



State of Connecticut
DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

TESTIMONY OF CHIEF STATE'S ATTORNEY CHRISTOPHER L. MORANO

IN OPPOSITION TO:

**H.B. No. 5782 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE AGE OF A CHILD FOR PURPOSES OF
JURISDICTION IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY MATTERS AND PROCEEDINGS**

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
MARCH 13, 2006**

The Division of Criminal Justice strongly urges the Committee to reject H.B. No. 5782, An Act Concerning the Age of a Child for Purposes of Jurisdiction in Juvenile Delinquency Matters and Proceedings. This bill is totally inconsistent with the enactment last year of Public Act 05-232, which made major changes to the laws governing Youthful Offender (YO) proceedings.

Our plea today is simple: fine tune the major bill you passed last year and then give that legislation the chance to work. It has been only six weeks since P.A. 05-232 took effect on January 1, 2006, and yet there is already legislation being considered to completely scrap all of the work that was done last year.

There is no evidence whatsoever to even suggest that P.A. 05-232 is not working as intended. In fact, the statistics show otherwise. The facts show that the overwhelming majority of Y.O. cases are not going to the adult docket. They are remaining on the Y.O. docket.

The number of bills presented by various parties seeking to fine-tune the bill would seem to suggest to that, yes, the new law is working but that a little bit more work needs to be done. They also show the willingness on the part of all involved to work out the concerns that have arisen and to give the new system a chance to work.

This bill would not accomplish what its proponents claim. You cannot "fix" the juvenile justice system by adding thousands of additional cases to a system that has long been sorely unfunded and seriously overtaxed. If you are serious about addressing the problem, the answer is to look at the lack or inadequate support for the programs and services that should be available to youthful offenders.

The Division of Criminal Justice strongly recommends that the Committee reject H.B. No. 5782 and focus its attention instead on the many bills seeking to fine tune P.A. 05-232.