



2021 Legislative Summary

Below is a synopsis of the priority bills AFT Connecticut worked on this legislative session, the State Budget and Implementor bills; as well as where the American Rescue Plan (ARP) money went. A special session is planned for early fall to allocate the rest of the ARP money.

COVID Related Issues:

[HB 5653](#) limits future extensions of the public health and civil preparedness emergencies after July 20, 2021 and creates a bipartisan commission to study the statutes governing future emergency declarations. **(Governor Signed)**

[HB 6555](#) requires Governor Lamont to submit a plan to the legislature about how he intends to spend more than \$2 billion Congress has allocated to the state. The Appropriations Committee will vote to approve or modify the plan and submit it to the General Assembly for final approval. **(Governor Signed)**

[HB 6686](#) extends the public health and civil preparedness emergencies through July 20, 2021. **(Governor Signed)**

[HB 6478](#) would have created a workers' compensation presumption for COVID-19. Since Governor Lamont refused to sign this bill, it died in the House. This bill did not pass during the regular session, but was addressed with the establishment of the Connecticut Essential Workers COVID-19 Assistance Fund in [SB 1202](#), the budget implementer bill, which passed during the special session. **(Governor Signed)**

[SB 660](#) provides workers' compensation coverage for treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Injury (PTSI) for corrections personnel, dispatchers and EMS workers. It provides coverage for healthcare workers who experience COVID-related PTSI. **(Governor Signed)**

[HB 6516](#) establishes a new distribution method for Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) grants that is based on each municipality's (1) equalized net grand list per capita, (2) designation as an alliance district, and (3) percentage of state-owned property. It also clarifies that Connecticut residents who work in another state, but have been working from home during the pandemic, will not be taxed twice. Finally, it prohibits the state from placing liens on the property of public assistance recipients. **(Governor Signed)**

Labor Issues

[SB 842](#) would have authorized the Comptroller to establish a public option program to offer high-quality, affordable health insurance coverage to small businesses, non-profits and unions with multi-employer Taft-Hartley plans. **It died in the Senate.**

[SB 908](#) mitigates the impacts of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Janus v. AFSCME Council 31* decision, which challenged public-sector unions' ability to collect fees for the services they provide. The bill (1) requires public employers to provide the union with access to orientations for new public employee hires and up-to-

date bargaining unit lists with worksite locations and contact information; (2) clarifies the dues deduction authorization process; (3) maintains the union's ability to meet with members during the workday to respond to grievances, complaints and other issues; and (4) requires public employers to refrain from deterring or discouraging public employees from becoming or remaining members of a union. **(Governor Signed)**

[HB 5377](#) freezes employers unemployment insurance ratings for layoffs related to COVID-19. **(Governor Signed)**

[HB 6476](#) requires the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) to develop and issue a request for a proposal for a disparity study. **(Governor Signed)**

[HB 6633](#) reforms the unemployment insurance system and shores up the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. The following changes will take effect in 2024:

- Increase the taxable wage base from \$15,000 to \$25,000 and indexes it to inflation;
- Reduce the maximum solvency tax rate from 1.4% to 1%;
- Reduce the minimum and expands the maximum experience tax rate, from 0.5-5.4% to 0.1-10%;
- Increase the minimum base period earnings required to qualify for benefits from \$600 to \$1600 and indexes it to inflation, except when the federal government is providing additional benefits;
- Delay increases in the maximum weekly benefit amount until the plan is implemented; and
- Defer initial payment of benefits until employee's exhaust severance payments. **(Governor Signed)**

[SB 904](#) makes the Executive Director of the Department of Labor's Employment Security Division a member of the state employee classified service and increases, from \$150 to \$325, the compensation that State Board of Mediation and Arbitration members receive for each extra day of presiding over a proceeding that lasts for more than one day. The bill also increases, from \$150 to \$200, the compensation the board members receive upon concluding an executive panel session. **(Governor Signed)**

State Employee/Higher Education Issues

[HB 6381](#) established a task force to study the state workforce and retiring state employees. This study would examine adequate succession planning for state employees in order to recruit and maintain the best talent in the state workforce, as well as a review of barriers to managerial recruitment. This bill did not pass during the regular session, but was included in [SB 1202](#), the budget implementer bill, during the special session. **(Governor Signed)**

[HB 6402](#) prevents graduation fees at public institutes of higher education and requires the state comptroller, in consultation with the Board of Regents (BOR) and UConn Board of Trustees (BOT) to study and develop a plan to extend eligibility for participation in the state's group medical insurance plan to part-time, professional state system of higher education employees. It also allows college student athletes to earn compensation through an endorsement contract or employment in an activity unrelated to an intercollegiate athletic program and obtain the legal or professional representation of an attorney or sports agent. **(Governor Signed)**

[HB 6462](#) delays the effective date of 2020 legislative changes affecting law enforcement use of force (§ 29 of PA 20-1, July Special Session (JSS)) from April 1, 2021, to January 1, 2022. Among other things, these

provisions (1) limit the circumstances under which a law enforcement officer's use of deadly physical force is justified and establish factors to consider when evaluating whether the officer's action was reasonable and (2) limit when officers may use chokeholds or similar restraints.

The bill also modifies the circumstances in which officers are justified in using deadly physical force, established in PA 20-1, JSS(§ 29), by, among other things, (1) basing the objective reasonableness standard on the officer's given circumstances at that time; (2) requiring officers to have reasonably determined that no reasonable alternatives exist, rather than having exhausted such alternatives, if using deadly force when making an arrest or preventing escape; and (3) establishing the condition that the escaping person poses a significant threat of death or serious physical injury to others, among other requirements. **(Governor Signed)**

[SB 363](#) expands the Attorney General's powers to include (1) investigating allegations of certain hate crimes and civil rights violations; (2) initiating related legal proceedings; and (3) seeking relief for the affected person. **(Governor Signed)**

[SB 920](#) reestablishes the Governor's authority, which expired January 1, 2020, to approve up to five public-private partnership (P3) project agreements but limits them to Department of Transportation (DOT) projects. It requires DOT to make best efforts to use DOT employees to perform development and inspection work and reduce, or eliminate where possible, the department's reliance on outside consultants. It also requires DOT to submit additional reports on the use of consultants and on P3s' status and effectiveness. It maintains the role of the State Contracting Standards Board, but also allows for non-revenue generating P3s to be approved. **(Governor Signed)**

[HR 11/SR 6](#) approves a memorandum of understanding between the state and the Administrative & Residual Union, AFT Local 4200. **(Passed)**

[HB 6403](#) would have required legislative approval for the merger or closing of institutions within the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities. **(DIED)**

[HB 6576](#) would have prohibited the Office of Attorney General from disclosing its employees' home addresses from the office's personnel, medical, or similar files. **(DIED)**

Education Issues

[HB 6423](#) eliminates the religious exemption from immunization requirements for individuals attending (1) public and private schools, including higher education institutions, and (2) child care centers and group and family day care homes. Under current law, individuals may opt out of vaccination if they present a statement that immunization would be contrary to their religious beliefs or, for minors, those of their parent or guardian. The bill grandfathers in individuals enrolled in grades kindergarten or higher who submitted a religious exemption prior to the bill's passage. It continues to grandfather these students if they transfer to another public or private school in the state (i.e., a primary or secondary school).

Under the bill, individuals with prior religious exemptions who are enrolled in pre-kindergarten or other preschool programs generally must comply with immunization requirements by September 1, 2022, or within 14 days after transferring to a different public or private program, whichever is later.

However, the bill allows these children to extend the timeframe within which they must comply with the immunization requirements if they present a written declaration from the child’s physician, physician assistant (PA), or advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) that an alternative immunization schedule is recommended. The bill also retains current law’s medical exemption from these immunization requirements for individuals who can document that the immunization is medically contraindicated. **(Governor Signed)**

HB 6444 in Section 25 increases the Commission for Educational Technology size from 19 members to 23 by adding the following four members:

- a representative of the Connecticut Association of Public-School Superintendents,
- a representative of the Connecticut Educators Computer Association,
- a secondary school teacher designated by the Connecticut Education Association,
- an elementary school teacher designated by American Federation of Teachers–Connecticut **(Governor Signed)**

HB 6517 makes the following changes in state laws governing teacher preparation programs, teacher certification, and elementary student reading proficiency assessments:

- establishes an Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities (hereafter “the office”) in the State Department of Education (SDE) to verify whether teacher preparation programs and teacher certification applicants comply with requirements in state law relating to dyslexia instruction and training;
- bars the State Board of Education (SBE) from approving any teacher preparation programs, beginning September 1, 2022, until the office verifies that the program complies with state law relating to dyslexia instruction and training;
- requires SDE to issue a teaching certificate to any level of applicant (initial, provisional, or professional), beginning September 1, 2023, if the office verifies that he or she has fulfilled certain literacy training and education requirements;
- allows applicants for certain teaching certification endorsements to substitute student teaching experience for supervised practicum hours;
- requires the office to provide guidance to higher education institutions and other teacher preparation program providers about how to verify whether practicum hour supervisors have obtained certain qualifications;
- requires SDE to revise previously developed reading assessments for grades kindergarten through three to include new methodologies for measuring reading proficiency;
- allows SDE to partner with a public college or university to establish a data center to guide the department and boards of education in the use and effectiveness of reading assessments;
- requires each local or regional board of education to develop a voluntary family history questionnaire to help identify students who are at risk of reading proficiency challenges;
- requires SDE to report to legislative committees about the (a) progress of the office’s establishment and staffing, (b) results of the verification of teacher preparation programs and teacher certificate applicants’ compliance with state law, and (c) guidance given to boards of education about the administration of reading assessments. **(Governor Signed)**

HB 6621 This bill requires a number of actions related to social-emotional learning, including assessing students for social-emotional learning, developing a statewide social-emotional learning strategy, and developing social-emotional learning standards. The bill includes provisions on social-emotional learning and teacher professional development and school resource officer training. It also requires the state law regarding

bullying in school to be reviewed for possible changes and modifies the membership of safe school climate committees. The bill also makes various unrelated changes in the education statutes about (1) the topics for which a board of education can be petitioned to hold a public hearing, (2) in-school vision screening equipment, (3) a special education services and funding task force, (4) it requires the School Paraeducator Advisory Council to study compensation levels, professional development delivery and career ladders for paraeducators, (5) a plan for a statewide virtual school, and (6) acting superintendents' probationary periods. **(Governor Signed)**

HB 6655 repealed any provision of a municipal charter, special act or home rule ordinance that prohibits or limits a municipality from sharing services with other municipalities and would have allowed any group of collective bargaining units to bargain in coalition to negotiate with municipalities or boards of education for the provision of public services on a regional basis, including, but not limited to, education, police services, fire-fighting services and emergency medical services. **(DIED)**

SB 2 would make various changes to laws affecting children and pupils and related entities, such as the departments of Children and Families (DCF), Education (SDE), Public Health (DPH); the Office of Early Childhood (OEC); and local and regional boards of education. Among other things, the bill:

- requires DCF to (a) develop a policy to provide remote visitation opportunities and (b) provide written notice and a list of legal services providers when removing a child;
- expands the Birth-to-Three Program, (b) prohibits OEC from charging for early intervention services, (c) allows Birth-to-Three coordinators to participate in planning and placement meetings and exempts them from certain disciplinary actions, and (d) requires local or regional boards of education to monitor certain children for developmental and social-emotional delays;
- allows local or regional boards of education to provide virtual learning to high school students and remote parent-teacher conferences, (b) requires the boards to integrate social-emotional learning into professional training, (c) requires the boards of education to allow up to two excused mental health wellness days per school year, (d) prohibits school boards from shaming a child for unpaid meals, and (e) allows minors to receive more than six outpatient mental health treatment sessions without their parent or guardian's consent; and
- requires SDE to develop a community resource document for children and families.

The bill also:

- sets up a youth suicide prevention training program in local and district health departments,
- adds specified mental health training to DPH's continuing education requirements for certain healthcare professionals, and
- establishes a 25-member task force on children's needs. **(Governor Signed)**

SB 1032 makes various revisions to the education statutes, including:

- creating a reporting requirement for boards of education that decline to implement the community eligibility provision of the National School Lunch Program;
- requiring boards of education to develop a policy to equitably identify gifted and talented students;
- requiring boards of education have policies to place students in advanced academic courses that are not based exclusively on academic performance;
- requiring boards of education to adopt policies on rigorous and challenging curricula, establish student success plans in grades 6-12 and improve completion rates for the Free Application for

Federal StudentAid (FAFSA); and

- raising the school drop-out age and age at which students can take high school equivalency tests from 17 to 18. **(Governor Signed)**

SB 288 established indoor air quality standards in schools and requires temperature in gymnasiums, require a percentage of federal money going to HVAC in schools. **(DIED)**

SB 945 This bill makes the following changes in the education statutes:

- requires planning and placement teams (PPTs) for special education students to write transition services into individualized education programs (IEPs) for all 14-year-olds;
- splits the elementary level bilingual education certificate into two and creates alternative methods by which candidates may fulfill the certificates' written competency requirement;
- requires the education commissioner, by January 1, 2022, to approve guidelines for bilingual STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and humanities teaching certificate endorsements and establishes coursework eligibility requirements for high school bilingual STEM and humanities teachers;
- removes the grade point average (GPA) requirement for the resident teacher certificate and broadens its eligibility pool;
- requires charter school governing councils and cooperative arrangements to have their requested criminal history records checks for school personnel conducted in accordance with the federal National Child Protection Act of 1992 and the federal Volunteers for Children Act of 1998, in addition to state law;
- removes the requirement that the criminal history records checks for charter school governing councilor management organization members and certain contractors be conducted in accordance with the state law governing their procedure;
- allows the attorney general, on behalf of the State Department of Education (SDE), to bring a civil suit against an organization to recover misused state funds;
- clarifies the appointment process for the Technical Education and Career System (TECS) superintendent;
- creates a new PPT process that must occur before a student receiving special education services enrolls in TECS; and
- removes obsolete language from state law and repeals certain education reports and programs. **(Governor Signed)**

SB 1032 This bill makes the following revisions in the education statutes:

- creates a new reporting requirement for boards of education with schools or districts that decline to implement the Community Eligibility Provision of the National School Lunch Program;
- requires local and regional boards of education to develop a policy by July 1, 2022, for equitable identification of gifted and talented students that uses multiple identification methods that comply with State Department of Education (SDE) guidelines;
- requires boards of education to create or revise a policy for student placement in advanced academic courses or programs that is not based exclusively on academic performance;
- creates new a content requirement for grades 6-12 student success plans and generally requires the plans to be created in collaboration with students and their parents or guardians;
- requires board of education to adopt a new challenging curriculum policy;

- requires boards of education to adopt a policy to improve the completion rates for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) among grade 12 students or students in adult education programs;
- adds to the list of goals that a board of education may include in its application to the education commissioner for alliance district funds;
- requires SDE to publish and make available on its website the annual FAFSA student completion rate for the graduating class of each high school and each school district;
- requires the education commissioner to establish a working group to develop ways to improve student FAFSA completion rates;
- raises, from age 17 to 18, the age when a student may withdraw from high school from, beginning in the 2023-24 school year, but also allows a parent or guardian of a 17-year-old student to withdraw the student if he or she simultaneously enrolls in an adult education program;
- generally raises, from age 17 to 18, the minimum age at which a student can get permission from the education commissioner to take the GED or another SDE-approved high school equivalency test;
- allows the education commissioner to make recommendations to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) and the Education Committee about policies to make higher education more affordable; and
- requires boards of education to update their written weighted grading policy to address additional courses and programs. **(Governor Signed)**

Healthcare Issues

HB 6449 makes it easier for health care professionals and various trades people and other professionals licensed in other states to obtain a Connecticut credential if they reside here. It does so by generally requiring the Department of Public Health (DPH) or Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) to issue the appropriate license or other credential to a state resident, or a spouse of an active duty service member permanently stationed here, if that person meets specified experience and background requirements (e.g., has no disciplinary history). It allows DPH or DCP, as applicable, to deny a credential if the commissioner finds it to be in the state's best interest.

The bill specifies that, for certain professions, the DCP commissioner may deny a license, or issue one under a consent order with conditions that an applicant must meet, if the applicant reports that he or she has been found guilty or convicted of what constitutes a felony under Connecticut or federal law at the time of the application, or of an offense under the laws of another jurisdiction that would be a felony under Connecticut law. This authority applies to electricians; plumbers; solar, heating, piping, and cooling contractors and journeymen; elevator and fire protection sprinkler craftsmen; irrigation contractors and journeymen; gas hearth installer contractors and journeymen; and residential stair lift technicians. The bill also eliminates a requirement that applicants for these licenses demonstrate good moral character.

The bill requires the DPH commissioner to (1) convene working groups to determine whether Connecticut should join any interstate licensure compacts and (2) report to the Public Health Committee on the groups' recommendations by January 15, 2022. The bill requires the DPH commissioner to report on whether it would be in the state's best interest to (1) replace any state exams for DPH-credentialed professionals with tests by national organizations that DPH deems acceptable and (2) reduce any experience and training requirements while increasing testing of applicants' knowledge or skills. She must report to the Public Health Committee by January 15, 2022, and develop the report in consultation with whatever boards or commissions she deems

appropriate. **(Governor Signed)**

SB 1 includes various provisions related to racial disparities in public health, health care services, pandemic preparedness, and other related topics. For example, it:

- declares racism as a public health crisis and creates a Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health to (a) make recommendations to decrease racism’s effect on public health and (b) create a strategic plan to eliminate health disparities and inequities across several sectors;
- requires the Department of Public Health (DPH) to study (a) the state’s COVID-19 response and (b) developing a program to recruit and retain health care workers of color in the state;
- establishes a committee to advise the Public Health and Human Services committees on establishing a Commission on Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention;
- sets certain requirements related to demographic data collection in health care; and
- establishes working groups or task forces on other matters, such as breast health and breast cancer awareness, school-based health center service expansion, and peer support services.

(Governor Signed)

SB 2 Section 5 of this bill requires that actively practicing registered nurses and licensed practical nurses include the mental health and suicide prevention training as contact hours of training. The bill defines a “contact hour” as a minimum of 50 minutes of continuing education and activities. The requirements apply to registration periods (i.e., the one-year period for which a license has been renewed) starting on or after January 1, 2022. Under the bill, qualifying continuing education courses include in-person and online courses offered or approved by:

- the American Nurses Association,
- the Connecticut Hospital Association,
- the Connecticut Nurses Association or Connecticut League for Nursing,
- a specialty nursing society or an equivalent organization in another jurisdiction,
- a hospital or other health care institution,
- a regionally accredited academic institution ,or
- a state or local health department.

The bill also requires each registered nurse and licensed practical nurse applying for license renewal to sign a statement attesting that he or she has satisfied the continuing education requirements on a form prescribed by DPH. Each licensee must (1) retain attendance records or completion certificates demonstrating compliance with the bill’s continuing education requirements for at least three years after the year in which the continuing education was completed and (2) submit the records or certificates to the department for inspection within 45 days after the department requests them. **(Governor Signed)**

SB 1086 would have allowed medical assistants to administer vaccines. **It passed the Senate but died in the House.**

SB 660 provides coverage for healthcare workers who experience COVID-related PTSI. For health care providers under the bill, a qualifying event is an event arising in and out of the course of employment on or after March 10, 2020, in which the provider was engaged in activities substantially dedicated to mitigating

or responding to the COVID-19 emergency and:

- witnessed the death of a person due to COVID-19;
- witnessed an injury to a person who subsequently died as a result of COVID-19;
- had physical contact with and treated or provided care for a person who subsequently died as a result of COVID-19; or
- witnessed a traumatic physical injury that resulted in someone's loss of a vital body function due to COVID-19. **(Governor Signed)**

Retiree Issues

SB 1080 clarifies the administration of benefits of Teachers' Retirement System to: 1) update the age at which minimum distribution requirements must be made to 72 for members who attain that age on or after January 1, 2020 as required under federal law; 2) clarify that any voluntary contributions can only be made by payroll deduction on an after-tax basis; 3) clarify that the majority of the membership of the Teachers' Retirement Board is a quorum for the transaction of any business; and 4) specify that a member must provide a statutory basis for any appeal. **(Governor Signed)**

SB 1081 aligns statutory thresholds for pension fund performance and cost of living allowances (COLAs) for retirees of the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) with the system's recently lowered assumed rate of return. **(Governor Signed)**

Voting Issues:

HJ 59 allows a question to appear on the 2022 general election ballot asking voters if they want to amend the state constitution to authorize in-person, early voting. **(Governor Signed)**

HJ 58 begins the process to allow a question to appear on a general election ballot asking voters if they wish to amend the state constitution to allow no-excuse absentee balloting. It must pass both chambers again next session for the question to appear on the 2024 ballot. **(Governor Signed)**

Connecticut's FY 2022-2023 State Budget

The General Assembly adopted [HB 6689](#) a \$46 billion FY 2022-2023 biennium budget before adjourning the 2021 legislative session. The budget does not add progressivity to the tax code and relies heavily (\$2.332 billion) on one-time federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to fund ongoing line items. The proposal is under the spending cap by \$22.2 million in FY 2022 and \$35.7 million in FY 2023.

Volatility Cap/Built-in Surplus

The volatility cap is a mechanism for annually diverting certain income tax receipts tied to capital gains and other investment earnings directly to the Budget Reserve Fund (BRF or “rainy day fund”). By doing so, it reduces the amount of General Fund revenue available for appropriation in the budget.

The BRF is already at its statutory cap of 15% of net General Fund appropriations (approximately \$3.5 billion). Any amount in the BRF above that amount (currently \$427.8 million) must be deposited into either the State Employee Retirement System or the Teachers’ Retirement System.

This budget moves \$969.2 million in FY 2022 and \$798.2 million in FY 2023 from the General Fund to the BRF to comply with the volatility cap. Together, with the excess BRF Funds, mean a surplus of more than \$2 billion, much of which could be used to reduce pension liabilities.

Revenue (Taxes and Tax Credits)

- Phases out, over four years, the income tax on income from IRAs, other than Roth IRAs, for taxpayers with qualifying incomes, starting with the 2023 tax year; clarifies that teachers who qualify for the general pension and annuity exemption may take either the teacher pension exemption or the general pension and annuity exemption, whichever is greater.
 - For FY22 and FY23, requires (1) motor vehicle property tax grants to be paid from appropriations, rather than from MRSA; (2) PILOTs to be paid from appropriations any remaining part due from MRSA; and (3) specified amounts to be transferred from MRSA to the General Fund; expands the PILOTs paid from MRSA to include existing payments to specified municipalities; modifies the statutory formula for calculating motor vehicle property tax grants.
 - Replaces the current 6% gross receipts tax on Ambulatory Surgical Centers with a 3% net revenue tax on services, subject and eliminates the current exemption for the first \$1 million of gross receipts but retains the exemption for Medicaid and Medicare payments, beginning January 1, 2023.

Appropriations

- Creates a new three-tiered program for state payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) that will deliver almost \$120 million more each year in municipal aid.
- Continues the 10-year phase in of the education cost sharing grant (ECS), expanding funding by \$140 million over the biennium.
- Provides \$34 million to cover out-of-pocket medical costs and lost time to essential workers

with COVID-19 workers' compensation claims (Program details are contained in the budget implementer bill).

- Adds \$1 million to the Department of Corrections for workers' compensation claims.
- Includes \$29 million over both years to fully fund the Debt Free Community College program.
- Provides \$450,000 each year to fund additional staff at the State Contracting Standards Board to hold executive agencies accountable more effectively for transparent and responsible procurement and contracting. This funding was removed in the [budget implementer bill](#) a few days later at the request of Governor Lamont.
- Provides \$125,000 in each year for the Career Pathways Pre-Apprenticeship Technology Collaborative administered by the Justice Education Center at Eli Whitney Technical High School in New Haven.
- Provides \$500,000 in FY 2022 and \$1 million in FY 2023 to expand the Career Pathways Pre-Apprenticeship Technology Collaborative administered by the Justice Education Center.
- Provides \$4 million to the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities to conduct a disparity and equity study in state government.
- Appropriates \$50 million to UConn Health to reduce its FY 2020 operating deficit but specifies that those funds cannot be used for fringe benefit recovery from the Comptroller's fringe benefit accounts. Funds projected shortfalls in FY 2021 and FY 2022 but projects a \$40 million deficiency in FY 2023.
- Includes \$2,418,000 for the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System for FY 2022 and FY 2023 to hire up to seventeen world languages teachers but the funds can also be used for hiring up to fourteen teachers for any other shortage area.
- Includes \$59.1 million in FY 2022 and \$114.2M in FY 2023 for the Reserve for Salary Adjustments that fund negotiated state employee wage increases. Allows unexpended funds in the Reserve for Salary Adjustment that relate to collective bargaining to be retained for that purpose after FY 2021.
- Deposits \$21 million in the State Employees Retirement Fund to reduce unfunded pension liabilities.
- Cuts \$5 million in each year in the Judicial Department to achieve budget savings identified by the Chief Justice and Chief Public Defender.
- Allows reductions of \$78 million over both years to achieve savings from retirements, restructuring or efficiency savings across state government, except at UConn Health.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds

Connecticut received \$2.812 billion of unrestricted ARPA funds from the federal government. It allocated \$1,271.4 million in FY 2022, \$1,010.4 million in FY 2023 and \$49.9 million in FY 2024 (total \$2.332 billion) into the biennial budget.

Some of the allocations impacting AFTCT members include:

- \$15 million to Connecticut State Colleges and Universities.
- \$15 million for the University of Connecticut.
- \$38 million for UConn Health to recover COVID-19 clinical revenue losses.
- Up to \$20,000,000 of the federal funds allocated in section 41 of this act to The University of Connecticut Health Center, for the fiscal

year ending June 30, 2022, may be used to retire COVID-19 clinical revenue losses from the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020.

- \$25.72 million to fund Right to Read programming.
- \$10, Faith Acts Priority School Districts
- \$155 million for the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund.
- \$20 million for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and supplies.
- \$130,000 Women in Manufacturing - Platt Tech Regional Vocational Technical School

Approximately \$480.5 million of ARPA remains unallocated. General Assembly leadership has indicated that a later special session will be held to finalize the allocation of the remaining ARPA dollars. The Labor movement will continue lobbying to provide hazard pandemic pay to essential workers with ARPA dollars.

The Budget Implementer (SB 1202)

In addition to the language required to implement the budget (HB 6689), SB 1202 includes several provisions that did not pass during the regular session. Relevant provisions include:

- Creating of the Connecticut Essential Workers COVID-19 Assistance Fund, which allows essential workers with new and pending COVID-19 workers' compensation claims to seek reimbursement for out-of-pocket medical costs and lost time. If they later prevail with their WC claim, any money they receive from the Fund would offset their workers' compensation award. The language also provides \$3000 in burial benefits to complement the \$9000 essential workers can get from FEMA. It changes all workers' compensation burial benefits to \$12K going forward and indexes it to inflation in future years.
- Establishing a task force to study issues related to managerial and exempt state employees' retirements and barriers to recruitment.
- Requiring the Board of Regents to report on how they use and allocate funds budgeted by the General Assembly.
- Transferring the financial assets of the Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy at Central Connecticut State University to The University of Connecticut.
- Establishing the Office of the Unemployed Workers' Advocate within the Labor Department to help unemployed individuals.
- Prohibiting municipalities from receiving grants from the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Fund if a school uses a mascot that refers to or is associated with a Native American individual, custom, tradition, or tribe.
- Expanding funding for the state's debt-free community college program from online lottery ticket sales revenue.
- Establishing a "Fee Free Day" for high school students applying to admission at UConn or any Board of Regent institutes of higher education.
- Requiring CHRO to oversee a study of equity in state government programs and actions and submit study findings to the GAE Committee by February 15, 2023.
- Establishing a number of voting reforms, including:
 - Requiring the DMV, voter registration agencies, and public higher education institutions to use an electronic system to automatically transmit voter registration applications to registrars of voters;

- Requiring registrars of voters to annually distribute voter registration information at public high school;
 - Requiring employers to give employees two hours of unpaid time to vote;
 - Restores voting rights to convicted felons who are on parole or confined in a community residence;
 - Allowing municipalities to conduct absentee ballot pre-counting procedures;
 - Making the use of absentee ballot drop boxes permanent and expanding who is eligible to return absentee ballots on behalf of an immediate family member; and
 - Making voters suffering from a long-term illness to be permanently eligible for absentee ballot status.
- Removing approximately \$450,000 for new staff from the State Contracting Standards Board's appropriations in both FYs 2022 and 2023.
 - Subjecting the Connecticut Port Authority to State Contracting Standards Board oversight until 2026.
 - Requiring the DAS commissioner to give non-union state employees in the executive and judicial branches the same rights and benefits provided by state employee collective bargaining agreements.
 - Eliminating the Office of Workforce Competitiveness in the Labor Department and replacing it with the Office of Workforce Strategy, headed by a chief workforce officer within the Office of the Governor and creating the Governor's Workforce Council as a successor council to Connecticut Employment and Training Commission and designating it as the governor's principal advisor on workforce development issues.
 - Allowing a municipality that does not participate in the Connecticut Municipal Employees Retirement System (CMERS), the option to invest its retirement system's assets with the state's combined retirement plans and trust funds administered, held, or invested by the State Treasurer.
 - Changing the death benefit for Teachers Retirement System members based on accumulated years of service rather than retirement date.
 - Extends, until June 30, 2024, an exemption that allows certain retirees receiving a TRS pension to return to teaching without salary limits.
 - Suspending for two years, scheduled decreases in ECS grants, extending the phase-in period for other grant changes until FY 29 and revising the ECS formula.
 - Revises the ECS formula by changing several formula components including the weighting for need students; expands the regional per-student bonus to include endowed academies that function as public high schools.
 - Allocates \$5 million in both FY 22 and 23 for Priority School District Grants.
 - Requires the TECS board or superintendent to waive the world language high school graduation requirement for the class of 2023 and 2024.
 - Creating a new, foundation-based funding formula to replace the uniform per-pupil state charter school operating grant.
 - Requires BOR to waive tuition and fees for Ansonia High School students who participate in certain manufacturing programs.
 - Adding Native American studies to the public-school curriculum beginning in the 2023-24 school year.
 - Requires SDE, in collaboration with SERC, to develop a K-8 model curriculum beginning in the 2023-

24 school year.

- Requires the education commissioner and certain higher education officials to jointly develop a plan to help school boards promote teaching as career option to high school students; requires SDE to distribute to school board information that promotes the teaching profession.
- Requiring SDE to develop an implicit-bias video training module for school district personnel.
- \$20 million to State Employee Essential Workers and National Guard Premium Pay
- For FY 22, increases the inpatient Medicaid reimbursement rate for Natchaug Hospital to at least \$975 per day.
- Requires SDE to establish a commission to analyze and provide recommendations about remote learning for K-12 public schools students.
- Requires SDE to develop a plan to create and implement a K-12 statewide remote learning school.
- Requires the State Education Resource Center (SERC) to provide technical assistance for teacher professional development and in-service regarding the teaching of the black and Latino studies course.