

An aerial photograph of the Connecticut State Capitol building, a large, ornate, light-colored stone structure with a prominent central dome. The building is surrounded by green lawns and parking areas. In the background, a dense urban skyline with various skyscrapers is visible under a clear blue sky. The text "FOCUS GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS" is overlaid in white, sans-serif capital letters at the top of the image.

FOCUS GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

MONTH IN REVIEW

June

LAWS TAKING EFFECT JULY 1

More than 60 new Connecticut law took effect July 1, implementing policy changes approved during the 2026 legislative session. Key provisions include:

- **Housing & Zoning:** Municipalities must allow certain mixed-use residential developments in commercial and mixed-use zones, while new limits are placed on denying housing projects based solely on off-street parking requirements. The changes are intended to increase housing production and address the state's housing shortage.
- **Artificial Intelligence:** The state will establish a Connecticut AI Academy through Charter Oak State College to expand AI education, workforce training, and digital literacy. A statewide AI working group will also be created to study emerging technologies and recommend future policy.
- **Election Law:** Connecticut's new no-excuse absentee voting law takes effect, allowing any eligible voter to request an absentee ballot without providing a reason. Additional election security provisions also regulate face coverings near polling places.

- Healthcare: A pilot program at Yale will begin offering federally approved psychedelic-assisted therapy for qualifying patients through clinical research. Separate legislation expands access to breast cancer screening and treatment for incarcerated women.
- Transportation: Eligible public high school students and Connecticut veterans will gain access to free public transit passes through new state-funded grant programs.

These laws represent some of the significant policy changes with additional measures scheduled to be implemented later this year.

AFL-CIO ENDORSES THEIR CANDIDATES

The state's largest labor federation released its slate of endorsed candidates, offering an early look at organized labor's priorities ahead of the 2026 elections. The Connecticut AFL-CIO endorsed Gov. Ned Lamont for a third term despite recent disagreements between the governor and labor leaders.

In the four-way Democratic primary for the 1st Congressional District, no candidate secured the two-thirds vote required to receive the federation's endorsement. However, incumbent Rep. John Larson received a majority of delegate support and continues to hold endorsements from numerous individual labor unions.

Further down the ballot, the Connecticut AFL-CIO backed the Democratic convention-endorsed candidates in several closely watched legislative primaries. State Rep. Maryam Khan received the federation's endorsement in her challenge to State Sen. Doug McCrory, while in New Haven, the AFL-CIO endorsed State Rep. Pat Dillon in the 92nd House District and Leland Moore in the 97th House District.

SEN. CICARELLA PENSION REVOKED

A state medical review board voted unanimously to revoke the disability pension of Connecticut state Sen. Paul Cicarella, a benefit that was projected to pay him approximately \$71,000 this year. The recommendation follows an investigation prompted by reporting that identified gaps in the state's disability pension oversight system.

The review stemmed from reforms implemented by Connecticut Comptroller Sean Scanlon after questions were raised about Cicarella's continued eligibility, including his outside employment and failure to submit required annual income reports. While the investigation found no evidence that Cicarella violated any laws, the Medical Examining Board determined he no longer qualified for disability benefits. The recommendation now moves to the State Employee Retirement Commission for final action.

DIAMANTIS BACK IN THE HEADLINES

Connecticut's long-running school construction corruption scandal is back in the headlines. Former state official Konstantinos Diamantis, who was convicted last year on 21 federal charges tied to a bribery scheme involving school construction contracts, has reportedly petitioned President Donald Trump for a presidential pardon. Diamantis is also expected to stand trial later this year in a separate federal bribery case involving an alleged Medicaid audit scheme.

The case is also bringing renewed attention to contractor oversight. Salvatore Monarca, who pled guilty to bribing Diamantis, had his company, Acranom Masonry, removed from the state's prequalified contractor list. However, questions have been raised about whether an affiliated company, AMI Boston Masonry/Restoration, has continued pursuing Connecticut public construction work despite its ties to Acranom. The Department of Administrative Services says it is reviewing the matter.

The presence of these scandals continues to serve as a reminder that oversight of Connecticut's public process remains very much in focus.

LEGISLATIVE MOOD

As Connecticut enters the summer months, the focus has shifted decisively from legislative activity to the 2026 campaign season. With the General Assembly adjourned and no regular session scheduled until 2027, candidates for statewide, congressional, and legislative offices are ramping up fundraising, securing endorsements, and engaging voters across the state. Competitive races, open seats, and contested primaries are expected to shape the political landscape in the months ahead, with the outcomes likely to influence the priorities and balance of power when lawmakers return to Hartford. While legislative action has paused, the political environment remains highly active as campaigns move into full swing ahead of the November election.

TODAY IN CT HISTORY

On July 2, 1812, Connecticut Governor Roger Griswold refused a federal request to place the state's militia under national control for the War of 1812, arguing that the U.S. Constitution only allowed militias to be federalized to enforce laws, suppress insurrections, or repel invasions. His defiance reflected widespread opposition to the war across New England and sparked a legal battle that reached the U.S. Supreme Court. Although the Court ultimately ruled against Connecticut, Griswold died before learning of the decision, making his stand one of the state's most notable constitutional disputes.



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