



## State of Connecticut

### DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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### Testimony of Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel Office of Chief Public Defender

Judiciary Committee - March 25, 2022

### Raised S.B. 460 - An Act Concerning Compassionate or Medical Parole and Credits Awarded for Release During an Emergency Declaration

#### *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.*

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The Office of Chief Public Defender supports **R.B. 460 - An Act Concerning Compassionate or Medical Parole and Credits Awarded for Release During an Emergency Declaration**. COVID has demonstrated the difficulties and obstacles that prevent the release of individuals who apply for a medical or compassionate parole. The bill does not allow for automatic release. The bill allows certain inmates the opportunity to apply for compassionate release, especially during a time such as the current COVID pandemic, a major or natural disaster, disease epidemic, or public health emergency. The Board of Pardons and Paroles would consider not only whether the person presents a significantly reduced risk of danger to the society if released, but also whether “circumstances exist which pose a higher risk of harm” if the inmate were to remain incarcerated. This office thanks the Committee for raising this bill and requests that this bill receive a joint favorable vote.