Additionally, it imposes method- and area-specific restrictions on applications in the rights-of-way, such as those near public surface water sources, private wells, or wetlands.

Under this law, violations of these provisions are subject to a fine of up to \$90. In addition, the act specifies that DEEP and DOT have the authority to enforce the application restrictions within available resources ([PA 24-9](#), effective July 1, 2024).

General Law

THC-Infused Beverages

New legislation establishes a new category of THC product classified as “infused beverage” and requires these beverages to meet certain manufacturer hemp product requirements. It prohibits sales of these beverages to anyone under age 21 and the beverages may only be sold at package stores, cannabis dispensary facilities, hybrid retailers (i.e., licensed to sell both recreational cannabis and medical marijuana), or cannabis retailers. Among other things, the new law also:

1. generally requires infused beverage manufacturers to be licensed by the Department of Consumer Protection;
2. sets various requirements for testing, signs, packages, and labels;
3. imposes a \$1 assessment per container; and
4. makes it a Connecticut Trade Unfair Trade Practices Act violation to violate certain provisions ([PA 24-76](#), various sections, as amended (as amended by [SB 200](#), §§ 2 & 3, as amended), various effective dates).

Housing

Middle Housing Developments and Vacant Nursing Home Conversions

Under new legislation, (1) municipal zoning regulations may allow middle housing developments (e.g., duplexes and triplexes) “as of right” on lots zoned for residential use, commercial use, or mixed-use development and (2) any municipality adopting this type of zoning regulation receives points towards a moratorium under the CGS § 8-30g affordable housing land use appeals procedure for each middle housing dwelling unit that is built.

Under the new law, certain municipalities must also allow eligible vacant nursing homes to be converted to multifamily housing, subject only to a “summary review” (a determination, without requiring a public hearing or discretionary zoning action (e.g., a variance), that the conversion to housing conforms with applicable zoning regulations and will not impact public health or safety). To be eligible, (1) the nursing home must be a freestanding structure, (2) its owner must declare in writing that it has been vacant for at least 90 days, and (3) it must not be a nonconforming use. Additionally, the conversion must not involve demolishing the existing structure or substantially altering its footprint ([HB 5474](#), §§ 3 & 10-12, as amended, effective October 1, 2024).

Notice of Rent Increases

This session, the legislature passed a law prohibiting residential rent increases from being effective unless the landlord provides the tenant with at least 45 days' advance written notice. For leases with a term of one month or less, the notice must equal the full length of the lease ([HB 5474](#), §§ 16 & 17, as amended, effective October 1, 2024, and applicable to rental agreements entered, renewed, or extended after this date).

Insurance

Clinical Peers

The legislature passed a law generally requiring clinical peers doing adverse determination reviews to have a nonrestricted license in the same specialty as the treating physician or other health care professional who is managing the condition, procedure, or treatment under review. The new law also requires health carriers to authorize clinical peers to reverse initial adverse determinations that were based on medical necessity. This applies when the carrier, as required by law, offers a covered person's health care professional the opportunity to confer with a clinical peer of the carrier following the adverse determination ([PA 24-19](#), §§ 32 & 33, effective January 1, 2025, except January 1, 2026, for the change to the clinical peer definition).

Coronary Calcium Scans

This session, the legislature passed a law requiring certain fully insured individual and group health insurance policies to cover coronary calcium scans. Under the act, these are CT scans of the heart looking for calcium deposits in arteries ([PA 24-19](#), §§ 18 & 19, effective January 1, 2025).

Labor and Public Employees

Paid Sick Leave

This year, the legislature expanded the state's paid sick leave law by, among other things (1) covering nearly all private sector employees, instead of only certain types of "service workers"; (2) covering nearly all private sector employers with at least 25 employees in 2025, those with at least 11 employees in 2026, and then those with at least one employee in 2027; and (3) increasing the rate at which employees accrue leave from one hour for every 40 hours worked, to one hour for every 30 hours worked.

The new law also prohibits employers from requiring employees to provide documentation supporting their reasons for taking leave. Additionally, it sets employer recordkeeping requirements

that, among other things, require employee “pay stubs” to include an employee’s accrued paid sick time and use for the calendar year ([PA 24-8](#), most provisions effective January 1, 2025).

Municipalities

Municipal Employees Retirement

A new law creates the Municipal Employees Retirement Commission and, starting January 1, 2025, transfers responsibility for the Municipal Employees Retirement System (MERS) and the Policemen and Firemen Survivors’ Benefit Fund from the State Employees Retirement Commission to the new commission. The commission consists of 11 appointed trustees plus the state treasurer and comptroller.

The new law also (1) allows a MERS retiree who returns to work for a municipality that does not participate in MERS to participate in and receive credit in that municipality’s retirement system and (2) requires the state comptroller to create and administer a municipal defined contribution retirement plan, which any municipality may join ([HB 5524](#), §§ 82-90, various effective dates).

Public Health

Health Worker and Patient Safety

This session, a new law includes various provisions to address the safety of health care workers, particularly those employed by home health care and home health aide agencies (other than licensed hospice organizations). The act generally requires these agencies to collect certain information during client intake on the client and the service location and give it to the employees assigned to the client (but they cannot deny services solely based on this information or the client’s inability or refusal to provide it).

The act creates a two-year grant program to help home health agencies provide safety escorts and purchase technology for staff safety checks. It also requires these agencies, as well as certain other types of health care facilities, to comply with applicable safety-related training requirements. It requires DSS to condition home care agencies’ Medicaid reimbursement on meeting these training standards and allows the department to do so for the other facilities.

Among numerous provisions on other health care-related matters, the act also (1) generally requires hospitals to have their cybersecurity disruption plans audited annually and make related information available to certain agencies on a confidential basis; (2) requires primary care providers to make materials on gun safety available to patients; and (3) generally allows

pharmacists, when dispensing opioids, to give the patient information on personal opioid drug deactivation and disposal systems ([PA 24-19](#), various effective dates).

Telehealth

A new law makes permanent certain temporary expanded requirements for telehealth service delivery and insurance coverage that were scheduled to sunset under prior law on June 30, 2024. For example, the act (1) allows authorized telehealth providers to use audio-only telephone to provide services; (2) allows authorized providers to provide telehealth services from any location to patients at any location, subject to applicable state and federal requirements; and (3) prohibits health carriers from reducing the amount they reimburse telehealth providers for covered services appropriately provided through telehealth.

Among other changes, the act expands the list of authorized telehealth providers to include all Connecticut licensed health care providers and pharmacists. It also repeals a provision in prior law that permanently allowed out-of-state mental or behavioral health services providers to practice telehealth in Connecticut under certain conditions. It instead temporarily allows them to do so, until June 30, 2025, if they meet certain requirements, such as registering with DPH and obtaining a Connecticut license within a specified timeframe ([sHB 5198](#), as amended, various effective dates).

Social Services

Deaf, Deafblind, or Hard of Hearing Services

This year, the legislature passed a law establishing the Bureau of Services for Persons who are Deaf, Deafblind, or Hard of Hearing within the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS). The act requires ADS to hire a bureau director and sets forth the director's qualifications and duties. Under the new law, state agencies must appoint one employee to act as a point of contact for concerns related to people who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing. The law also modifies a related advisory board by changing its name, modifying its membership, and expanding its duties and reporting requirements ([PA 24-81](#), §§ 65-72, various effective dates).

Medical Debt Reporting

This session, the legislature passed a law prohibiting Connecticut health care providers and hospitals from reporting medical debt to credit rating agencies for use in a credit report. It also voids any debt that is reported to credit agencies. Under the act, medical debt is an obligation to pay for received health care goods (e.g., devices, durable medical equipment, or prescription drugs) or services (i.e., services for the diagnosis, prevention, treatment, cure, or relief of a health condition, illness, injury, or disease). The act excludes debts charged to a credit card unless the

card is issued under a plan offered specifically to pay for these goods and services ([PA 24-6](#), effective July 1, 2024).

Wheelchair Repair

In response to last year’s task force, the legislature passed a new law on wheelchair repair. Among other things, the law (1) sets requirements related to wheelchair repair for any company selling or leasing wheelchairs in the state, such as a deadline to complete the repair after a consumer’s request; (2) restricts prior authorization and new prescription requirements for certain wheelchairs under Medicaid and private insurance plans; and (3) establishes a Complex Rehabilitation Technology and Wheelchair Repair Advisory Council to monitor wheelchair repair and make recommendations on improving repair times ([PA 24-58](#), effective July 1, 2024).

State Finances

ARPA Allocation Adjustments and Other Executive Budgeting Changes

This session, the legislature reallocated approximately \$373.5 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to support initiatives in FY 25. This same act also made several executive budgeting changes for FY 25, including temporarily (1) increasing the threshold triggering the Finance Advisory Committee’s (FAC) required approval for intra-agency fund transfers from one appropriation to another and (2) authorizing the governor to make inter-agency transfers for pension fund contributions. It also appropriated \$340.2 million from the General Fund and \$6.6 million from the Special Transportation Fund (STF) to cover deficiencies in various state agencies and programs for FY 24. These appropriations were offset by reductions totaling \$283.7 million across five appropriated funds ([PA 24-81](#), most provisions effective upon passage).

Special Transportation Fund Debt

A new law requires that a portion of the STF’s balance be used to pay down STF-supported debt in order to reduce debt service costs in FY 25 and beyond. Specifically, the new law (1) caps the STF balance at the end of FY 24 at 18% of FY 25 appropriations and (2) requires any amount exceeding that cap to be used to pay off or reduce STF-supported debt ([HB 5524](#), § 124, effective upon passage).

Taxes

Local Option Residential Property Tax Relief

A new law gives towns the option of providing a partial property tax exemption for certain owner-occupied primary residences. This law specifically allows towns to exempt between 5% and 35% of the assessed value of owner-occupied single-family homes and duplexes (including condominiums and common interest community units) ([HB 5524](#), § 71, effective upon passage).

Municipal Property Tax Assessment Freezes

An existing property tax incentive allows municipalities to freeze a property's assessed (i.e., taxable) value if it is being developed for certain specified purposes (e.g., office, retail, or manufacturing purposes). This incentive allows the property's owner to develop the property without paying taxes on the improvements during the freeze. This year, the legislature changed the law to allow municipalities to provide a freeze for up to 30 years and expand it to also cover personal property. Under prior law, the freeze could last for up to 10 years and applied only to real property ([HB 5474](#), § 6, as amended, effective October 1, 2024).

Transportation

Automated Enforcement

This session, the legislature enacted several provisions establishing or modifying authorizations for automated enforcement of certain motor vehicle laws. One new law restarts DOT's work zone speed camera program and makes it permanent, with a few modifications from the pilot program (e.g., allowing cameras at up to 15 locations, rather than up to three as under the pilot program) ([PA 24-40](#), §§ 42-50, effective July 1, 2024).

Two other new laws allow municipalities to adopt municipal ordinances on passing school buses and excessive vehicle noise and enforce violations of those ordinances through automated enforcement. The new law for school bus passing violations (1) requires towns adopting an ordinance to set the fine for violations at \$250 and process them through municipal procedures and (2) sunsets the current statutory authorization for automated enforcement of the state violation, which is a \$450 fine and processed through the state centralized infractions bureau ([SSB 420](#), as amended, effective July 1, 2024).

For excessive vehicle noise, the new law allows municipalities to adopt an ordinance establishing a vehicle noise limit (other than for noise from a horn) of 80 decibels and authorizes the use of cameras to enforce the limit. Any such ordinance must require issuing a written warning for a first

violation, a \$100 fine for a second violation, and a \$250 fine for subsequent violations ([HB 5524](#), §§ 132-136, effective July 1, 2024).

Low-Speed Vehicles

A new law generally allows the operation of low-speed vehicles (LSVs) on roads with speed limits of 25 mph or less. Under the new law, as under federal regulation, an LSV is a four-wheeled motor vehicle that has a (1) speed attainable in one mile of more than 20 mph but not more than 25 mph on a paved, level surface and (2) gross vehicle weight rating of under 3,000 pounds. The new law requires LSVs to be registered, titled, and insured and their drivers to hold a valid driver's license, among other requirements. The state and municipalities may further restrict or prohibit LSV use on roads under their jurisdiction ([PA 24-20](#), §§ 33-36, effective October 1, 2024).

Veterans' and Military Affairs

Property Tax Exemption for Permanent and Total Disability

The legislature created a new property tax exemption for veterans who have a permanent and total disability rating from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Beginning with the 2024 assessment year (and first applicable to tax bills due July 1, 2025), the new law requires municipalities to fully exempt a primary residence or motor vehicle for each of these veterans. To qualify, veterans must file for the exemption with their town assessor. The exemption may also be transferred to a deceased veteran's surviving spouse or minor child ([PA 24-46](#), effective October 1, 2024, and applicable to assessment years starting on or after that date).