



*Office of Chief Public Defender
State of Connecticut*

30 TRINITY STREET, 4TH FLOOR
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106
TEL (860)509-6429
FAX (860)509-6499
susan.storey@jud.ct.gov

ATTORNEY SUSAN O. STOREY
CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER

**Testimony Of
Chief Public Defender Susan O. Storey**

**H.B. No. 6639 (Raised), An Act Concerning Credit In The State
Employees Retirement System For Hazardous Duty Service**

*Committee on Labor and Public Employees
February 15, 2007*

H.B. No. 6639 (RAISED), An Act Concerning Credit In The State Employees Retirement System For Hazardous Duty Service would include attorneys, investigators, social workers and other support staff of the Division of Public Defender Services in the definition of "hazardous duty member" for purposes of the state employees retirement system. While the employees of the Division, except for attorneys and exempt staff, are unionized, this office supports the concept of expanding the definition of "hazardous duty member" to all employees of the Division. This is so because Division employees are confronted with the risk of assault, threats and other health hazards as they carry out their duties to provide effective assistance to accused persons.

On a daily basis, the attorneys, investigators and social workers, secretaries and clerks that are employed by the Division of Public Defender Services work in very close proximity with persons accused of criminal offenses, witnesses and others in public defender offices, courthouse lockups and courtrooms, correctional facilities and throughout the community. Having daily contact with persons who may be violent, threatening and aggressive, has resulted in numerous incidents of assault, sometimes of a serious nature, and threats upon staff.

Attached for your review is the detailed testimony as submitted by former Chief Public Defender Gerard A. Smyth during the 2005 legislative session in regard to *S.B. No. 1320, An Act To Include State Prosecutors Within The Definition Of "Hazardous Duty" Members For The Purposes Of The State Employees Retirement System*. At that time, the testimony outlined more than 67 incidents of assaults or threats upon Public Defender staff.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.