



Senate Bill 277

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES' RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING FIRE MARSHAL QUALIFICATIONS, BURN INJURY REPORTS AND STATE BUILDING CODE PROVISIONS RELATING TO ACCESSIBILITY

Testimony of the Department of Administrative Services

Public Safety and Security Committee

March 3, 2026

Senator Gaston, Representative Boyd, Senator Cicarella, Representative Howard, and distinguished Public Safety and Security Committee members. We thank you for raising **Senate Bill 277: An Act implementing the Department of Administrative Services' Recommendations Regarding Fire Marshal Qualifications, Burn Injury Reports, and State Building Code Provisions Related to Accessibility.**

Senate Bill 277 aims to strengthen the professional development of fire marshals and inspectors, enhance the Office of the State Fire Marshal's (OSFM) functionality, provide OSFM with a consistent and reliable source of data on burn injuries, and repeal an outdated statute related to accessibility standards for the State Building Code.

Section 1 of the bill makes some changes regarding Fire Marshal qualifications. Currently, fire code officials have the same experience requirements, receive the same level of introductory training, and have the same continuing education requirements regardless of certification level or title. This places an undue barrier to entry-level inspector positions and fails to adequately prepare new fire marshals to fulfill all their legal and professional obligations. The current certification path is not conducive to communities adequately staffing their Fire Marshal's Offices and can lead to delays in construction and dangerous backlogs of missed inspections. This bill is the first step toward creating a pathway through defined certification levels based on national standards. While many of the changes to create this pathway will be made through OSFM's regulations, this proposed statutory change is the first step in the process, as it is needed to establish the entry-level track with heightened experience requirements as certification levels advance.

We recognize the complexity of establishing this pathway through defined certification levels, and we are committed to collaborating with our stakeholders on a workable solution. As these

conversations with stakeholders and the committee progress during the session, we would be happy to discuss additional language to help advance the concept forward.

Section 2 of the bill codifies the current practice of allowing the State Fire Marshal to issue official interpretations for the State Fire Safety Code, just as their counterpart, the State Building Inspector, does for the State Building Code (SBC).

Sections 3 and 7 of the bill make changes to the burn injury report that is sent to the State Fire Marshal. Currently, certain healthcare providers are required to report burn injuries to the OSFM. They also submit this data to the Department of Public Health (DPH). This bill aims to ease the reporting burden on these healthcare providers by removing the requirement for them to report this information to OSFM. Instead, DPH would be responsible for providing an annual report to OSFM that includes data on burn injuries and related deaths. DPH already compiles this information and has collaborated with the DAS on the bill. This change will ensure that OSFM has a consistent, secure, and reliable source of data.

Sections 4-7 of the bill eliminate an obsolete provision regarding the SBC and make conforming changes. C.G.S. § 29-269 requires the Office of the State Building Inspector (OSBI) to revise the SBC to comply with ADA accessibility standards and apply those standards to permits issued on and after October 1, 1975, and state construction undertaken on and after October 1, 1977. Since this provision was enacted, the OSBI has revised the SBC to comply with ADA.

In addition, the section sets forth a separate process for permitting variations and exemptions from the SBC related to accessibility that includes the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (OPAPD). The OPAPD was eliminated in 2017; therefore, § 29-269 is no longer necessary. Requests for variations and exemptions would continue to follow the process outlined in C.G.S. § 29-254.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony, and we urge passage of **Senate Bill 277**.