



State of Connecticut

DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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**Testimony of the Office of Chief Public Defender
Renee Cimino, Director of Delinquency Defense and Child Protection,
Benedict R. Daigle Assistant Public Defender, and
Sanford O. Bruce III, Assistant Public Defender**

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE - MARCH 20, 2024

Raised Bill No. 445

AN ACT CONCERNING A JOBS PROGRAM FOR YOUTH IMPACTED BY THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM, A REVIEW OF PROBATION VIOLATIONS, STATE-WIDE EXPANSION OF TRUANCY CLINICS AND PERMITTING PEACE OFFICERS TO STOP A MOTOR VEHICLE SOLELY BECAUSE THE DRIVER OR A PASSENGER IS USING CANNABIS

The Office of Chief Public Defender (OCPD) opposes Sections 4 and 5 of *Raised H.B. 5506, An Act Concerning A Jobs Program For Youth Impacted By The Juvenile Justice System, A Review Of Probation Violations, State-Wide Expansion Of Truancy Clinics And Permitting Peace Officers To Stop A Motor Vehicle Solely Because The Driver Or A Passenger Is Using Cannabis*. OCPD supports Section 2.¹

Section 2 - OCPD supports this section as it would establish a jobs program for youth impacted by the juvenile justice system. The proposed language would require CSSD to develop and implement a jobs program for youth who have been impacted by the juvenile justice system. Connecting these at-risk youth with apprenticeships, trade skills and employment opportunities can provide a pathway for successful entry into the labor market while reducing the likelihood of recidivism. Therefore, OCPD supports this section of the bill.

¹ OCPD takes no position on Sections 1 and 3 of the bill.

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Sections 4 and 5 – This office respectfully **opposes Sections 4 and 5**, which would allow the odor of cannabis or burnt cannabis to be a basis in determining whether probable cause or reasonable suspicion exists for law enforcement to conduct a stop or search of a person or motor vehicle. It would permit law enforcement officials to stop motor vehicles based on such officials' assertion that they perceived the odor of cannabis or burnt cannabis emanating from such vehicles. The reasons for which recent legislation was passed, including the disparate impact of such odor-based stops on communities of color, have not changed such that the proposed reversions would be warranted.

Therefore, OCPD requests that Sections 4 and 5 be stricken from the bill. Thank you.