



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

H.J. 261 – Resolution Proposing An Amendment To The State Constitution To Revise Requirements Relating To The Offering Of Bail Or Pretrial Release To Persons Accused Of A Crime

The Office of Chief Public Defender (OCPD) **opposes H.J. 261 Resolution Proposing An Amendment To The State Constitution To Revise Requirements Relating To The Offering Of Bail Or Pretrial Release To Persons Accused Of A Crime.** The Connecticut Sentencing Commission, of which this office is a member, was established in 2011. Its mission is to review Connecticut's criminal laws and propose recommendations to the Governor, this body and other criminal justice agencies. Members on this Commission include, among others, the Chief Court Administrator and other Judges, Court Support Services, Chief State's Attorney, Law School Professors, former state representatives, the Victim Advocate and Commissioners of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Mental Health and Addition Services, Correction, Pardon and Parole.

In 2022, the Sentencing Commission released its *Report on Pretrial Justice, Toward a Fair and Just System*. Discussion is continuing on this very important issue which impacts upon this agency's indigent clients who are presumed innocent. Details of any bail process contemplated must first be reviewed, considered and agreed upon by those in the criminal justice system. Passing an amendment to the Constitution would be premature without the specific details worked out before hand to avoid substantial and detrimental impact upon the most vulnerable people in this state, including people of

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.

color. This office is concerned as it believes this will result in increased detention of our clients and pressure clients to plead guilty so that they may be released from incarceration. Pretrial detention results in substantial collateral consequences, which include loss of employment, housing, children and family support.

Therefore, the Office of Chief Public Defender requests that the Committee take no action on this resolution. Thank you.