



State of Connecticut
DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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Testimony of the Office of Chief Public Defender
Benedict R. Daigle, Deputy Assistant Public Defender

Committee on Judiciary – March 25, 2022

Raised S.B. 459 – An Act Concerning the Commission for Correctional Oversight, the Use of Isolated Confinement, Seclusion, Restraints, Strip Searches, Social Contacts for Incarcerated Persons, Transparency for Conditions of Incarceration and Correctional Officer Training

Mission Statement of the Division of Public Defender Services

Striving to ensure justice and a fair and unbiased system, the Connecticut Division of Public Defender Services zealously promotes and protects the rights, liberty and dignity of all clients entrusted to us. We are committed to holistic representation that recognizes clients as individuals, fosters trust and prevents unnecessary and wrongful convictions.

The Office of Chief Public Defender (OCPD) supports S.B. 459 (LCO 3589), as the bill promotes the humanity and wellness of people who are incarcerated – and of people who work in correctional facilities.

- Section 1. Oversight provisions enhance accountability of correctional services – consequential public services delivered largely out of public sight.
- Section 2. Provisions regarding isolated confinement, residential rehabilitation units, restraints, and strip searches center wellness and rehabilitation while ensuring the safety and security of all individuals in correctional facilities.
- Section 3. Provisions regarding visitation and correspondence reflect the links among healthy relationships, appropriate conduct, and successful reentry.¹ Such provisions also may reduce negative impacts on children who have a parent who is incarcerated.²
- Section 4. Section 1 replaces the “ombudsman services” statute repealed by this section.

Bryan Stevenson observes that “each of us is more than the worst thing we’ve ever done.”³ This bill strikes the right balance between ensuring safety within correctional facilities and promoting an environment in which individuals there have the best opportunity to rehabilitate.

This office requests that the Committee vote favorably on this bill. Thank you for you considering OCPD’s support of this bill.

¹ *Ways to Support Children*, CT Children with Incarcerated Parents Initiative, <http://ctcip.org/adults/ways-to-support-children/> (last visited March 24, 2022).

² *Id.*

³ Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* (2014).