

March 1, 2011

**Appropriations Committee
Room 2700, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: 860-240-0390**

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee,

RE: HB-06380 DCF Proposed Budget-Significant Changes to Parole Services

I would first of all like to thank the Appropriations Committee for accepting this testimony and allowing the people the opportunity to be heard. My name is Kenneth Secchiaroli and I have been a state employee for 15 years. I have been with the Parole Services Division for the last 9 years. I am sending this testimony in opposition of the DCF Budget Proposal to Increase Parole Caseloads with the associated reduction of 22 Parole staff, which is located in the Governor's Budget Summary under the Department of Children and Families on page B-140 under Recommended Significant Changes.

This proposal was made on 9/1/10, at a time when the previous Governor called for a 10% reduction in costs. DCF previous administrators (as they are no longer employed) took the easy way out and sacrificed one division-Parole Services Division out of it's 3,000 employees. It did this because our staff are not covered under the Juan F. Consent Decree. So instead of looking at it's multi-layers of management staff (many with no direct care responsibilities, and undefined functions) it identified 22 frontline, direct care staff to be reduced, implying that this will result in a cost savings of 1.7 million dollars. When you actually scratch the surface and look a little deeper there is no cost savings. Parole staff are P-2 union members who have seniority over the majority of P-2 social workers. Therefore the 22 Parole staff will be bumping into 22 social work positions. Therefore there is no cost savings on the contrary, you have highly trained Parole staff now requiring additional training to become social workers. They will have to go through social work training for at least 6 to 9 months. Their years of training in Parole services functions for all intent and purposes will be lost. This is not the most significant issue. The most significant issue is that the Parole services division is made up of 49 staff who are charged with the responsibility to supervise and provide treatment for all youth committed delinquent for the state of Connecticut. 6 staff will be retiring by 7/1/11 and then another 7 are

projected to retire in 2012. This would leave 36 staff total to supervise all the youth committed delinquent in the state of Connecticut. Now factor in an additional 22 staff and that leaves you with 14 staff to cover the entire state of Connecticut. This is unacceptable and will directly impact the youth and families of Connecticut, not to mention due to the unmanageable staffing to client ratios, there will be a lapse in services and supervision which will lead to youth being incarcerated which will ultimately result in additional costs to the State of Connecticut. We are the staff that service the youth who are part of the Raise the Age Legislation. The initial phase of Raise the Age-16 year olds has already increased the parole population and the second phase of 17 year olds will go into effect on July 2012. This will be a failure if the Parole staff that work with these young men and women are no longer in their current positions. If you think about it we will most likely require additional positions to service the increase in population. So what sense does it make to lose 22 highly trained parole staff to only rehire staff who will have to be trained? We in parole pride ourselves on the excellent work we do with our youth and families. We establish excellent working relationships with our youth encouraging them and supporting them with their treatment and eventual reintegration in their home communities. We also establish strong working relationships with families, residential and community providers, and educational programs in our efforts to provide comprehensive wrap around services in order to give our youth the best chance at success. All of this will suffer if this budget proposal is put into effect.

Costs savings will not be realized through this proposal and will have a negative impact on the youth and families of Connecticut.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Secchiaroli, DCF Parole Services
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