



# State of Connecticut

## DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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**TESTIMONY OF  
DOUGLAS A. OVIAN  
SENIOR ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDER  
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER, ENFIELD G.A. 13**

***Raised House Bill No. 360  
An Act Concerning Arraignments on Arrest Warrants***

***Judiciary Committee Public Hearing  
March 3, 2006***

While not opposed entirely, the Office of Chief Public Defender opposes passage of subsection (c) of Section 1 of *Raised House Bill No. 360, An Act Concerning Arraignments on Arrest Warrants*. This subsection would extend from 2 to 5 the number of court days before a defendant who has been arraigned outside the originating Geographical Area court pursuant to PRAWN (Paperless Re-arrest Warrant Network), would be returned for an appearance at the originating Geographical Area court where the re-arrest for failure to appear had been ordered. There is a substantial likelihood that individuals could be incarcerated for up to a week before being returned to the originating court to face prosecution on the charged offenses.

Raised H.B. 360 would exacerbate current deficiencies in PRAWN, increasing costs to the State incurred in prisoner transport and incarceration of persons who may not receive meaningful argument of their bond because they are arraigned in the Geographical Area in which they were arrested rather than where the offense occurred. PRAWN was launched statewide in September of 2005, as a measure intended to use advances in technology to help reduce the backlog of unserved re-arrest warrants. However, since the re-arrest warrant itself is but one component in the "virtual" courtroom of the future, not the present, and the difficulty that some courts are finding in transferring these cases back to their home courts within the two day requirement is a problem which Raised H.B. 360 seeks to remedy through an extension of time.

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Judiciary Committee Public Hearing

Testimony - Douglas A. Ovian, Senior Assistant Public Defender,

Office of the Public Defender, Enfield G.A. 13

Re: *Raised H.B. No. 360, An Act Concerning Arraignments  
on Arrest Warrants*

PRAWN courts lack the people (defense attorneys, prosecutors, and judges) with documentation and/or knowledge of the warrants or police reports which describe the underlying charged offenses, or information pertaining to the defendant or his/her community ties and circumstances. Typically, all that exists is an affirmation of "the bond as it was set on the re-arrest warrant." As significant as it is, the financial cost is overshadowed by the cost to justice when only those defendants charged with failure to appear are detained in high-security jails in a reflex response to allegations which may be handled differently if the defendant were in the geographical area court where the offense occurred and the re-arrest order entered.

In conclusion, the Office of Chief Public Defender respectfully requests that the current 2 day time frame not be extended to 5 but remain the same in subsection (c) in Section 1.