

**Act Number:** 09-053  
**Bill Number:** 5674  
**Senate Pages:** 2076, 2146-2147 3  
**House Pages:** 2484-2495 12  
**Committee:** Aging: 305-310, 379 7

**Page Total:** 22

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**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2009**

**VOL. 52  
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SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you Mr. President. Also on Calendar page 13, Calendar 590, House Bill 5674, move to place this item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is to place the item on Consent, without objection so ordered sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk will you please proceed to the call of the calendar please.

THE CLERK:

Calling the Senate Calendar for Wednesday, May 13, 2009, favorable reports, Calendar page -- page nine -- correction page four, Calendar 248, File Number 58 and 284, House Bill No. 6184, AN ACT PRESERVING GOOD CAUSE FOR LATE FILING OF CERTAIN UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION APPEALS, as amended by House Amendment Schedule A, favorable report of the Committee on Labor. The Senate previously designated Senate Amendment Schedule B which was LCO 368 -- correction 6368 it was call designated and the bill was passed retaining its place on the calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Will the Clerk please call the Consent Calendar.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on the consent calendar, will all Senators please return to the chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar, will all Senators please return to the chamber. Mr. President, those items placed on the first Consent Calendar begin on Calendar Page 9, Calendar Number 524, Substitute for Senate Bill 876, Calendar Page 10, Calendar 538, House Bill 5277, Calendar Page 11, Calendar 543, Substitute for Senate Bill 981, Calendar Page 13, Calendar 585, House Bill 6410, Calendar 590, House Bill 5674 and Calendar Page 27, Calendar Number 191, Substitute for Senate Bill 809. Mr. President, that completes those items placed on the first Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Members have heard those items identified as on the Consent Calendar. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The Senate is now voting by roll call on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the chamber? The Senate is now voting by roll on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the chamber?

THE CHAIR:

Members, please check the board to see that your vote is properly recorded. If all members have voted the machine will be closed. Would the Clerk please take a tally and announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

The motion is on adoption of Consent Calendar #1: total number voting 35, those voting yea, 35, those voting nay, zero, those absent/not voting one.

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar #1 is passed.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I believe the Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda #1 for today's session.

THE CHAIR:

Is the Clerk in possession of Senate Agenda #1?

THE CLERK:

Mr. President, the Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda #1, dated Wednesday, May 13, 2009, copies have been distributed.

THE CHAIR:

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commend you for the great work you've done, and I hope you keep it up. Thank you very much.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

Thank you, Sir. Representative Perone.

REP. PERONS: (137th)

And so I'd like to take this, at this point, I'd like to ask the Chamber to stand and give her our usual warm welcome. Thank you very much.

(APPLAUSE)

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

Are there any other announcements or points of personal privilege?

If not, would the Clerk please call Calendar Number 155.

CLERK:

On Page 30, Calendar Number 155, House Bill Number 5674 AN ACT CONCERNING DISCLOSURE OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR SENIOR CITIZEN DISCOUNT PROGRAMS. Favorable Report of the Committee on Judiciary.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

The distinguished Chair of the Aging Committee, Representative Serra of the 33rd, you have the floor, Sir.

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REP. SERRA: (33rd)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move for the acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

The question before the Chamber is the acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill. Will you remark?

REP. SERRA: (33rd)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this bill requires individuals, firms or corporations that sell goods and services to the public to disclose eligibility requirements for any senior citizen discount offered.

It requires individuals or businesses to conspicuously place at the point of display, cash register or store entrance, stating the qualifying age and discount percentage.

Mr. Speaker, the Clerk has an amendment, LCO 5811. I ask that it be called and I receive permission to summarize.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

Will the Clerk please call LCO Number 5811 designated House Amendment Schedule "A".



CLERK:

LCO Number 5811, House "A", offered by  
Representatives McCluskey and Olson.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

The Representative seeks leave of the Chamber to summarize the Amendment. Is there any objection to summarization? Is there any objection? Hearing none, Representative Serra, you may proceed with summarizing the bill, the Amendment.

REP. SERRA: (33rd)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This makes some technical corrections.

After, in Line 4, after percentage, insert dollar amount and in Line 6, strike as applicable.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move for its adoption.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

The question before the Chamber is adoption of House Amendment Schedule "A". Will you remark? Will you remark further on House Amendment Schedule "A"?

If not, I will try your minds. All those in favor of the Amendment please signify by saying Aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

All those opposed, Nay. The Ayes have it. The  
Amendment is adopted.

REP. SERRA: (33rd)

Mr. Speaker, the Clerk has an amendment, LCO  
Number 5941. I ask that he call and I receive  
permission to summarize.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

Will the Clerk please call LCO Number 5941  
designated House Amendment Schedule "B".

CLERK:

LCO Number 5941, House "B", offered by  
Representatives Candelora, Miner, Bacchiochi, Serra,  
Widlitz.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

The Representative seeks leave of the Chamber to  
summarize the Amendment. Is there any objection to  
summarization? Is there any objection? Hearing none,  
Representative Serra, you may proceed with summarizing  
House Amendment "B".

REP. SERRA: (33rd)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Line 6, strike a  
violation of this section shall constitute and.

And in Line 7, strike, and 8, in their entirety  
and insert the following in lieu thereof. The

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Commissioner of Consumer Protection may assess a civil penalty in the amount of \$50 against any person, firm or corporation that violates the provision of this section.

I move the adoption of the Amendment, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

Thank you, Sir. The question before the Chamber is the adoption of Amendment Schedule "B". Will you remark? Representative Bacchiochi of the 52nd, Madam, you have the floor.

REP. BACCHIOCHI: (52nd)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also support this Amendment. The (inaudible) violation seem to be expensive and over-used and we are happy to see that removed from the bill. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

Thank you, Madam for your remarks. Will you remark further on House Amendment Schedule "B"? Will you remark?

If not, I'll try your minds. All those in favor please signify by saying Aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

All those opposed, Nay. The Ayes have it. House  
Amendment "B" is adopted.

Representative Serra.

REP. SERRA: (33rd)

Mr. Speaker, in summarization, I'd like for legislative intent, that this does not affect any type of cable companies at all. This is only for retail services that offer senior discounts where you have posted signs.

I move for approval, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

Thank you, Sir. Will you remark further?  
Representative Widlitz of the 98th, you have the floor, Madam.

REP. WIDLITZ: (98th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill. This is an excellent consumer bill and I'd like to thank the esteemed Chairman of the Aging Committee for bringing this out, and also thank a constituent of mine, Joe Winarski of Guilford, who brought this idea forward.

Mr. Winarski came up to testify and interestingly enough, he had an experience in a grocery store where

he went up to the clerk to check out and being a senior citizen the clerk looked at him and said, do you qualify for the senior citizen discount.

Well, Mr. Winarski then had to look around and there was nothing posted about the qualifications, so he had to ask, well, how old do you have to be to qualify, and everyone around him was a little embarrassed, and it's just not necessary.

You should be able to walk into a store and to know what the circumstances are surrounding discounts for senior citizens, and interestingly enough, without realizing what store Mr. Winarski had been to, I frequented that store a few months later and I was at the checkout counter and a young man said to me, do you qualify for the senior citizen discount.

You could have heard a pin drop in the store as people are going, oh, my God, they just asked her if she's old enough, and I looked around. There was nothing posted. I said, well, how old do you have to be? He told me and I said yeah, I guess I'm there.

But the point being that when money is tight and there are discounts available to senior citizens, they should be able to walk into a store, know what the circumstances are and take advantage of it.

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It's also good for business to draw in people for those discounts. So again, I thank the Chairman of the Aging Committee for bringing the bill forward, and strongly support it. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

Thank you, Madam. The distinguished Ranking Member of the Finance Committee, Representative Candelora of the 86th you have the floor, Sir.

REP. CANDELORA: (86th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I might, I just have one brief question for the proponent of the bill as amended.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

Representative Serra, please prepare yourself. Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA: (86th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to clarify. If a business provides a discount to the general public, which includes senior citizens, would the provision of this, would this statute apply to them?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

Representative Serra.

REP. SERRA: (33rd)

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Would the gentleman please repeat that question?

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora, would you please repeat your question, Sir?

REP. CANDELORA: (86th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If a business is offering a discount, say a 10 percent discount to every member of the public, including senior citizens, would they be required to post under the provisions of this statute, or does this statute or this bill only apply to senior citizen discounts?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

Representative Serra.

REP. SERRA: (33rd)

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it applies to senior citizen discount. But I personally think that if a retail establishment is offering discounts, it would be to their benefit to advertise it, but this does not require them to, only for seniors.

In our Connecticut statute, seniors in the statute start at 60 years old. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

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Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA: (86th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have any further questions?

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

Thank you, Sir. The distinguished Ranking Member of the Aging Committee, Representative Frey of the 111th, you have the floor, Sir.

REP. FREY: (111th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to thank the Chairman of the Aging Committee for advocating this issue.

We have seen some confusion regarding senior citizen discounts, and I've experienced some of that with my constituents in my hometown, and this bill passed out of the Committee unanimously as it did also in the Judiciary Committee.

I would urge its passage. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

Thank you, Sir. Will you remark further?  
Representative Miller of the 122nd, Sir, you have the floor.

REP. MILLER: (122nd)



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Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I get up in support of the bill. Quite often many, many stores, movie houses and so forth are offering discounts (inaudible) some of the old timers get out there and spend some bucks. This is (inaudible) type of activity for seniors and it's good for the economy, which is in dire need of some help today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

Thank you, Sir, for your remarks. Will you remark further on the bill as amended? Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

If not, will staff and guests please come to the Well of the House. Will the Members please take your seats. The machine will be opened.

CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by Roll Call. Members to the Chamber.

The House is voting by Roll Call. Members to the Chamber, please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

Have all the Members voted? Have all the Members voted? Will the Members please check the board to determine if your vote is properly cast.

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If all the Members have voted, the machine will be locked. The Clerk will please take a tally.

Will the Clerk please announce that tally.

CLERK:

House Bill Number 5674 as amended by House Schedules

"A" and "B".

Total Number Voting	148
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Necessary for Passage	75
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Those voting Yea

148

Those voting Nay	0
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Those absent and not voting	3
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DEPUTY SPEAKER MCCLUSKEY:

The bill as amended is passed.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The Clerk please call Calendar Number 205.

CLERK:

On Page 7, Calendar Number 205, Substitute for House Bill Number 5436 AN ACT CONCERNING GUIDE OR ASSISTANCE DOGS AND AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE COVERAGE. Favorable Report of the Committee on Insurance and Real Estates.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

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year, every two years? Has -- is that something that -- within the research that other states have done?

REP. REED: California, actually, is implementing that now and one of the things that they've discovered is that the legitimate agencies who do certify people to have a specialty in advising the senior population, should update their skillset at least every year or so; that they need to really stay in touch with tax law and investment options and financial products. As we all know, there are a million of them out there. So that is something that can be incorporated into the legislation, and as we were saying, sort of sharing it with the various agencies that we have in this state, who monitor that kind of thing. You know, one could have one piece of it and one could have another piece of it and then should communicate often.

REP. COOK: I think that if we require package stores to have a licensing fee, and they're simply selling something that's, you know, that life-altering in some respects, I think that we should, in this area, also require some type of an annual licensing fee and we can include that in the legislation to make sure that we are on top of this on a regular basis.

REP. SERRA: Thank you.

REP. REED: Thank you very much.

REP. SERRA: Representative Widlitz. Good morning, Representative.

REP. WIDLITZ: Thank you. May I have your permission to bring a constituent to the table with me as well? (Inaudible.)

14BS1674

For the record, my name is Pat Widlitz, State Representative of the 98th District, and I'm here this morning with my constituent Joe Wonoski to be in support of Bill 5674. This is An Act Concerning Disclosure of Eligibility Requirements for Senior Citizen Discount Programs.

Now Joe had requested that I raise -- that I submit a bill proposal about a year ago. And I listened to Joe's story, which he will relate to you, and actually had some personal experiences which reinforced the idea that I should bring this forward.

What the bill would do is require that retail establishments post in a conspicuous place, either at the door or near the register, if they have a senior citizen discount program and what the criteria is for being eligible for that program.

It happened that after I had spoken with Joe, I was at a grocery store in a neighboring town one day, and it was actually during the campaign and people were kind of talking to me and I was very visible, let's say, at the checkout stand, and a 16-year-old clerk said to me, do you want the senior citizen discount? And I -- and every -- it was like the air sucked out of the room around me. They were going whew, what is she going to do? I said, Well, how old do you have to be to qualify for the senior citizen discount program? He said, 62 years old. I said, Well, I guess I'm there. And you know, made a joke out of it. I didn't mind because, let's face it, as public officials we have no secrets about our age, but it could have been a very embarrassing situation for anybody, and it was for the people around me.

In another incident, I took my mom shopping in a store in Essex for her groceries, and a mature clerk at the checkout counter said to her, You know, if you spend \$50 -- which, I mean, who doesn't spend \$50 these days in a grocery store for almost anything -- she said, If you spend \$50, you take the receipt to the customer service desk and they'll give you back \$5. Well, who would know? And since then, I've been in that store many times, no one else has ever relayed that to customers while I was there. So, you know, \$5 to a senior citizen on a grocery bill is a lot of money. So certainly if there are these programs, we should know about it and people should be without asking, you know, personal information know whether or not they qualify.

So with that I'd like to introduce you to Joe Wonoski. Joe?

REP. SERRA: Good morning.

JOE WONOSKI: Good morning. Thank you, Pat.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Joe Wonoski from Guilford. I am here to speak in favor of Bill 5674.

There's a problem facing senior citizens today that can be solved very easily and at virtually no cost to anyone. Many business offer special programs to seniors. Special prices and services are great. I'm not complaining. Being a senior citizen myself, I fully appreciate the advantages of discounts and preferential services.

The difficulty is that among the businesses offering senior discounts, only a few make it well enough known, and that the qualifications

are not stated clearly, if at all. A typical conversation taking place between a senior citizen patron and a cashier might contain an exchange covering questions including whether or not there is any senior pricing available, what the qualifying age is, what days of the week the pricing is effective, and any categories of goods or services that are excluded. Further, the conversation would often include the patron needing to verbally state their age in a more or less public environment with the likelihood of others listening. This conversation might have been an obstacle or at least an inconvenience, as well as having the strong potential of being an embarrassment to the patron needing to verbalize his or her age with an audience present. It should not be necessary for this conversation to take place.

What is being proposed by this bill would enable seniors to obtain necessary information about any special pricing ahead of time concerning their eligibility. The solution is simple: A Business owner would be required to state any qualifying requirements such as age, along with -- with a stated policy concerning proof of age, if required by the owner, days of the week in effect, excluded -- excuse me excluded or included items, et cetera, on a sign in public view. A sign such as this that would cost the business owner 10 -- 10 cents. The cashier might need to ask for proof of age if the business owner requires it. The result would be a more efficient transaction with no embarrassing consequences of having -- having to verbalize a person's age.

The proposed legislation would not require businesses to offer senior pricing, nor does it attempt to standardize any eligibility requirements. Similar to merchandise return

policies which are set by the business owner, the only requirement would be that the owner make it known what the policy is, if there is one at all.

And there are some examples of senior pricing policies such as the one on the sign that I fictitiously wrote as 10 percent off vitamins, Tuesday mornings, minimum age 55. That's all that needs to be said. One dime is all it costs. No cost to the taxpayers, no cost to the business owner, and no cost to the consumer. And I think this would be a very nice piece of legislation that would help seniors get through any transactions concerning senior pricing.

I'd like to thank Representative Pat Widlitz for her assistance in getting Bill 5674 introduced to the Legislature. She's been very helpful and courteous, and I appreciate my being able to present my case here. Thank you.

REP. SERRA: Thank you.

If there's any questions?

Senator Prague.

SENATOR PRAGUE: Now, I want to say something about seniors being embarrassed about their age. We live in a society apparently that associates beauty with being young. There is beauty in being older. And it, you know, it always shakes me up when people are embarrassed about their age. I remember a few years ago my grandson said to me, You know Grandma, I learned on television that old people have wisdom. So if nothing else, we have wisdom. And you're absolutely right that people, some people are embarrassed about their age, and I



think to myself, isn't that ridiculous. What's the alternative here? You know, the sun is going to come up and that sun is going to go down for each and every one of us and those of us who enjoy years of life are very fortunate. So you tell your friends not to be embarrassed about their age, but to brag about it.

There are really a lot of positive characteristics that go with aging, but anyhow, we will honor your request. Because there are some people out there who are embarrassed but they just should not be. They should be proud of themselves and where they are in life. So whatever. Thank you for coming in today.

JOE WONOSKI: I've known 30 and 40 year olds who are embarrassed to have their age known.

SENATOR PRAGUE: Isn't that ridiculous?

REP. WIDLITZ: Even in spite of the age issue, it's the information that there is such a thing -- you know one of the advantages of the senior citizens discount --

SENATOR PRAGUE: Right.

REP. WIDLITZ: -- so you know if they exist we should be able to know that they do.

SENATOR PRAGUE: Right. And they should be posted. Not kept a secret. So, thank you.

REP. WIDLITZ: Thank you.

REP. SERRA: Thank you.

Next up is Deb Polin?

(T2)

## SENIOR DISCOUNT POLICY BILL

### # 5674

There is a problem facing senior citizens today that can be solved very easily and at virtually no cost to anyone. Many businesses offer special pricing to seniors. Special prices and services are great. I'm not complaining. Being a senior citizen myself, I fully appreciate the advantages of discounts and preferential services.

The difficulty is that among the businesses offering senior discounts, only a few make it well enough known, and that the qualifications are not stated clearly, if at all. A typical conversation taking place between a senior citizen patron and a cashier might contain an exchange covering questions including whether or not there is any senior pricing available, what the qualifying age is, what days of the week the pricing is effective, and any categories of goods or services that are excluded. Further, the conversation would often include the patron needing to verbally state their age in a more or less public environment with the likelihood of others listening. This conversation would have been an obstacle or at least an inconvenience, as well as having the strong potential of being an embarrassment to the patron needing to verbalize his or her age with an audience present. It shouldn't be necessary for this conversation to take place.

What is being proposed by this bill would enable seniors to obtain necessary information about any special pricing ahead of time, or perhaps at the point of sale concerning their eligibility. The solution is simple. A business owner would be required to state any qualifying requirements such as age (along with a stated policy concerning proof of age, if required), days of the week in effect, excluded/included items, etc. on a sign in public view. The patron would then already know if they qualify, and then if applicable ask for the discount. The cashier might need to ask for proof of age if the business owner requires it. The result would be a more efficient transaction with no embarrassing consequences of having to verbalize the patron's age.

This proposed legislation would not require businesses to offer senior pricing, nor does it attempt to standardize any eligibility requirements. Similar to merchandise return policies which are set by the business owner, the only requirement would be that the owner make it known what the policy is, if any at all.

Some possible examples of senior pricing policies:

#### **Senior Pricing Policy**

10% off all canned goods

Minimum age 55

Effective Tuesday & Wednesday unless a holiday

#### **Senior Pricing Policy**

Minimum age 60

5% off deli items on Tuesday

10% off store baked goods and produce on Wednesday

Proof of age required

#### **Senior Pricing Policy**

Minimum age 62

15% off except weekends and holidays