



# OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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## QUESTIONS FOR PSYCHIATRIC SECURITY REVIEW BOARD NOMINEE

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The Psychiatric Security Review Board (PSRB) is a state agency to which the Superior Court commits persons who are found not guilty of a crime by reason of mental disease or defect. These individuals are called "acquittees." The PSRB's responsibility is to review the status of acquittees through an administrative hearing process and order the level of supervision and treatment for the acquittee necessary to protect the public.

The Board is composed of six members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by either house of the General Assembly. The board members are designated to represent professional expertise in the fields of law, probation/parole services, psychology, psychiatry, victim services, and the interest of the general community. Its activities are governed by Connecticut General Statutes, [Sections 17a-580](#) through [17a-603](#).

1. About how many acquittees who come before the board each year are granted some form of community release? How many requests are turned down? Are these figures relatively stable from year to year and how do they compare with other states?
2. What would you consider to be the most important factors when deciding whether to recommend discharging an acquittee from PSRB custody? How much consideration should be given to the victim's statements? How much should be given to the crime committed?
3. Concerns have been raised both about overcrowding in Connecticut Valley Hospital's (CVH) Dutcher Unit and the impact of staff retirements on remaining personnel. Are these legitimate concerns and if so, what would need to be done to address them?
4. Legislation passed last session requires the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to notify courts when acquittees are being released from civil commitment before the statute of limitations applicable to the crime they are accused of committing has expired. Will PSRB play any role in implementing this procedure? Do you foresee any problems with assigning DMHAS this task?
5. Connecticut is one of a handful of states without an outpatient civil commitment law that enables court-appointed conservators to consent to forcibly medicating psychiatric patients living in the community. We will likely see legislative proposals to adopt one in this session. Do you think such laws are a good idea?
6. Do you anticipate that the Newtown shootings will affect how you make community release decisions?
7. Some legislators are exploring options for improving the dissemination of information about former CVH patients to more effectively block them from buying guns. In your opinion, is Connecticut following legal requirements for registering people with psychiatric disabilities in state and federal databanks? If not, could the General Assembly pass legislation to improve the existing procedure?
8. Has the board formulated legislative proposals for this year? Which do you consider as top priority?

SP:tjo