



## State of Connecticut

### DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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### Testimony of Michael Alevy Senior Assistant Public Defender Office of Chief Public Defender

### Veterans' Affairs Committee Public Hearing February 19, 2013

#### *Proposed House Bill No. 5754*

### **An Act Concerning Mental Health Services for Veterans and Members of the Armed Forces**

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports *Proposed Bill 5754, An Act Concerning Mental Health Services for Veterans and Members of the Armed Forces*. This proposal recognizes the ongoing importance of meeting the needs of veterans experiencing mental health issues. Last year this legislature passed *S.B. 114 (PA12-42), An Act Concerning Services for Veterans in Pretrial Diversionary Programs*. The effect of that legislation was to provide veteran specific treatment services to qualified individuals participating in certain Judicial Branch pretrial diversionary programs. The bill was an important recognition of the unique circumstances faced by of our returning veterans. This office supports the legislature's focus on veteran specific issues in the area of mental health and treatment and urges passage of this proposed bill.