

Connecticut Bar Association Capitol Update with Bill Chapman



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Capitol Update News

Check your inbox every Monday for your Capitol Update Newsletter in the CBA's *Weekly Docket* during this year's legislative session (February 7 – May 9), featuring the Capitol Update Newsletter and Video Series.

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@The Capitol

The weekly Capitol Update—what's going on at the legislature—returns this week after many months off. Please clean out your spam filters. I'll be telling you what has and what will be going on at the Legislative Office Building (LOB) and the same with the Capitol. Also, each week I'll be giving you a five minute video interview with a different legislator or capitol staff member giving you insights on the legislative affairs.

This legislative session started on Wednesday, February 7 and will conclude at midnight on May 9. It is known as the short session, and will try to include as much statutory change as possible as well as provide legislators and others sufficient time by the end of this session to announce their intentions for Election Day: November 6, 2018.

A few legislators already have announced plans to run for governor, attorney general, the upper chamber, or not run at all. Some will maintain their present status hoping that November's election will offer them enhanced leadership in the Capitol.

There are about 15 Republicans running for the governor's office with maybe 12 Democrats doing the same thing. There is one Independent team in their midst. With four of six constitutional officers vacating this year, the races have become crowded. The attorney general race has four active Democratic contenders while the Republicans are racing at least two. The endorsement caucuses are held in May and the conventions occur prior to the September primaries. At this same time, these members will be running across the state to visit Republican and Democratic Town Committees to gain endorsements.

In light of recent cases nationwide, the state Senate Democrats called Thursday for public hearings to consider updating the legislature's sexual harassment policy. Senators said the policy is already strong, but they want to see if it can be made even stronger.

With Rep. Dave Baram being recently elected to judge of probate in Tobacco Valley, Rep. Mike D'Agostino (Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP) has been appointed to replace him as chair of the General Law Committee.

Legislators are looking at a probable deficit of \$245 million.

The [governor presented his State of the State address](#) on Wednesday, which included:

- Increasing the 6.35 percent sales tax rate
- Allowing grocery stores to sell wine
- Increasing excise taxes on liquor and beer
- Reducing hospital Medicaid rate
- Re-closing Care 4 Kids
- Reducing services for behavioral health care

- Eliminating the renters rebate program
- Requiring towns to contribute to the Teachers' Retirement System
- Further reducing municipal aid
- Legalizing and taxing the recreational use of marijuana

Additional issues coming from the legislature include the transportation infrastructure, tolls, a 4-7 percent gas tax increase, tax code, and the death tax.

The Branch

On February 5, 2018 Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers retired and on March 19 will be joining Day Pitney LLP as a partner in the litigation department and as a member of the appellate practice group. Governor Malloy nominated Justice Andrew J. McDonald as the new chief justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court. The Judiciary Committee leadership has stated that Justice McDonald will be fully vetted in a public hearing as with all past nominees for chief justice. Between the time of his nomination and his public hearing, Justice McDonald is making the rounds to speak with legislators to explain his positions and to pronounce his worthiness to lead the branch. Justice McDonald will likely have his public hearing next week. Meanwhile, both democratic co-chairs of the Judiciary Committee are now making their route for attorney general.

The Judiciary Committee, besides vetting the governor's nominee for chief justice, will be holding public hearings starting this Friday for the re-nominations of one senior judge, 15 referees, and 18 superior court judges. Included in that number are some family court judges who will be challenged mostly because they are family court judges. Also, a number of new judges will be nominated for appellate, superior, and Supreme Court in the next few weeks.