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Testimony of Deborah Del Prete Sullivan,
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Raised Bill No. 5932
An Act Concerning Tax Credits for Businesses that Hire Exoffenders and Criminal History Questions in Certain Applications for State Employment

Judiciary Committee Public Hearing - March 20, 2008

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports this legislation which would provide a tax credit to a business entity that hires a person who has been convicted of a criminal offense. The person so hired would be required to work a minimum of 30 hours per week. Providing such an incentive to businesses would assist persons convicted of crimes in obtaining employment.

Typically, a person who has been released on parole or probation is required to be employed as a condition of parole or probation. However, although a person may make every effort to obtain employment, a conviction can impede one's ability to obtain and maintain gainful employment, to obtain housing, education, and to meet basic needs for themselves and their families. In addition, research indicates that persons who can not obtain employment may be at a higher risk of recidivating.

Technology has made it increasingly easy to obtain the criminal record of a person. In addition, the Judicial Department now posts the criminal court dockets, which include the names of arrestees, dates of birth and charges, on the internet. These advances allow potential employers to obtain more information than ever before and within a shorter amount of time.

Allowing a business a tax credit when hiring a person who has been convicted will assist that person upon release from incarceration and reentry to the community to become a productive member of society.

Therefore, this office supports this proposed legislation and requests that this Committee adopt it.