



State of Connecticut

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

R. B. No. 1152, An Act Concerning Petition for Release from the Requirement To Register as a Sexual Offender for Life

Judiciary Committee Public Hearing - April 5, 2013

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports *Raised Bill No. 1152, An Act Concerning Petition for Release from the Requirement to Register as a Sexual Offender for Life*. The bill provides a process for a person to file a petition with the court seeking to be released from the registration requirements after ten years of compliance with such if certain additional criteria have been met. The bill does not require the court to grant the petition. The bill only grants the discretion to the court to permit a person be released from the registry requirements if the person (1) has "fully complied" with the terms of his/her release, (2) has not been convicted of an offense against a minor, and, (3) is not a public safety risk. If the petition is denied by the court, the bill provides an opportunity for a person to file another petition five years from the denial of such.

Passage of this bill would provide an opportunity for persons convicted of a criminal offense against a minor, which can include a conviction for consensual teenage sexual relations, to petition for release from lifetime registration. Current registration requirements are based only upon convictions and not upon the risk that the person will reoffend. Registration requirements do not indicate whether a person poses a potential threat against children in general. Instead registration requirements are overbroad and extremely lengthy in duration, even if not necessary. Registry information does not provide the public with details of the case so as to distinguish one offender or offense from another. Instead all persons who are required to register are "lumped in" together on the one registry regardless of the seriousness of the offense or level of violence associated with it. Such a general registry can lead to the public perception that each and every person on the registry is extremely dangerous and capable of committing a sex offense again when in

fact the majority of offenders do not reoffend.

Lastly, registered offenders, and even their families, can be the recipients of harassment and threats merely because their addresses are on the registry. In addition they are faced with obstacles in obtaining housing, employment and education. The Office of Chief Public Defender requests that the Committee vote favorably upon this bill.