



DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES
State of Connecticut

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

Judiciary Committee – March 22, 2023

Raised H.B. 6738 – An Act Concerning Compassionate or Medical Parole and Credits Awarded for Release During an Emergency Declaration

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports **H.B. 6738- An Act Concerning Compassionate or Medical Parole and Credits Awarded for Release During an Emergency Declaration**. The bill allows certain inmates the opportunity to apply for compassionate parole release or medical parole release, especially during a time such as the COVID pandemic, a natural disaster, disease epidemic or public health emergency. This bill does not allow for automatic release. The bill also prohibits release of any inmate sentenced for a capital felony or murder with special circumstances.

COVID demonstrated the difficulties and obstacles that prevent the release of individuals who apply for a medical or compassionate parole. The Board of Pardons and Paroles would be required to consider not only whether the person presents a

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.

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.

The bill requires anyone who is granted a compassionate parole release during a major disaster or emergency declaration to again appear before the Board of Pardons and Parole not later than 20 days after the termination or expiration of the disaster or emergency declaration. At this hearing the Board will determine whether to revoke, continue or modify the compassionate parole. As a basis for such revocation, continuance or modification, the Board would consider the risk of harm to the person if confined and the best interest of public safety.

This office thanks the Committee for raising this bill and requests that this bill receive a joint favorable vote. Thank you.