



State of Connecticut

DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

Office of Chief Public Defender
55 Farmington Avenue, 8th Floor
Hartford, Connecticut 06105
(860) 509-6405 Telephone
(860) 509-6495 Fax

Deborah Del Prete Sullivan
Legal Counsel, Director
deborah.d.sullivan@pds.ct.gov

**Testimony of the Office of Chief Public Defender
Benedict R. Daigle, Assistant Public Defender**

**COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT -
FEBRUARY 22, 2024**

Raised Bill No. 5127

**AN ACT REQUIRING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR THE DELIVERY OF
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN PRISONS**

The Office of Chief Public Defender (OCPD) supports Raised H.B. 5127 (LCO 1001), as the legislation would support efforts to strengthen individuals, families, and communities, and to reduce recidivism, by requiring a comprehensive needs assessment for the delivery of postsecondary education programs in prisons.

It is fundamental that education is a key to an individual's reaching and maintaining socioeconomic stability. This is especially true for individuals who do not have generational wealth and other social supports on which they can rely. As public defenders, we represent such individuals in more than 100,000 court cases each year.

The next best thing to an individual's avoiding the carceral system altogether is for an individual's contact with that system to result in their being equipped with knowledge, skills, abilities, and resources that support greater stability and success afterward. Insofar as this legislation is part of Connecticut's work toward that goal—a goal which benefits individuals, families, communities, and our state as a whole—this office is in strong support.

This office thanks the Committee for raising this legislation and respectfully requests a joint favorable report. Thank you.