



## State of Connecticut

### DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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**Testimony of Christine Perra Rapillo, Chief Public Defender  
Raised Bill 1099, AN ACT CONCERNING DISCRIMINATION  
BASED ON A PERSON'S CRIMINAL RECORD  
Committee on the Judiciary - March 25, 2019**

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports the concept of *Raised Bill 1099, An Act Concerning Discrimination Based on a Person's Criminal Record*, that persons convicted of a criminal offense should not be discriminated against. Currently there are numerous collateral consequences that accompany a conviction. Persons convicted face substantially difficult, if not impossible, obstacles as they attempt to successfully re-enter and live in their communities. Individuals released from incarceration face even more stigma as they navigate a system encumbered with barriers to housing, education and employment. Discrimination negatively and disproportionately impacts upon indigent persons and minorities.

Even if a crime was wholly unrelated to a person's field of work, a convicted person can be denied employment. He/she can be denied an occupational license, permit or certificate to work, and if they had one previously, it can be suspended or revoked based upon the conviction. A person can be denied housing, an education, student loans and even life insurance. A conviction can deem a person ineligible for public benefits for food, shelter, medical care and income assistance. This denial has the inevitable effect of setting people up for failure. This is regardless of whether a person has finished serving their sentence of incarceration or probation or even if they pled guilty and paid a fine. And the discrimination can continue in perpetuity, regardless of whether a person has "paid their debt to society" or been rehabilitated.

Further, the impact of the discrimination is not felt only by the convicted person. Their family, especially their spouse and children, are also negatively impacted by the discrimination. They are also subject to suffer economically as a result of being denied housing and a means to make a living or obtain assistance. Prohibiting discrimination will assist families to remain together and be stronger. Individuals seeking to recover from a conviction or period of incarceration make a more productive reentry in to our communities if they are

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able to maintain family connections. Everyone benefits from supporting these individual as they seek to work and be successful. Therefore, the Office of Chief Public Defender requests that the Committee act favorably on this bill.