

JOINT TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Interim Secretary Joshua E. Wojcik (Office of Policy and Management)
Commissioner Michelle Gilman (Department of Administrative Services)
Commissioner Daniel O'Keefe (Department of Economic & Community
Development)

*Testimony Regarding [House Bill 5247](#) An Act Concerning a Test Bed Technologies
Program and the JobsCT Tax Rebate Program*

Senator Needleman, Representative Steinberg, Senator Fazio, Representative Marra, and distinguished members of the Energy and Technology Committee. We appreciate this opportunity to testify **in opposition** to [House Bill 5247](#), *An Act Concerning a Test Bed Technologies Program and the JobsCT Tax Rebate Program*.

The Office of Policy and Management (OPM), Department of Administrative Services (DAS), and Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD) strongly oppose House Bill 5247, as the concerns remain about potentially undermining our state procurement process and standards, and creating significant administrative mandates. House Bill 5247 is nearly identical to last year's [House Bill 7018](#), the previous year's [House Bill 5444](#), and [Public Act 23-64](#), which the Governor returned to the General Assembly without his signature. As noted in the veto message, the proposed testbed program under this bill undermines the successes of the existing Connecticut Innovation (CI) program and deters competition, which is the foundation for public procurement.

The proposed bill creates significant administrative mandates for DECD, DAS, OPM, and other state agencies in a way that conflicts with existing statutes and discourages solution-oriented innovation. It requires resources that are not currently appropriated or within the Governor's proposed budget.

Encouraging, Piloting and Implementing Innovation

Innovation is not only a laudable aim, it is a focus for the Lamont administration, and

it is in exactly that same spirit that we launched the [Governor's Innovation Lab](#) at CI. This initiative connects CT-based CI portfolio companies to state agencies and funds a structured pilot-to-procurement process aimed at increasing operational efficiency, reducing costs for taxpayers, and helping startups to grow their businesses.

The Innovation Lab program established pursuant to C.G.S. § [32-39e](#), authorizes the State to test a technology, product, or process by employing it to validate the commercial viability. The Innovation Lab program promotes Connecticut-based businesses and/or small contractors or minority business enterprises that could address an agency's identified need(s), or opportunities to enhance efficiency and/or effectiveness. The current process outlined in statute provides sufficient time to evaluate the success of a solution based on an agency's identified needs. The current process features a collaborative approach with the piloting agencies, which encourages participation and dedication of appropriate oversight. This program is operated within OPM and DAS, in cooperation with CI. Since 2021, seven pilots have been launched, with several deemed a success and permanently implemented. The table below summarizes the pilots that have been launched.

CI has the statutory power to outline requirements, perform necessary due diligence, and establish guardrails that must be adhered to by vendors seeking participation in the program. The existing statute also adds guardrails for OPM and DAS to consider before a pilot is implemented on a permanent basis.

Pilot #	Stage	Agency	Vendor Contract	Description	Pilot Start	Pilot End
1	Over -not continued	UCONN	Copyleaks	Technology for tracking and tracing textual content to identify copyright infringement and plagiarism	3/1/23	8/31/23
2	Over -not continued	UCHC	Medtel	Cloud based surgical coordination and management platform	3/14/23	3/31/24
3	Over -procured	OSC	Intellihealth	Clinical anti-obesity programming and management of anti-obesity medications creating a standard protocol for treatment of obesity	7/1/23	4/30/24
6	Over -procured	UCONN	Vita Health	Suicidal risk clinical care technology and program. The program has been so successful that it has been awarded a federal grant that will leverage Vita Health. UConn executed permanent contract on 5/1/25	1/15/24	4/30/25
4	Pilot Underway	DOH	Storyhub	SmartBrief technology to automatically produce project updates and alerts for 100+ Department of Housing projects	9/1/24	9/30/25
5	Pilot Underway	UCHC	Budderfly	Energy management services using proprietary software that separates airflow management from heating and cooling. Note: The first pilot with Budderfly was denied on 10/23 and revised pilot was approved on 2/24.	8/1/2025	
7	Pilot Underway	DOH	Matrix Rentals	Solution aimed at matching DOH renters with landlords automating the current paper driven process. Pilot was extended to incorporate the homeless population. NOTE: A request for IT Capital was submitted for consideration, however, additional follow up work is required.	1/15/24	6/30/26

Connecticut agencies also frequently seek innovative products in their procurement process from companies outside the state, which makes the changes outlined in this bill unnecessary. Such procurements are solicited with careful design on the challenges the agency is encountering, the appropriate compliance with state and federal law, and the identified solution. The procurement selections are made using careful due diligence including the evaluation of efficiency, data privacy, security, cost, company track record of success and many other factors.

Ethical Procurement

If passed, this bill would undermine and erode our competitive procurement processes. Although the participant pool in the bill is limited to DAS-registered Small Business Enterprises (SBEs), the process allows any currently available product or service—including those already under contract—to be considered if it can be shown through a third-party assessment to “promote operational cost reduction.” The bill does not define this term, but emphasizes product and service costs rather than the overall cost of doing business with the state after a testing period of no more than 60 days.

This approach would encourage vendors to market their existing goods and services to state agencies, which contradicts Connecticut’s procurement policies aimed at maintaining a level playing field. A vendor-driven, time-limited, and partial evaluation process is inadequate to safeguard the interests of the state, Connecticut businesses, and residents. Additionally, sixty days is too short to conduct a meaningful analysis.

Furthermore, given the large number of vendors that would likely reach out to agencies, along with the proposed timelines for agency responses, this proposal would create a significant administrative burden for state departments that are required to evaluate the submissions. Receipt, evaluation, and distribution of the applicant technologies would consume time that could otherwise be utilized by state agencies to articulate their challenges, develop ethical procurement solicitations or pilots, and, finally, deploy the technologies that could deliver efficiencies. Lines 101-103 refer to a request for proposals (RFP), which is a standard procurement step. RFPs are intended to solicit multiple responses. The contents of an RFP is designed by a state agency in response to agency need with specific parameters, evaluated based

on reasonable criteria, and completed with selection of a contractor that meets the criteria. The bill makes the RFP specific to procuring the technology that went through the pilot, which is the reverse of procurement procedures.

Of particular note, Lines 93 to 95 would create a new exemption from the Freedom of Information laws.

Creating Connecticut businesses and jobs

Section 2 of House Bill 5247 significantly alters the JobsCT program by allowing an “affected business entity” to claim the JobsCT tax rebate without creating any new jobs. It does this by eliminating the two-year lookback used to verify that full-time equivalent (FTEs) were created and maintained. The bill articulates that a qualified business must exceed employment levels as of January 1, 2020.

This change fundamentally undermines the core intent of the JobsCT program, which is to drive economic growth by attracting and retaining large employers that provide high-paying jobs in Connecticut. The program was designed to offer a tax rebate based on a percentage of withholding taxes from net new employees—ensuring that incentives are tied directly to job creation and workforce expansion.

By decoupling the credit from the two-year lookback, the bill risks turning JobsCT into a passive tax benefit rather than a strategic economic development tool. This could reduce Connecticut’s competitiveness in attracting new investment, weaken accountability for public dollars, and fail to deliver the intended multiplier effect of high-quality job growth on local economies.

As noted above, the current proposal is substantially similar to previous versions, including, Public Act 23-64, which the Governor returned to the General Assembly without his signature. The veto message is attached.

For these reasons, OPM, DAS, and DECD strongly oppose House Bill 5247. Thank you for your consideration of this information.



Ned Lamont

GOVERNOR
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

June 29, 2023

The Honorable Stephanie Thomas
Secretary of the State
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Madam Secretary:

I hereby return, without my signature, House Bill 6496, *An Act Concerning Test Bed Technologies*.

I fully support the intent of this legislation, which is to reduce operating costs in state government by utilizing new technologies and products. However, this bill would create significant administrative mandates for our state agencies and, more importantly, would undermine our state procurement process and standards. At its core, the proposed legislation undermines the principle of competition, which is the foundation of public procurement, as articulated in CGS 4a-57(a): "all purchases of, and contracts for, supplies, materials, equipment and contractual services... shall be based, when possible, on competitive bids or competitive negotiation."

In 2021, the Connecticut Pilot Test Bed Program was established through Public Act 21-76, *An Act Concerning the Modernization of State Services*, to promote Connecticut based businesses, create jobs, and solve challenges identified by government agencies. Specifically, Section 14 of P.A. 21-76 allows the state to contract with Connecticut-based businesses for innovative technology, processes, or products that can promote government efficiency and reduce burdens. The Office of Policy and Management, the Department of Administrative Services, and Connecticut Innovations are all identified in that statute as partners for the approval and implementation of specific incubator technology. Since its passage, those agencies have been working collaboratively to ensure a fair and balanced approach under the Test Bed Program while maintaining the integrity of our state's procurement process.

House Bill 6496, *An Act Concerning Test Bed Technologies*, would undermine the current successes of the Connecticut Pilot Test Bed Program. Rather than agencies identifying a need to procure innovative products, this legislation reverses this process through a new vendor-driven model. For example, the proposal allows vendors to compel a state agency to review a product that is already in the marketplace or is similar to products already on existing state contracts with public facing price points and contract details. That may result in advantages that allow a vendor to adjust their product or proposal using market-based pricing of current contracts. In addition, the language would apply to currently contracted goods and services, potentially undermining existing contracts and mandating agency heads to review and act on these proposals.

House Bill 6496 further erodes the competitive bidding processes by inappropriately expanding the usage of CGS Section 4a-58(b) and not subjecting the proposed product or service to further competitive bidding. Section 1(g) of the bill states, in relevant part:

(g) If the commissioner of the state agency testing such technology, product or process determines that the test program sufficiently demonstrates that the technology, product or process promotes operational cost reduction, such testing agency may request that the Commissioner of Administrative Services (1) procure such technology for use by any or all state agencies, and (2) make such procurement pursuant to subsection (b) of section 4a-58 of the general statutes.

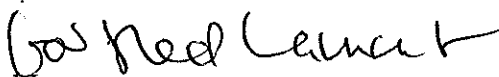
In current practice, CGS 4a-58 is triggered when an agency identifies an emergency because of an “extraordinary condition or contingencies that could not reasonably be foreseen and guarded against” or because of an “unusual trade or market conditions”. The Connecticut Innovations Program established pursuant to Public Act 21-76, involves product development, curated to meet an agency identified need. The process proposed in HB 6496 is not curated to an agency identified need, but rather utilizes products already in production in the marketplace. Thus, a commercially available product identified for operational cost reduction purposes fails to meet the threshold requirements established in CGS 4a-58.

Connecticut Innovations has the statutory power to outline requirements and establish guardrails that must be adhered to by vendors seeking participation in its program. HB 6496, on the other hand, is silent on any effective constraints for evaluating or administering any program.

From an administrative perspective, House Bill 6496 permits a vendor to submit a product to an agency head with a requirement for an initial evaluation within a thirty-day timeframe, and a final evaluation based solely on cost within ninety days. The bill does not limit the number of agencies to which any vendor may submit their proposal. Thus, the same vendor may submit the same proposal to multiple agencies for mandated review in accordance with the identified timeline and criteria creating administrative burdens and duplicative processes for agencies.

For these reasons, I disapprove of House Bill 6496, *An Act Concerning Test Bed Technologies*. Pursuant to Section 15 of Article Fourth of the Constitution of the State of Connecticut, I am returning House Bill 6496 without my signature.

Sincerely,


Ned Lamont
Governor