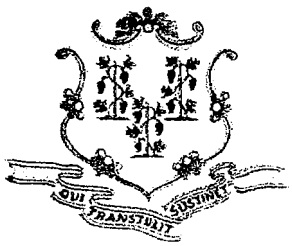
M. Jodi Rell
Governor

Robert Farr
Chairman

STATE OF CONNECTICUT



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BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLES
55 West Main Street - Waterbury, CT 06702

Judiciary Committee
Room 2500, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

February 26, 2007

RE: Raised Bill No. 7237 – AN ACT CONCERNING SPECIAL PAROLE

Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Committee. I am submitting this testimony as the interim Chairman of the Board of Pardons and Paroles in opposition to two sections of the above bill.

Section 1 of the bill amends subsection (b) of Section 54-125e of the general statutes which currently allows the Board to establish the conditions of special parole. The new language would allow the Court to establish these conditions.

Allowing the court more say in the conditions of special parole sounds reasonable, but would have serious impacts on the existing system. Currently, when the Board establishes conditions, it has the power to amend them without returning to court. If the Court sets the conditions, the Board would then have to petition the Court for any and all modification of the conditions of parole, thus forcing the Board to staff all courts with parole officers at great cost. There are currently no parole officers staffing our court systems and no one available to explain to the Court the need for the modification. In addition, the conditions set by the Court might be set years before the defendant could be ready for release on special parole, unlike the current system which allows the Board to set the conditions up to the time of release. During the time between sentencing and parole, the programs available for the defendant as well as the needs of the defendant might change substantially.

Therefore, a better approach would be to allow the court to recommend conditions of parole, or if the Court is allowed to establish the conditions, to allow the Board to modify them without court approval.

Section 2 of the bill amends Subsection (b) of section 53a-28. This new language would allow the courts an option of imposing a term of imprisonment, followed by a period of special parole, and then, a period of probation.

Allowing a period of probation to follow a period of special parole would not only complicate but also potentially compromise effective community supervision. It would be counter-productive to place an individual under the supervision of Parole and then uproot that supervision from the parole officer, and transfer it to the jurisdiction of Probation with a new period of supervision with a new probation officer.

I have no position on the balance of the proposed Bill, but if it is to be adopted, I hope you will make these recommended changes to the language.

Please feel free to contact me or Rich Sparaco, my legislative liaison, if you have any questions or require any further information.

Sincerely,

Robert Farr

Robert Farr, Chairman

RS/RF