



State of Connecticut
DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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Testimony of Christine Perra Rapillo, Chief Public Defender
Office of Chief Public Defender

Committee on Labor and Public Employees - Public Hearing March 5, 2020

Raised Bill 5389

An Act Concerning Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Record

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports *Raised Bill 5389, An Act Concerning Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Record* which would remove existing substantial barriers for persons re-entering their communities after an arrest or conviction. The bill eliminates the stigmatizing title of "criminal offenders" currently imposed upon anyone who has been arrested or convicted regardless of the number years that have passed since the person totally completed his/her sentence.

The bill amends the discrimination statutes to prohibit such based upon the person's criminal history record information in regard to education, employment, housing, insurance and credit worthiness. By changing the current statutory framework which imposes prohibitions and practices that substantially impede re-entry, this bill will benefit such persons and greatly assist them as they attempt to put their lives back together and become contributing members of society. Our clients face discrimination on a daily basis in regard to these areas in addition to the discrimination based upon their indigency as they struggle to survive and support themselves and their families.

The Office of Chief Public Defender thanks the Committee for raising this bill and the opportunity to voice support of the important changes contained in the bill.