



State of Connecticut

DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

OFFICE OF CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER
30 TRINITY STREET-4th Floor
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106

DEBORAH DEL PRETE SULLIVAN
LEGAL COUNSEL/EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDER
(860) 509-6405 Telephone
(860) 509-6495 Fax
deborah.d.sullivan@po.state.ct.us

TESTIMONY OF
DEBORAH Del PRETE SULLIVAN, LEGAL COUNSEL
OFFICE OF CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER
Raised House Bill No. 5654
An Act Concerning Eligibility for Youthful Offender Status
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
March 20, 2006

The Office of Chief Public Defender would oppose passage of *Raised House Bill No. 5654, An Act Concerning Eligibility for Youthful Offender Status* if the intent is to treat youths aged 16 and 17 as adults for motor vehicle violations for which a youth may be convicted of a misdemeanor or a felony. Passage of this legislation, as written, would require that a youth be prosecuted on the docket for criminal matters in the Superior Court (adult court) if charged with a motor vehicle violation just as an adult would.

If a youth is charged with a motor vehicle violation which is classified as a misdemeanor or a felony, the youth should, as current law provides, be presumed Youthful Offender status. Being charged with a motor vehicle violation that is classified as a misdemeanor or a felony poses not only the risk of the youth obtaining a criminal record but of incarceration and the loss of liberty. A youth arrested for a motor vehicle violation that is classified as a misdemeanor or a felony should not be treated more harshly than if he/she committed a criminal offense such as an assault.

If, however, the intent of this legislation is to remove such criminal penalties, including criminal misdemeanor or felony convictions, i.e. a record, and risk of incarceration from the penalties of a motor vehicle violation that a youth may be charged, the Office of Chief Public Defender would support such. Likewise, if it is the intent of this legislation to remove from Youthful Offender status all motor vehicle violations that are infractions, the Office of Chief Public Defender would not oppose such.