

# State of Connecticut

## DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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### Testimony of Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel Office of Chief Public Defender

#### *Raised Bill No. 732* An Act Concerning the Sentencing of Drunken Drivers

#### Judiciary Committee Public Hearing March 16, 2009

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports **Raised Bill No. 732, An Act Concerning the Sentencing of Drunken Drivers**. Current law articulates that the court shall impose a 1 year mandatory motor vehicle operator's license suspension upon any person convicted of a first violation of driving under the influence. This proposed legislation would permit the court the discretion to suspend such person's license for three months and prohibit the person from driving for an additional 9 months thereafter unless his/her motor vehicle is equipped with an ignition interlock device. As a result, the proposal would assist persons so convicted with issues surrounding transportation to and from employment, school, medical appointments and family care.

Current law also requires a mandatory minimum prison term, probation, fine, and/or community service to be imposed upon any person convicted of a first, second or third violation. This proposal would permit the court discretion to depart from the imposition of the mandatory minimum sentence if the most serious conviction is for driving under the influence. In lieu of the mandatory minimum sentence, this proposal provides that the court could suspend all or a part of the sentence and order the person confined to his house and subject him/her to electronic monitoring (GPS - global positioning system) and "continuous monitoring for alcohol consumption". This alternative sentence could decrease the number of persons incarcerated due to substance abuse issues and provide such persons with services through probation to address their individual needs, therefore saving prison beds for more serious offenders. This office supports this bill and requests that it be voted out favorably by this Committee as drafted.