State of Connecticut
DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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Testimony of Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel, Director
Committee on Judiciary - Public Hearing March 9, 2018
Raised Bill 5407, An Act Establishing a Task Force to Promote Efficiencies in the Filing of Habeas Corpus Matters

The Office of Chief Public Defender appreciates being included in the Task Force as proposed in **Raised Bill 5407, An Act Establishing a Task Force to Promote Efficiencies in the Filing of Habeas Corpus Matters.** The number of habeas corpus filings initially rose substantially over the last few years, in part due to the enactment of a statute of limitations. Although the number of habeas corpus petitions being filed has continued downward since a spike in filings, the costs in this area remain unpredictable. The increased expenditures from this agency's budget have resulted from this agency's obligation to provide counsel and other legal services to indigent persons in habeas corpus proceedings. In addition, pursuant to State v. Wang, this agency is also charged with expending funds to pro se indigent petitioners for investigation or expert expenses.

There are a number of issues that could be included for review by this Task Force, including issues relating to emerging issues in forensic science and how new findings may impact prior convictions. The Division of Criminal Justice may be making proposals to add this and other topics to the mission of any Habeas Task Force. The Office of Chief Public Defender supports expanding the scope to address issues that impact our post-conviction practice.

The Office of Chief Public Defender appreciates being included on this important task force and looks forward to participating on this Task Force.