

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. 6245
An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the
Task Force on Domestic Violence in Immigrant Communities
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing - March 26, 2009**

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports *Raised Bill No. 6245, An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Task Force on Domestic Violence in Immigrant Communities*. The Office of Chief Public Defender participated on the Task Force and was allowed to do a presentation on the issue of indigent non citizens who are charged with a criminal offense. This Office supports all of the recommendations and thanks former Speaker Amann who convened the Task Force and the Co-Chairs, Representative Fox and Representative Reynolds for their leadership and thoughtfulness of all of the issues.

This office is grateful for the Task Force support of Section 10. Section 10 of the bill provides additional funding for the hiring of 4 additional attorneys for the Division of Public Defender Services to be assigned to the Domestic Violence courts. There are currently 8 domestic violence dockets in Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Stamford and Waterbury courts. However, the Division of Public Defender Services has only 3 full time attorneys that are designated specifically for the domestic violence courts. The Division of Criminal Justice currently has 14 prosecutors designated for domestic violence dockets. Currently, clients in courts without designated public defender staff are represented by staff public defenders who must take time from their already burdened caseloads on the regular court dockets to appear in the domestic violence courts. These public defenders handle about 50% of the caseloads that exist in the geographical areas including domestic violence cases.

Therefore, this office supports Section 10 and the bill as drafted. Thank you.