

STATE FALSE CLAIMS ACT: Connecticut

Sec. 17b-301a. Prohibited acts re medical assistance: Definitions. As used in this section and section 17b-301b:

- (1) "Knowing" and "knowingly" means that a person, with respect to information: (A) Has actual knowledge of the information; (B) acts in deliberate ignorance of the truth or falsity of the information; or (C) acts in reckless disregard of the truth or falsity of the information, without regard to whether the person intends to defraud;
- (2) "Claim" means any request or demand, whether under a contract or otherwise, for money or property that is made to a contractor, grantee or other recipient if the state provides any portion of the money or property that is requested or demanded, or if the state will reimburse such contractor, grantee or other recipient for any portion of the money or property that is requested or demanded;
- (3) "Person" means any natural person, corporation, limited liability company, firm, association, organization, partnership, business, trust or other legal entity;
- (4) "State" means the state of Connecticut, any agency or department of the state or any quasipublic agency, as defined in section 1-120.

Sec. 17b-301b. Prohibited acts re medical assistance. Penalties.

(a) No person shall:

- (1) Knowingly present, or cause to be presented, to an officer or employee of the state a false or fraudulent claim for payment or approval under a medical assistance program administered by the Department of Social Services;
- (2) Knowingly make, use or cause to be made or used, a false record or statement to secure the payment or approval by the state of a false or fraudulent claim under a medical assistance program administered by the Department of Social Services;
- (3) Conspire to defraud the state by securing the allowance or payment of a false or fraudulent claim under a medical assistance program administered by the Department of Social Services;
- (4) Having possession, custody or control of property or money used, or to be used, by the state relative to a medical assistance program administered by the Department of Social Services, and intending to defraud the state or wilfully to conceal the property, deliver or cause to be delivered less property than the amount for which the person receives a certificate or receipt;
- (5) Being authorized to make or deliver a document certifying receipt of property used, or to be used, by the state relative to a medical assistance program administered by the Department of Social Services and intending to defraud the state, make or deliver such document without completely knowing that the information on the document is true;
- (6) Knowingly buy, or receive as a pledge of an obligation or debt, public property from an officer or employee of the state relative to a medical assistance program administered by the Department of Social Services, who lawfully may not sell or pledge the property; or
- (7) Knowingly make, use or cause to be made or used, a false record or statement to conceal, avoid or decrease an obligation to pay or transmit money or property to the state under a medical assistance program administered by the Department of Social Services.

(b) Any person who violates the provisions of subsection (a) of this section shall be liable to the state for:

- (1) A civil penalty of not less than five thousand dollars or more than ten thousand dollars,
- (2) three times the amount of damages that the state sustains because of the act of that person, and
- (3) the costs of investigation and prosecution of such violation. Liability under this section shall be joint and several for any violation of this section committed by two or more persons.

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (b) of this section concerning treble damages, if the court finds that:

- (1) A person committing a violation of subsection (a) of this section furnished officials of the state responsible for investigating false claims violations with all information known to such person about the violation not later than thirty days after the date on which the person first obtained the information;
- (2) such person fully cooperated with an investigation by the state of such violation; and
- (3) at the time such person furnished the state with the information about the violation, no criminal prosecution, civil action or administrative action had commenced under sections 17b-301c to 17b-301g, inclusive, with respect to such violation, and such person did not have actual knowledge of the existence of an investigation into such violation, the court may assess not less than two times the amount of damages which the state sustains because of the act of such person. Any information furnished pursuant to this subsection shall be exempt from disclosure under section 1-210.

Sec. 17b-301c. Attorney General's investigation of prohibited acts. Civil action.

The Attorney General may investigate any violation of subsection (a) of section 17b-301b. Any information obtained pursuant to this investigation shall be exempt from disclosure under section 1-210. If the Attorney General finds that a person has violated or is violating any provision of subsection (a) of section 17b-301b, the Attorney General may bring a civil action in the superior court for the judicial district of Hartford under this section in the name of the state against such person.

Sec. 17b-301d. Civil action by individual. Consent for withdrawal. Manner of service. Complaint under seal. Intervening in action by Attorney General.

(a) A person may bring a civil action in the superior court for the judicial district of Hartford against any person who violates subsection (a) of section 17b-301b, for the person who brings the action and for the state. Such civil action shall be brought in the name of the state. The action may thereafter be withdrawn only if the court and the Attorney General give written consent to the withdrawing of such action and their reasons for consenting.

(b) A copy of the complaint and written disclosure of substantially all material evidence and information the person possesses shall be served on the state by serving the Attorney General in the manner prescribed in section 52-64. The complaint shall be filed in camera, shall remain under seal for at least sixty days and shall not be served on the defendant until the court so orders. The court, upon motion of the Attorney General, may, for good cause shown, extend the time during which the complaint remains under seal. Such motion may be supported by affidavits or other submissions in

camera. Prior to the expiration of the time during which the complaint remains under seal, the Attorney General shall: (1) Proceed with the action in which case the action shall be conducted by the Attorney General, or (2) notify the court that the Attorney General declines to take over the action in which case the person bringing the action shall have the right to conduct the action.

(c) If the court orders that the complaint be unsealed and served, the Superior Court shall issue an appropriate order of notice requiring the same notice that is ordinarily required to commence a civil action. The defendant shall not be required to respond to any complaint filed under this section until thirty days after the complaint is served upon the defendant.

(d) If a person brings an action under this section or the federal False Claims Act, 31 USC 3729, et seq., no person other than the state may intervene or bring a related action based on the facts underlying the pending action.

Sec. 17b-301e. Prosecution by Attorney General. Withdrawal. Settlement. Limits on individual's participation. Division of proceeds. Attorneys' fees and costs.

(a) If the Attorney General, pursuant to section 17b-301d, elects to proceed with the action, the Attorney General shall have the primary responsibility for prosecuting the action and shall not be bound by any act of the person bringing the action. Such person shall have the right to continue as a party to the action, subject to the limitations set forth in this section.

(b) The Attorney General may withdraw such action notwithstanding the objections of the person bringing the action if the Attorney General has notified the person of the filing of the motion and the court has provided the person with an opportunity for a hearing on the motion.

(c) The Attorney General may settle the action with the defendant notwithstanding the objections of the person bringing the action if the court determines, after a hearing, that the proposed settlement is fair, adequate and reasonable under all the circumstances. Upon a showing of good cause, such hearing may be held in camera.

(d) Upon a showing by (1) the Attorney General that unrestricted participation during the course of the litigation by the person bringing the action would (A) interfere with or unduly delay the Attorney General's prosecution of the case, or (B) be repetitious, irrelevant or for purposes of harassment; or (2) the defendant that unrestricted participation during the course of the litigation by the person bringing the action would be for purposes of harassment or would cause the defendant undue burden or unnecessary expense, the court may, in its discretion, impose limitations on the person's participation, including, but not limited to, limiting the number of witnesses that such person may call, limiting the length of the testimony of any such witnesses, limiting the person's cross-examination of any such witnesses or otherwise limiting the participation by the person in the litigation.

(e) If the court awards civil penalties or damages to the state or if the Attorney General settles with the defendant and receives civil penalties or damages, the person bringing such action shall receive from the proceeds not less than fifteen per cent but not more than twenty-five per cent of such proceeds of the action or settlement of the claim, based upon the extent to which the person substantially contributed to the prosecution of the action. Any such person shall also receive an amount for reasonable expenses which the court finds to have been necessarily incurred, plus reasonable attorneys' fees and costs. All such expenses, fees and costs shall be awarded against the defendant.

(f) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (e) of this section, where the action is one that the court finds to be based primarily on disclosures of specific information relating to allegations or transactions (1) in a criminal, civil or administrative hearing, (2) in a report, hearing, audit or investigation conducted by the General Assembly, a committee of the General Assembly, the

Auditors of Public Accounts, a state agency or a quasi-public agency, or (3) from the news media, the court may award from such proceeds to the person bringing the action such sums as it considers appropriate, but in no case more than ten per cent of the proceeds, taking into account the significance of the information and the role of the person bringing the action in advancing the case to litigation. Any such person shall also receive an amount for reasonable expenses that the court finds to have been necessarily incurred, plus reasonable attorneys' fees and costs. All such expenses, fees and costs shall be awarded against the defendant.

**Sec. 17b-301f. Civil action by individual when Attorney General declines to proceed.
Procedure. Division of proceeds. Attorneys' fees and costs.**

(a) If the Attorney General declines to proceed with the action, the person who brought the action shall have the right to conduct the action. In the event that the Attorney General declines to proceed with the action, upon the request of the Attorney General, the court shall order that copies of all pleadings filed in the action and copies of any deposition transcripts be provided to the state. When the person who brought the action proceeds with the action, the court, without limiting the status and rights of such person, may permit the Attorney General to intervene at a later date upon a showing of good cause.

(b) A person bringing an action under this section or settling the claim shall receive an amount which the court decides is reasonable for collecting the civil penalty and damages. The amount shall be not less than twenty-five per cent or more than thirty per cent of the proceeds of the action or settlement and shall be paid out of such proceeds. Such person shall also receive an amount for reasonable expenses that the court finds to have been necessarily incurred, plus reasonable attorneys' fees and costs. All such expenses, fees and costs shall be awarded against the defendant.

(c) If a defendant prevails in the action conducted under this section and the court finds that the claim of the person bringing the action was clearly frivolous, clearly vexatious or brought primarily for purposes of harassment, the court may award reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses to the defendant.

(d) Irrespective of whether the Attorney General proceeds with the action, upon request and showing by the Attorney General that certain motions or requests for discovery by a person bringing the action would interfere with the state's investigation or prosecution of a criminal or civil matter arising out of the same facts, the court may stay such discovery for a period of not more than sixty days from the date of the order of the stay. Such a showing shall be conducted in camera. The court may extend the stay for an additional sixty-day period upon a further showing in camera that the state has pursued the criminal or civil investigation or proceedings with reasonable diligence and any proposed discovery in the civil action will interfere with the ongoing criminal or civil investigation or proceedings. For the purposes of this subsection, the Chief State's Attorney or state's attorney for the appropriate judicial district may appear to explain to the court the potential impact of such discovery on a pending criminal investigation or prosecution.

Sec. 17b-301g. Attorney General's pursuit of claim through alternate remedy.

Notwithstanding the provisions of section 17b-301d, the Attorney General may elect to pursue the state's claim through any alternate remedy available to the state, including any administrative proceeding to determine a civil penalty. If any such alternate remedy is pursued in another proceeding, the person bringing the action shall have the same rights in such proceeding as such person would have had if the action had continued under the provisions of sections 17b-301d to 17b-301f, inclusive. Any finding of fact or conclusion of law made in such other proceeding that has become final shall be conclusive on all parties to an action under sections 17b-301d to 17b-301f, inclusive. A finding or conclusion is final if it has been finally determined on appeal to the appropriate court of the state, if the time for filing such an appeal with respect to the finding or conclusion has expired or if the finding or conclusion is not subject to judicial review.

Sec. 17b-301h. Civil action by individual who committed prohibited act re medical assistance. Reduction of proceeds. Dismissal from action.

Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 17b-301e and 17b-301f, if the court finds that the action was brought by a person who planned and initiated the violation of subsection (a) of section 17b-301b, upon which violation an action was brought, then the court may reduce the share of the proceeds of the action that the person would otherwise receive under section 17b-301e or 17b-301f, taking into account the role of that person in advancing the case to litigation and any relevant circumstances pertaining to the violation. If a person bringing the action is convicted of criminal conduct arising from his or her role in the violation of subsection (a) of section 17b-301b, such person shall be dismissed from the civil action and shall not receive any share of the proceeds of the action. Such dismissal shall not prejudice the right of the Attorney General to continue the action.

Sec. 17b-301i. Court's jurisdiction over civil actions brought by certain individuals.

(a) No court shall have jurisdiction over an action brought under section 17b-301d (1) against a member of the General Assembly, a member of the judiciary or an elected officer or department head of the state if the action is based on evidence or information known to the state when the action was brought; (2) that is based upon allegations or transactions that are the subject of a civil suit or an administrative civil penalty proceeding in which the state is already a party; or (3) that is based upon the public disclosure of allegations or transactions (A) in a criminal, civil or administrative hearing, (B) in a report, hearing, audit or investigation, conducted by the General Assembly, a committee of the General Assembly, the Auditors of Public Accounts, a state agency or a quasi-public agency, or (C) from the news media, unless such action is brought by the Attorney General or the person bringing the action is an original source of the information. For the purposes of this subsection, "original source" means an individual who has direct and independent knowledge of the information on which the allegations are based and has voluntarily provided the information to the state before filing an action under section 17b-301d based on such information.

(b) No court shall have jurisdiction over an action brought under section 17b-301d by a person who knew or had reason to know that the Attorney General or another state law enforcement official knew of the allegations or transactions prior to such person filing the action or serving the disclosure of material evidence.

Sec. 17b-301j. State not liable for expenses.

The state of Connecticut shall not be liable for expenses which a person incurs in bringing an action under sections 17b-301d to 17b-301g, inclusive.

Sec. 17b-301k. Discrimination in employment because of acts in furtherance of civil action prohibited. Remedies. Attorneys' fees and costs.

Any employee who is discharged, demoted, suspended, threatened, harassed or in any other manner discriminated against in the terms and conditions of employment by his or her employer because of lawful acts done by the employee on behalf of the employee or others in furtherance of an action under sections 17b-301c to 17b-301g, inclusive, including investigation for, initiation of, testimony for or assistance in an action filed or to be filed under sections 17b-301c to 17b-301g, inclusive, shall be entitled to all relief necessary to make the employee whole. Such relief shall include reinstatement with the same seniority status such employee would have had but for the discrimination, two times the amount of any back pay, interest on any back pay and compensation for any special damages sustained as a result of the discrimination, including litigation costs and reasonable attorneys' fees. An employee may bring an action in the Superior Court for the relief provided in this section.

Sec. 17b-301l. Time for bringing civil action.

A civil action under sections 17b-301c to 17b-301g, inclusive, may not be brought: (1) More than six years after the date on which the violation of subsection (a) of section 17b-301b is committed, or (2) more than three years after the date when facts material to the right of action are known or reasonably should have been known by the official of the state charged with responsibility to act in the circumstances, but in no event more than ten years after the date on which the violation is committed, whichever last occurs.

Sec. 17b-301m. Standard of proof in civil action.

In any action brought under sections 17b-301c to 17b-301g, inclusive, the Attorney General or the person initiating such action shall be required to prove all essential elements of the cause of action, including damages, by a preponderance of the evidence.

Sec. 17b-301n. Effect of final judgment in criminal proceeding on civil action.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a final judgment rendered in favor of the state against a defendant in any criminal proceeding charging fraud or false statements, whether upon a verdict after trial or upon a plea of guilty or nolo contendere, shall estop such defendant from denying the essential elements of the offense in any action which involves the same transaction as in the criminal proceeding and which is brought in accordance with the provisions of sections 17b-301c to 17b-301g, inclusive.

Sec. 17b-301o. Remedies not exclusive.

The provisions of sections 17b-301a to 17b-301o, inclusive, and subsection (a) of section 4-61dd are not exclusive, and the remedies provided for shall be in addition to any other remedies provided for in any other provision of the general statutes or federal law or available under common law.

Sec. 17b-301p. Report re medical assistance civil actions.

On the thirtieth day after October 5, 2009, and annually thereafter, the Attorney General shall submit a report to the General Assembly and the Governor, in accordance with section 11-4a, that contains the following information:

- (1) The number of civil actions the Attorney General filed during the previous calendar year under sections 17b-301c to 17b-301g, inclusive;
- (2) The number of civil actions private individuals filed during the previous calendar year under sections 17b-301c to 17b-301g, inclusive, including the number of civil actions that remain under seal, along with (A) the state or federal courts in which such civil actions were filed and the number of civil actions filed in each such court, (B) the state program or agency involved in each civil action, and (C) the number of civil actions filed by private individuals who previously had filed an action based on the same or similar transactions or allegations under the federal False Claims Act, 31 USC 3729-3733, as amended from time to time, or the false claims act of any other state; and
- (3) The amount that was recovered by the state under sections 17b-301c to 17b-301g, inclusive, in settlement, damages and penalties and the litigation cost, if known, along with the (A) case number and parties for each civil action where there was a recovery, (B) separate amount of any funds recovered for damages, penalties and litigation costs, and (C) per cent of the recovery and the amount that the state paid to any private person who brought the civil action.