



State of Connecticut
DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Testimony of the Division of Criminal Justice

In Support of:

**H.B. No. 5919 (RAISED) – An Act Concerning Access to Police Reports and
Witness Statements**

Joint Committee on Judiciary – March 20, 2008

The Division of Criminal Justice respectfully requests the Committee's Joint Favorable Report for H.B. No. 5919, An Act Concerning Access to Police Reports and Witness Statements. This bill makes what is essentially a technical, but critical, revision to the section of Public Act 08-1, January Special Session, creating a state-of-the-art information technology system for the criminal justice system.

This bill would make **absolutely no change** in the way the system operates right now. This bill will not change in any way the obligation that prosecutors presently have under the federal and state Constitutions and state law and rules of practice to provide information to the defense.

In fact the reason that this bill is needed and is so critical is that it seeks to prevent a situation where new technology could bring about an unintended, unwanted and unwise change with the advent of the information technology system envisioned in Public Act 08-1 of the January Special Session, An Act Concerning Criminal Justice Reform. The Division of Criminal Justice enthusiastically supports that system and we eagerly await its development and deployment. However, we cannot overstate the need for stringent controls on access to the information that will be collected, stored and processed through this system. While it is essential to link all agencies in the criminal justice system electronically, it is equally important that in doing so we maintain the confidentiality of what can be very sensitive information.

This bill would protect the confidentiality of police reports or witness statements, the improper disclosure of which could (1) compromise and even threaten the safety of witnesses, and/or (2) reveal the identity of confidential informants and/or (3) compromise ongoing investigations. One needs look no