

**Testimony of James Long:
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Municipal Employees Local 1565, Connecticut Jail
Employees.
Monday March 13, 2006,
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing on Raised Bill
Number 5784, An Act Concerning the Board of Pardons
and Paroles.**

Good Afternoon, Senator McDonald and Representative Lawlor, Chairpersons of the Judiciary Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly; Good afternoon, to the other honorable and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee.

I have been a parole officer since September 3, 2004. I was promoted along with 40 other Parole Officers. Most of these parole officers were promoted from within the Department of Correction ranks. We were given about 12 days of training at the Hartford District Parole Office. After we had completed training, I was assigned to the Waterbury District Office. I continue in that assignment in the Waterbury District Office as a Field Parole Officer 1.

It has been a long road to travel. The Parole officers assigned to the Waterbury District Office were fully equipped by March of 2005.

The Department of Correction seems to be learning from past mistakes. The last fifteen parole officers assigned to the Parole and Community Services Division were fully equipped within two weeks of being assigned at their respective district offices. These new officers continue with their training. Most of these new hires came from outside of the Department of Correction.

I would like to testify in favor of Raised Bill Number 5784.

Currently, parole officers supervise six types of offenders, which are:

1. Discretionary Parole offenders.
2. Special Parole Offenders.
3. Transitional Supervision Inmates under section 18-100c of the Connecticut General Statutes.
4. Community Release Inmates, which are residing in Department of Correction Halfway Houses.
5. Out of State Parolees, governed by the Interstate Commission Compact Agreement of Adult Offenders.
6. Special Management Unit, sex offenders and mental health offenders.

Additionally, the Chain of Command is separated. Field parole officers report to their respective district parole supervisors, who intern report to the Parole and Community Division Director. Hearing Parole Officers assigned to the Board of Pardons and Paroles report to the Chairperson of the Board of Pardons and Paroles. We need to come under one unified command.

Violation Process:

--Parole, Special Management Unit, and Special Parole, the field parole officer submits a parole violation report their supervisor, who intern forwards the report to the Board of Pardons and Paroles. The Board can reject report of the field officer. The parolee could go before a revocation hearing at a correctional facility.

--Interstate Parole, the field parole officer submits a violation report to their supervisor: who then forwards the report to the Interstate Parole Supervisor. The Interstate parole supervisor contacts the sending state for advice.

In both of the above parolees, the field parole officer has to monitor the violation process.

--Transitional Supervision/Community Release, the field officer submits a Disciplinary Report to the receiving Department of Correction Facility for a Hearing by a Disciplinary Hearing Officer. The field officer is not required to monitor the violation process.

Absconders/Escape Process:

--Parole/Special Parole, the officer submits violation report to their supervisor. The field parole officer is required to look for thirty days unless the parolee leaves a residential program. The parole supervisor forwards the report the Fugitive Unit. The Fugitive Unit takes over case. There are five parole officers assigned to the Fugitive Unit. The parole absconder gets no added time. Their time is stopped.

--Transitional Supervision, the field officer conducts three attempts to locate the inmate. The officer has to write an arrest warrant affidavit and forward to their supervisor. Their supervisor reviews warrant. The officer then has to hand deliver the warrant to the court for the State's Attorney and a Judge to review; after they review and sign the officer drops off at a State Police Barracks, which is assigned to their district. The State Police hold the warrant and enter into the COLLECT/NCIC computer system. The escaped inmate will face an Escape charge in the first degree.

--Community Release, the parole officer writes a report, which is reviewed by their Residential Parole Supervisor. The report is forwarded the State Police Troop. The State Police Troop then applies for the escape warrant.

--Out of State Parolees, the parole officer forwards an absconder violation reports to their supervisor. The parole supervisor forwards to the Parole Supervisor of the Interstate Compact Administrator for advice.

As you can see, there are many rules and procedures to follow and keep track of.

Violations and escapes are just two examples. In my opinion, the Board of Pardons and Paroles should oversee all conditional releases from the Department of Correction. The Board of Pardons and Parolees should operate independently from the Department of Correction.

Substance Abuse and Addiction Services Treatment:

Parole has contracted providers. In Waterbury we have the Morris Foundation for Parole, Special Parole, and Out of State Parolees.

Transitional Supervision inmates have Correctional Addiction Services Counselors.

Substance abuse treatment for the inmates on transitional supervision is done by a referral to the Department of Social Services for SAGA Title 19 benefits.

I will now answer any questions that the committee may have. Thank You.