



State of Connecticut
DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

TESTIMONY OF CHIEF STATE'S ATTORNEY CHRISTOPHER L. MORANO

IN OPPOSITION TO:

H.B. No. 5739 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRACTICE OF LAW BY ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEYS AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEYS

JOINT COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
MARCH 13, 2006

The Division of Criminal Justice opposes H.B. No. 5739, An Act Concerning the Practice of Law by Assistant State's Attorneys and Deputy Assistant State's Attorneys, and would strongly urge the Committee to look at the underlying problem that brings this bill before you - the compensation of attorneys in public service.

This bill essentially would allow most state prosecutors to engage in the private practice of law in non-criminal matters on a part-time basis. The bill would continue the existing prohibition on the outside practice of law by the Chief State's Attorney, the Deputy Chief State's Attorneys and the State's Attorneys.

There is no question that the reason for the bill is financial. You stand to make a whole lot more money working the private sector than in the public sector, whether as a prosecutor, a public defender, or even a judge. I understand that and I understand the reason that this bill has been brought before you.

That being said, I oppose this bill because our criminal justice system, and in particular the Division of Criminal Justice, cannot permit even the slightest opening for even the potential appearance of a conflict of interest. Prosecutors can serve but one master, and that is the pursuit of justice for this State and its people.

Yes, our prosecutors are underpaid when compared to their counterparts in the private sector and in many cases their counterparts in the public sector. The only way to deal with this issue is directly establishing a level of compensation that recognizes their tremendous commitment and dedication.