



State of Connecticut
DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE - MARCH 20, 2024

H.B. 5499 - ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF THE CRIMINAL LAWS OF THIS STATE

**S.B. 438 - AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE LAWS
OF THIS STATE**

The Office of Chief Public Defender (OCPD) supports *H.B. 5499, Act Concerning a Study of the Criminal Laws of this State* and *S.B. 438, An Act Concerning a Study of the Criminal Procedure Laws of this State*. OCPD requests that the Chief Public Defender be added to the membership of both groups as they carry out their charge to study the criminal laws and criminal procedures of this state. OCPD's substantial experience in Connecticut courts gives this agency a unique perspective on Connecticut's criminal and juvenile delinquency laws and procedures. OCPD requests your consideration of including the Division of Criminal Justice in the membership of both groups as well.

Pursuant to C.G.S. 51-296¹, the Division of Public Defender Services, as a state agency, provides legal representation to indigent adults and juveniles in criminal proceedings, including direct appeals:

¹ C.G.S. 51-296 also requires the Division of Public Defender Services to provide: "(A) Legal services and guardians ad litem to children, youths and indigent respondents in family relations matters in which the state has been ordered to pay the cost of such legal services and guardians ad litem, provided legal services shall be provided to indigent respondents pursuant to this subparagraph only in paternity proceedings and contempt proceedings; and (B) legal services and guardians ad litem to children, youths and indigent legal parties in proceedings before the superior court for juvenile matters."

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(a) In any criminal action, in any habeas corpus proceeding arising from a criminal matter, in any extradition proceeding, or in any delinquency matter, the court before which the matter is pending shall, if it determines after investigation by the public defender or his office that a defendant is indigent as defined under this chapter . . . “

See C.G.S. 51-296, *Designation of public defender for indigent defendant, codefendant*. Legal services and guardians ad litem in family relations matters and juvenile matters. Contracts for legal services.

Therefore, OCPD supports both bills and requests that it be included as a member of these working groups. Thank you.