



# Agency Legislative Proposal

2026 Session

## General Information

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Dept. of Aging and Disability Services</b>
<b>Proposal Name</b>	Protecting the Integrity of Municipal Agents
<b>Legislative Liaison</b>	Jennifer Proto, ADS Legislative & Administrative Advisor
<b>Division Requesting Proposal</b>	Bureau of Aging
<b>Drafter</b>	Jennifer Proto

## Overview

### **Brief Summary of Proposal**

By law, municipalities must appoint a municipal agent for elderly persons to help older adults learn about community resources and file for benefits. PA 24-39 made the agents' duties mandatory, rather than permissive as under prior law. This proposal seeks to add clarifying language to prohibit the appointment of an individual with a real or perceived conflict of interest.

### **What problem is this proposal looking to solve?**

This year ADS was made aware of an issue with a licensed independent insurance agent selling Medicare plans while also serving in the role of municipal agent. In the role of municipal agent, we believe this individual has a conflict of interest that does not properly serve health insurance needs or rights of Connecticut residents while giving them a distinct advantage over other insurance agents by leveraging the integrity and title of municipal agent. Specifically, our concerns include the municipal agent: preventing consumers from receiving unbiased information about all health care insurance options and providing a significantly smaller scope of services (limited mainly to those advanced by her business interests) to town residents than those that are offered by other municipal agents, based on website comparisons. The municipal agent did not respond to an invitation from the Office of the Healthcare Advocate to discuss these concerns. The statute also includes outdated references to "the elderly" – a term that is no longer being used in the field of aging services.

### **How does the proposal solve the problem?**

ADS believes that this proposal will clarify that Connecticut municipal agents, as public servants, must be without conflicts of interest to effectively serve in this role. While the current statute does not expressly preclude conflicts of interest, ADS believes the spirit of the law provides that each agent should not divide their loyalty in a way that may enrich their own business interests to the possible detriment of sharing unbiased consumer education and most appropriate health insurance plan choices. Further, requiring municipal chief elected officials and chief executive officers to appoint individuals who are free of real or perceived conflicts of interest will protect the reputation and effectiveness of this role. The proposal also updates the outdated references to “the elderly” and renames the position as “municipal agent for aging.”

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Section by section summary:

Section #(s)	Section Summary
1	Adds clarifying language to prohibit the appointment of an individual with a real or perceived conflict of interest to the role of municipal agent. Updates the outdated references to “the elderly” and renames the positions as “municipal agent for aging.”

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<b>Statutory Reference:</b>	CGS 7-127b
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## **Background**

☒ New Proposal

☐ Resubmission

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**Have there been any changes in federal laws or regulations that make this legislation necessary?**

No

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**Have there been any changes in state laws or regulations that make this legislation necessary?**

Yes                      PA 24-39 made municipal agents' duties mandatory, rather than permissive as under prior law. It also expanded their duties to include helping older adults access resources on housing opportunities, including information on accessing elderly housing waiting lists, applications, and consumer reports.

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**Has this proposal or a similar proposal been implemented in other states?**

No                      Not that we are aware of.

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**Have certain constituencies called for this proposal?**

Yes                      The Office of the Healthcare Advocate serves to inform and protect the healthcare rights of the residents of Connecticut and is in support of this proposal.

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### **Interagency Impact**

☒ Check here if this proposal does NOT impact other agencies

<b>Agency</b>	N/A
<b>Contact</b>	N/A
<b>Date Contacted</b>	N/A
<b>Status</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Unresolved
<b>Open Issues</b>	N/A

### **Fiscal Impact**

☒ No Fiscal Impact

☐ Budget Option Submitted

Include the section number(s) which have a fiscal impact and the anticipated impact:

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**State**

No

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**Municipal**

No

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**Federal**

No

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### **Other Information**

If there is any additional information we should know, please detail below:

While not required, many municipal agents undergo an 18+ hour Medicare training course through the state CHOICES program, or partner with their local Area Agency on Aging to provide a community presentation or open enrollment event. However, insurance agents, including the business operated by the municipal agent in question, are precluded from the CHOICES training program because of a potential conflict of interest. (CHOICES Policies Section 3.35 states that anyone who receives compensation for enrolling beneficiaries in a specific insurance plan or plan has an inherent conflict of interest.)

Connecticut's SHIP program, known as CHOICES in Connecticut, is a national program that provides free, unbiased insurance counseling and education for those who are Medicare-eligible, their families and their caregivers. CHOICES is a partnership between the ADS Bureau of Aging, the Center for Medicare Advocacy, and the Area Agencies on Aging.

## **Legislative Language**

Insert fully drafted bill below. Please use standard legislative drafting considerations, as published by LCO [here](#).

Section 1. Section 7-127b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

The chief elected official or the chief executive officer if by ordinance of each municipality shall appoint a municipal agent for [elderly persons] aging. Such agent shall be a staff member of a senior center, a member of an agency that serves [elderly persons] older adults in the municipality or a responsible resident of the municipality who has demonstrated an interest in assisting [elderly persons] older adults or has been involved in programs in the field of aging.

(b) The duties of the municipal agent shall include, but need not be limited to: (1) Disseminating information to [elderly persons] older adults, assisting such persons in learning about the community resources available to them and publicizing such resources and benefits; (2) assisting [elderly persons] older adults in applying for federal and state benefits, and accessing community resources, available to such persons; and (3) reporting to the chief elected official or chief executive officer of the municipality and the Department of Aging and Disability Services any needs and problems of [the elderly] older adults and any recommendations for action to improve services to [the elderly] older adults. For the purposes of this subsection, "community resources" means resources that assist [elderly persons] older adults in gaining access to housing opportunities, including, but not limited to, information regarding access to waitlists for housing designated for [elderly persons] older adults, applications and consumer reports.

(c) The chief elected official or the chief executive officer shall be responsible for appointing a municipal agent who is free from a conflict of interest, or a perceived conflict of interest, that may interfere with the individual's ability to provide unbiased information, assistance, or referral services. Beginning July 1, 2026, the municipal agent shall, at the time of their appointment and any reappointment, certify in writing that they are unaware of any existing real or perceived conflicts of interest, and submit such certification in a form and manner as prescribed by the Aging and Disability Services commissioner. If a conflict of interest should arise, any interested party may, and the municipal agent shall,

immediately report the matter to the appointing authority to determine whether the matter can be reassigned to another agent, or a municipal employee. In making such determination, the chief elected official or chief executive officer may seek technical assistance from the Department of Aging and Disability Services. For the purposes of this section, a conflict of interest shall include, but not be limited to, the receipt of any financial or other personal benefit by such agent, such agent's spouse, parent, sibling, child or the spouse of a child or a business with which such agent is associated.

[(c)] (d) Each municipal agent shall serve for a term of two or four years, at the discretion of the appointing authority of each municipality and may be reappointed. If more than one agent is necessary to carry out the purposes of this section, the appointing authority, in its discretion, may appoint one or more assistant agents. Two or more municipalities may jointly appoint one municipal agent to carry out the duties and responsibilities under this subsection, provided such municipalities shall enter into a memorandum of agreement or understanding for such purpose, which memorandum may include terms concerning the sharing of any related expenses. The town clerk in each municipality shall notify the Department of Aging and Disability Services immediately of the appointment of a new municipal agent. Each municipality may provide to its municipal agent resources sufficient for such agent to perform the duties of the office.

[(d)] (e) The Department of Aging and Disability Services shall adopt and disseminate to municipalities guidelines as to the role and duties of municipal agents and such informational and technical materials as may assist such agents in performance of their duties. The department, in cooperation with the area agencies on aging, may provide training for municipal agents within the available resources of the department and of the area agencies on aging.

[(e)] (f) On or before January 1, 2025, the Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services shall create a directory of municipal agents appointed pursuant to the provisions of this section, which shall include, but need not be limited to, the name, title, telephone number, electronic mail address and mailing address of each municipal agent. The commissioner shall post a link to the directory on the Department of Aging and Disability Services' Internet web site.



# Agency Legislative Proposal

2026 Session

## General Information

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Dept. of Aging and Disability Services</b>
<b>Proposal Name</b>	Updating Staffing Methodology for Teachers of the Visually Impaired
<b>Legislative Liaison</b>	Jennifer Proto, ADS Legislative & Administrative Advisor
<b>Division Requesting Proposal</b>	Bureau of Education & Services for the Blind
<b>Drafter</b>	Jennifer Proto

## Overview

### **Brief Summary of Proposal**

Updates teacher caseload management determination process to align with current practice.

### **What problem is this proposal looking to solve?**

Connecticut's local school districts with enrolled students who are blind or have visual impairments generally have three options in providing an accessible education: 1) hiring their own certified teachers of the visually impaired (TVIs), 2) outplacing students to a private provider, or 3) requesting TVI services from ADS, through BESB. As of September 2025, our Children's Services Unit of 30 TVIs are providing services to 732 students, which does not include students who have been referred to us and are awaiting intake. The process of assigning caseloads and adjusting them to balance diverse and evolving student needs within our staff capacity is labor-intensive and ongoing throughout the year. The proposal would eliminate reference to an outdated statutory formula that credits 6 points for each child learning braille (~10% of our student caseload) and 1 point for each non-braille student (~90% of our caseload), with a recommendation of one full-time certified TVI assigned per 25 points credited. The new replacement language aligns with our current practice by requiring consideration of the instruction levels established in the student's individualized education plan (IEP) or 504 service plan, the student's geographical location, and other relevant caseload management factors, as outlined in the bureau's service delivery guidelines, as amended from time to time, to determine the number of teachers needed to serve the school districts.



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**How does the proposal solve the problem?**

Considering multiple factors relevant to the unique needs of students with blindness or visual impairments, including any requirements of an individualized education plan or service plan, allows for a more realistic determination of teacher workload and to efficiently utilize teacher capacity to effectively serve as many students as possible. Matching sufficient instructional time to student needs is directly tied to our mission of maximizing opportunities for the independence and well-being of people with disabilities and older adults in Connecticut.

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Section #(s)	Section Summary
1	Eliminates reference to an outdated teacher caseload management formula that credits 6 points for each child learning braille and 1 point for each child who is not learning braille, with one full-time certified teacher who instructs students who are visually impaired assigned for every 25 points credited. It instead aligns with current BESB practice by requiring the ADS commissioner to consider the instruction levels established in the student's individualized education plan or service plan, the student's geographical location, and other relevant caseload management factors to determine the number of teachers needed to serve the school districts.

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<b>Statutory Reference:</b>	CGS § 17a-812(b)
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## **Background**

☐ New Proposal

☒ Resubmission

<b>Bill #(s)</b>	<b>Reason bill(s) did not move forward</b>
HB 7025	Human Services Public Hearing on 2/27; not reported out of committee. Issues with pending labor grievances were cited as the reason, which have since been resolved.

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**Have there been any changes in federal laws or regulations that make this legislation necessary?**

No

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**Have there been any changes in state laws or regulations that make this legislation necessary?**

No

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**Has this proposal or a similar proposal been implemented in other states?**

Yes      BESB is not aware of any states that base caseloads entirely on whether a student is learning braille or not, as the current law does. Considering multiple factors, especially the requirements of an IEP, is common practice, including in the states of Michigan, Minnesota, and Texas.

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**Have certain constituencies called for this proposal?**

No

### **Interagency Impact**

☒ Check here if this proposal does NOT impact other agencies

<b>Agency</b>	N/A
<b>Contact</b>	N/A
<b>Date Contacted</b>	N/A
<b>Status</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Unresolved
<b>Open Issues</b>	N/A

### **Fiscal Impact**

☒ No Fiscal Impact

☐ Budget Option Submitted

Include the section number(s) which have a fiscal impact and the anticipated impact:

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**State**

No

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**Municipal**

No

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**Federal**

No

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### **Other Information**

If there is any additional information we should know, please detail below: N/A

## **Legislative Language**

Insert fully drafted bill below. Please use standard legislative drafting considerations, as published by LCO [here](#).

Section 1. Subsection (b) of section 17a-812 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective August 1, 2026):

(b) The Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services shall expend funds for the services made available pursuant to subsection (a) of this section from the educational aid for children who are blind or visually impaired account in accordance with the provisions of this subsection. The Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services may adopt, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, such regulations as the commissioner deems necessary to carry out the purpose and intent of this subsection.

(1) The Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services shall provide, upon written request from any interested school district, the services of teachers who instruct students who are visually impaired, based on the levels established in the individualized education or service plan. The Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services shall also make available resources, including, but not limited to, the braille and large print library, to all teachers of public and nonpublic school children. The commissioner may also provide vision-related professional development and training to all school districts and cover the actual cost for paraprofessionals from school districts to participate in agency-sponsored braille training programs. The commissioner shall utilize education consultant positions, funded by moneys appropriated from the General Fund, to supplement new staffing that will be made available through the educational aid for children who are blind or visually impaired account, which shall be governed by formal written policies established by the commissioner.

(2) The Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services may use funds appropriated to said account to provide specialized books, materials, equipment, supplies, adaptive technology services and devices, specialist examinations and aids, preschool programs and vision-related independent living services, excluding primary educational placement, for eligible children.

(3) The Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services may, within available appropriations, employ certified teachers who instruct students who are visually impaired in sufficient numbers to meet the requests for services received from school districts. In responding to such requests, the commissioner shall consider factors including, but not limited to, the instruction levels established in the student's individualized education plan or service plan, the student's geographical location, and other relevant caseload management factors, as outlined in the bureau's service delivery guidelines, as amended from time to time, to [utilize a formula for] determine[ing] the number of teachers needed to serve the school districts[, crediting six points for each child learning braille and one point for each other child, with one full-time certified teacher who instructs students who are visually impaired assigned for every twenty-five points credited]. The commissioner shall exercise due diligence to employ the needed number of certified teachers who instruct students who are visually impaired, but shall not be liable for lack of resources. Funds appropriated to said account may also be utilized to employ additional staff in numbers sufficient to provide compensatory skills, evaluations and training to children who are blind or visually impaired, special assistants and other support staff necessary to ensure the efficient operation of service delivery. Not later than October first of each year, the Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services shall determine the number of teachers needed based on the formula provided in this subdivision. Based on such determination, the Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services shall estimate the funding needed to pay such teachers' salaries and related expenses.

(4) In any fiscal year, when funds appropriated to cover the combined costs associated with providing the services set forth in subdivisions (2) and (3) of this subsection are projected to be insufficient, the Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services may collect revenue from all school districts that have requested such services on a per student pro rata basis, in the sums necessary to cover the projected portion of these services for which there are insufficient appropriations.