



State of Connecticut

DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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**Testimony of Deborah Del Prete Sullivan,
Legal Counsel/Executive Assistant Public Defender
Office of Chief Public Defender
Raised Bill No. 668, An Act Concerning Prison Overcrowding
Public Hearing - March 12, 2008**

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports collaborations which work to assist in reducing prison overcrowding. In addition, it supports Sections 2 and 6 of this bill which would establish programs and services for veterans and incarcerated parents. There is a need for more services and counseling for veterans who have returned from the traumatic environment of war. In addition, providing parenting programs to incarcerated parents would assist in preparing him/her upon re-entry to the community.

Section 3 provides that the fact of whether an inmate is taking classes to earn a GED or has earned a GED may be considered for purposes of granting parole. Although providing discretion to the Board of Pardons and Parole to consider such, this office is concerned that there may be inmates who, due to limited availability of the GED program, may not have been able to work towards or earn a GED. As a result, the lack of a GED or proof of working towards a GED may work to the disadvantage of certain inmates who apply for parole. If the lack of adequate funding is an issue that exists which precludes the availability of GED classes to all inmates who desire to pursue such, this office would support increased funding to the Department of Corrections for the offering of more GED classes.