

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE - MAR. 15, 2024

SENATE DEMOCRATS PRIORITY BILLS RECEIVE PUBLIC HEARING:

- [SB 5 - An Act Concerning School Resources](#). The Education Committee held a public hearing on Monday. Testimony was heard on the Senate Democrats priority bill that looks to: (1) establish a taskforce, working with school districts, to develop a program reducing special education costs; (2) provide that all children in the Baby Bond program be automatically enrolled in the Care 4 Kids program at birth; (3) align state law with federal law to provide AI training to protect student privacy; (4) expand a pilot program for responsible social media usage/digital literacy; and (5) ensure that building blueprints in schools are consistent with the blueprints of first responders.
- [SB 8 - An Act Concerning Drug Affordability](#) - The Human Services Committee heard testimony on Tuesday on another Senate Democrats priority bill that would, among other things: (1) bring in affordable prescription drugs from Canada (with prior federal government approval); (2) work with hospitals and nonprofit manufacturers to identify drug shortages; (3) piggyback off other states or the federal government's negotiation of prescription drug prices; (4) create a prescription drug advisory board; and (5) lower cost of insulin coming on the market/provide insulin coverage on all insurance plans.

GOVERNOR LAMONT URGES PASSAGE OF JUNK FEE LEGISLATION: In a press release yesterday (found [here](#)), Governor Lamont urged the legislature to pass [SB 15 - An Act Requiring Fee Disclosures](#). The proposed "junk fees" bill would prohibit companies from selling or advertising: (1) any event ticket, food or beverage, or the delivery thereof, and (2) the right to occupy any hotel room, motel room, short-term rental, or similar lodging that includes sleeping accommodations unless the company displays or offers clearly and conspicuously the total price, including, but not limited to, any mandatory fees or charges other than any applicable taxes imposed by government entities, for such consumer goods or services. The Governor said, "upfront pricing will ensure that consumers are able to make well-informed purchases, and it levels the playing field among competitors." Attorney General Tong and Consumer Protection Commissioner Cafferelli are also in support of the legislation.

COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARINGS THIS WEEK: Other notable public hearings:

- **JUDICIARY** - Testimony was heard on bills that would: (1) criminalize unauthorized dissemination of intimate images created/digitally altered by AI; and (2) require the Department of Children and Families to provide certain resources/materials to relatives of a parent whose death resulted from intimate partner violence.
- **LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES** - Testimony was heard on bills that would: (1) require certain employers to provide advance notice to certain employees regarding said employees' work schedule/work schedule changes (food, retail and hospitality industries), create a cause of action and penalties for alleged violations, and allow whistleblowers to bring a suit for an alleged violation; (2) create certain protections for warehouse workers in the state against quotas imposed by employers; (3) outline rideshare/delivery driver standards concerning reimbursement for mileage, tolls, vehicle wear and tear, trip

cancellations; and (4) require employers to provide twelve months' notice prior to making changes to a paid time off policy.

- **HUMAN SERVICES** - Testimony was provided on bills that would: (1) require the Department of Social Services ("DSS") (to the extent permissible under federal law), provide coverage for biomarker testing for the diagnosis, treatment, appropriate management/ongoing monitoring of a Medicaid enrollee's disease/condition; (2) prohibit the reporting of medical debt to credit rating agencies/impose penalties via reduction or withdrawal of Medicaid funds to the extent permissible under federal law; (3) stagger distribution of supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits so that benefits are distributed at four intervals during a month and requires state participation in the federal program; and (4) require DSS to study and implement changes necessary to ensure a fair compensation system for deliverable fuel vendors in the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program without a negative impact to program participants.
- **INSURANCE** - Testimony was heard before the committee on bills that would: (1) extend telehealth provisions adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic; (2) provide for the regulation and taxation of travel insurance, and associated entities, products, and professionals in this state; and (3) require the Insurance Commissioner to conduct a study of usage-based automobile liability insurance programs for new drivers.
- **TRANSPORTATION** - Testimony was heard on a bill that would establish an Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Coordinating Council to assess and report on strategies and plans necessary to ensure affordable, equitable, accessible, and reliable integration of battery electric vehicles, fuel cell electric vehicles, plug-in hybrid electric vehicles and range-extended battery electric vehicles into the state's transportation network. House and Senate Republican leadership held a press conference in advance of the hearing expressing their concerns that the Council composition is unfairly democratic leaning and the proposed legislation, if passed, would result in an EV mandate based on California emission standards.
- **PUBLIC HEALTH** - Testimony was provided on a bill that would provide funding for the Rare Disease Advisory Council, and others that would extend telehealth services, require additional hospital assistance programs and reporting for hospitals and prohibit adverse actions against health care providers for providing certain health care services.
- **ENERGY** - Testimony was provided on bills that would: (1) broaden the base of the applicability of the gross earnings tax to fund PEG/PETIA, task the Office of Consumer Counsel with developing a CT Internet for All Plan; (2) require PURA to report on any program to divide the upfront interconnection costs of new electric grid interconnection points among multiple renewable energy project developers; (3) establish an Energy Data Bill of Rights; and (4) create a task force to study transmission infrastructure in the state and potential use of grid enhancing technologies.
- **JF DEADLINES**: The Aging Committee, Children's Committee, Housing Committee, and Veteran's Affairs Committee all met their JF deadlines this week. Any bill not voted

out of committee is considered "dead" and will be moved to the end of your weekly bill tracking report.