



DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES
State of Connecticut

OFFICE OF CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER
30 TRINITY STREET, 4TH FLOOR
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106

ATTORNEY CHRISTINE P. RAPILLO
CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER
TEL: (860) 509-6429
FAX: (860) 509-6499

Testimony of Christine Perra Rapillo, Chief Public Defender
Housing Committee Public Hearing
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Raised Bill 5242
An Act Concerning the Risk of Homelessness for Those Released From the Custody
of the Department of Correction

The Office of Chief Public Defender respectfully requests that this Committee support *Raised Bill 5242, An Act Concerning the Risk of Homelessness for Those Released From the Custody of the Department of Correction*. As drafted the bill would focus on persons who may become homeless upon release from incarceration by assessing housing needs including homelessness risk, family support, prior employment and housing searches for utilization in the person's re-entry plan.

Section 2 of the bill mandates the Departments of Correction and Housing create a *returning home program* to assist persons released on parole or to a supervised community setting. A report to the General Assembly is required regarding homelessness and needs of incarcerated persons. Obtaining stable housing is one of the main challenges our clients face when reentering the community from incarceration. While the Department of Correction makes efforts to ensure that returning citizens have safe living arrangements, resources are limited and particularly challenging for individuals being discharged at the end of a sentence. Any attention or resources that can be devoted to increasing housing options for returning citizen will help improve their outcomes and enhance public safety.

The Office of Chief Public Defender is supportive of this legislation and efforts to assist persons upon their re-entry to their communities.