



Office of The Attorney General
State of Connecticut

*TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
MARCH 16, 2009*

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 6646, an Act Concerning the Regulation of Bail Bondsmen.

The proposal transfers licensing of bail bondsmen to the Department of Public Safety, provides additional requirements for bail bondsmen and transfers collection of forfeited bonds from the Division of Criminal Justice to the Attorney General's Office.

I urge the committee to follow the recommendations of a 2004 Program Review and Investigations Committee report on bail services and deem forfeited bail bonds a debt owed to the state of Connecticut. House Bill 6646 places all administrative responsibilities for forfeited bonds in the Office of the Attorney General. DAS has a system in place that can be more easily modified for this additional work. Currently, the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and my office collect hundreds of millions of dollars annually. DAS has a tracking and administrative collection system that effectively and locates and identifies anyone owing money to the state. If the debtor fails to pay the debt, DAS refers the matter to my office for civil action.

The proposal should also be amended to reallocate collected forfeited bail bond revenue in a more equitable manner commensurate with the resources used in the collection of such revenue. Under the current language, the General Fund receives 50% of the collected revenue, the Department of Public Safety receives 40% and the Attorney General receives 10%. If the committee amends the legislation to provide for an expanded DAS role, adequate resources will need to be provided to that agency. In addition, the Governor's proposed budget has cut 7 attorney positions from my office and another 6 positions cannot be filled. Any additional collection work depends on the appropriation of adequate funds for civil collection efforts.

Finally, House Bill 6646 should be amended to explicitly state that the failure to pay a forfeited bond results in license suspension or revocation. Line 355 references a violation of sections 28 and 32 as a basis for suspension or revocation of a bail bondsmen license. Since those sections address the collection of forfeited bail bonds they are unclear that a bail bondsman violates the provisions of those sections.

I urge the committee's favorable consideration of the proposed amendments to House Bill 6646.