

Legal Assistance Resource Center

❖ of Connecticut, Inc. ❖

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**Written Testimony of Sara Parker McKernan
Regarding SB 453, AAC Certificates of Relief from Barriers
Resulting from Conviction of a Crime
March 23, 2012**

I am submitting testimony on behalf of Connecticut's Legal Services programs regarding SB 453. This bill seeks to expand CT's current provisional pardons policies in order to provide job applicants, those applying for or seeking to renew state occupational licenses and those applying for public housing, with the presumption of suitability that the Certificate of Relief from Barriers implies.

Provisional pardons were established in 2006 in an effort to enhance an ex-offender's prospects for employment by certifying that an individual has been formally reviewed, that they have demonstrated rehabilitation and are not a threat to public safety or property. The legislature also provided that an employer is prohibited from discharging or denying employment to a person solely on the basis of a conviction for which the person received a provisional pardon. Although provisional pardons do not erase a person's criminal record, they do give employers one more positive thing to consider when making a hiring decision. The proposed modification of provisional pardons to certificates of relief, is designed to have the same impact.

Legal Services strongly supports efforts that can help support ex-offenders as they reenter the community and workplace. One of the most important aspects of successfully making this transition is the ability of the individual to find adequate housing. By extending certificates of relief to public housing applicants, this proposal will help to create an opportunity for an ex-offender to receive the support and stability that comes with permanent housing.