



**DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES**  
**State of Connecticut**

OFFICE OF CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER  
55 FARMINGTON AVENUE, 8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR  
HARTFORD, CT 06105

ATTORNEY TASHUN BOWDEN-LEWIS  
CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER  
TEL: (860) 509-6429  
FAX: (860) 509-6499

**Testimony of the Office of Chief Public Defender  
TaShun Bowden- Lewis, Chief Public Defender**

**Judiciary Committee – March 22, 2023**  
**Raised S.B. 1230 – An Act Expanding Access to Public Defender Services**

The Office of Chief Public Defender (OCPD) **whole heartedly supports** the intent of **Raised S.B. 1230 An Act Expanding Access to Public Defender Services**. However, it is important to note that if this bill is adopted, additional funding and resources will be needed to hire additional personnel for the Division of Public Defender Services (DPDS).

There is no question that the indigent, the underserved, and those stricken by poverty deserve the legal services of zealous and competent advocates. DPDS is comprised of attorneys, social workers, investigators, and clerical staff. The clients represented by this agency require full staffing and resources to represent them with excellence and integrity.

The Sixth Amendment to the United States Constitution “guarantees” the right to counsel. In Gideon vs. Wainwright, 373 U.S. 335 (1963), the United States Supreme Court understood that “lawyers in criminal courts are necessities, not luxuries.”

OCPD requests that the Judiciary Committee act favorably on this bill with the knowledge that comparable funding and resources will need to be allocated to DPDS to ensure the constitutional, zealous and competent representation we currently provide. Thank you.

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***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.*