



Portfolio Media, Inc. | 230 Park Avenue, 7th Floor | New York, NY 10169 | www.law360.com
Phone: +1 646 783 7100 | Fax: +1 646 783 7161 | customerservice@law360.com

Connecticut Cases To Watch In 2026

By **Aaron Keller**

Law360 (January 2, 2026, 12:03 PM EST) -- The criminal prosecution of a law firm bookkeeper accused of embezzling \$584,000 over a dozen years and the criminal trial of a strip club boss accused of failing to report \$5.7 million in cash income to the Internal Revenue Service are just two high-profile cases scheduled for trial in Connecticut dockets in 2026.

Other high-stakes matters slated to go before a jury are the government's case against a state budget director accused of accepting bribes and a long-delayed malpractice lawsuit accusing McCarter & English LLP of faulty advice surrounding a \$20.1 million loan.

Here are four Connecticut cases to watch in 2026.

Strip Club Boss's \$5.7M Tax Trial Slated for May

A strip club boss **accused of hiding** \$5.7 million from the IRS and obtaining COVID-19 grants despite restrictions on sex-related businesses is scheduled to face a Connecticut federal jury May 11.

Kenneth Denning of Holland, Massachusetts, stands accused of pocketing cover charges collected from customers at the door of the Electric Blue Cafe in Tolland, Connecticut.

Federal prosecutors say he used the money for business and personal expenses, including a \$21,700 tab at the Mohegan Sun Casino and other gambling sprees in Connecticut and elsewhere. Club manager and bookkeeper Joshua Baker of Willimantic, Connecticut, and **bouncer** William Mayo, 41, of Manchester, Connecticut, pled guilty to related charges. Baker is scheduled for sentencing on June 4, and Mayo could learn his punishment on March 25, though that date may change based on a late December delay in Denning's trial and Baker's sentencing.

Denning was the Electric Blue Cafe's de facto leader, though the club was owned on paper by his wife's company, prosecutors have alleged. He applied for and received a \$150,000 Economic Injury Disaster Loan in 2020 despite a ban on using such money for sexual performances, according to his indictment.

The Electric Blue Cafe "was operating as a strip club and brothel where performances of a prurient sexual nature were performed regularly," the indictment reads.

The case is U.S. v. Denning et al., case number 3:24-cr-00107, in the U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut.

Convicted Former Budget Official Will Face Another Jury

A second federal corruption trial for Connecticut budget official Konstantinos Diamantis remains on the docket for 2026, though his attorney's exit bid and a request to delay the proceeding could affect the trial date.

Diamantis is accused of pocketing bribes from fellow suspended attorney and former lawmaker Christopher Ziogas. The money ensured Diamantis would help settle a Medicaid billing audit of Ziogas' fiancée, Bristol optometrist Helen Zervas, according to an **indictment**. Prosecutors say Ziogas paid Diamantis \$20,000 on one occasion, \$10,000 on another and \$65,000 once the audit ended. The cash originated with Zervas or her practice, the indictment indicates.