



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 18, 2024

**RAISED S.B. 429 - AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF THE CIVIL PROCEDURE
LAWS IN THIS STATE**

**RAISED H.B. 5486 - AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF THE CIVIL LAWS IN THIS
STATE**

The Office of Chief Public Defender (OCPD) supports *Raised S.B. 429 - An Act Concerning a Study of the Civil Procedure Laws in this State* and *Raised H.B. 5486 - An Act Concerning a Study of the Civil Laws in this State*. OCPD requests that the Chief Public Defender or their designee be added to the membership of both groups as they carry out their charge to study the civil laws and civil procedures of this state. OCPD requests your consideration of including the Division of Criminal Justice in the membership of both groups as well.

Pursuant to *C.G.S. 51-296, 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*, the Division of Public Defender Services, as a state agency, provides:

“(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

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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."

This statutory mandate articulated in C.G.S. 51-296, is in addition to OCPD's mandate to provide legal representation to indigent adults and juveniles in any criminal action or delinquency matter, or in extradition or *habeas corpus proceedings* which arise out of a conviction. OCPD's substantial experience in the Connecticut courts gives this agency a unique perspective on Connecticut's civil laws and procedures.

For these reasons, OCPD supports the bill and requests that it be included in these groups.