



Testimony of
Melodie Peters, President
AFT Connecticut, AFL-CIO

Appropriations Committee
March 5, 2015

Good afternoon Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Melodie Peters and I am the President of AFT Connecticut, a diverse state federation of union of nearly 30,000 public and private sector employees including the Judicial Professional Employees Union that represents juvenile probation officers, adult probation officers and court support services employees.

Having the Judicial Branch at the helm of our court support services division has led to a drop in the state's 24 month adult probation rearrest rate from 47% in 2007 to 4% in 2013¹. This has been a dramatic drop when considering that they have been serving a population of over 55,000. During this same time period, our family services section developed the first tool in the nation for family civil intake screening, and our adult probation and bail services section was the first statewide system in the nation to be accredited. This is the kind of work that needs to be recognized for what our Court Support Services and our Judicial Branch have done.

I applaud the Governor for addressing the issue of a second chance society, but I believe that the best way to administer his proposal is through our court support services division as it currently stands. Our members at the court support services division have already been addressing the tenets that incorporate a second chance society. They have tailored their work to help our residents who are on probation build the skills they need to become a valuable member of our society, while reducing recidivism.

It has yet to be seen, what kind of cost savings will be achieved when these services are displaced and relocated. By keeping the juvenile and adult probation services under the Judicial Branch we are allowing a team that has worked well and built off of each other's strengths to continue working together sharing their best practices, while keeping costs down.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. Attached to my testimony is a more detailed explanation of the procurement, and fiscal oversights as well as some of the awards and accreditations of Court Support Services Division.

¹ Connecticut Judicial Branch. *2014 Program Report Card: Judicial Branch – Adult Probation*.
http://www.jud.ct.gov/statistics/RBA/adult_probation.pdf

Judicial Branch – Court Support Services Division (CSSD) Procurement, Fiscal and Contracts Oversight

Procurement Process

- Judicial Branch (JB) Procurement Code guides the process (process approved by the Legislature)
- Primary contracting method is a competitive bidding process referred to as a Request for Proposal (RFP)
- This process is overseen by the JB Purchasing Unit, a unit under the direct authority of Judicial Administrative Services (not CSSD)
- RFP's are reviewed and scored by a team comprised of the JB Purchasing Unit and CSSD content and operation specialists
- Contracts are drafted by CSSD and then reviewed by JB's Purchasing and Legal Services Units respectively prior to award to providers (predominantly awarded to non-profit providers)
- Services also secured through co-contracting agreements with other state agencies (e.g. DMHAS, DCF, DOC) which are effectuated through either a Memorandum of Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding. Both of those vehicles require review and approval from JB's Purchasing and Legal Services Units
- Contract terms are generally issued for three years, with two optional one year extensions (five year maximum)

Fiscal Management

- Monthly budget meetings with Executive Director
- Ongoing consultation between CSSD's Fiscal and Programs and Services Units regarding program budget requests and expenditure levels
- Monthly CORE budget status reports reviewed by CSSD's Fiscal and JB's Budget Units
- Quarterly CORE queries compared to CSSD's internal budget
- Quarterly YTD Detention Medical/Mental Health expenditure report submitted to JB's Budget and Planning
- Annual meeting held with JB Purchasing to review upcoming blanket purchase orders and contract needs

Contract and Program Oversight

- CSSD contracts for programs that are evidence and research-based
- Fidelity of Evidence Based Program Implementation directly linked to positive outcomes
 - Contracts are issued to engage the service of a third party that conducts comprehensive Quality Assurance processes and procedures to ensure the efficacy of program delivery.
- Contract Compliance and Audit System (CCAS)
 - An automated system utilized by CSSD Contract Compliance Specialists to document contract performance on up to eight different domains.
- Alchemy and Awards Databases
 - All contract documentation/fiscal data is maintained in electronic systems for ease of use and access
- Contractor Data Collection System (CDCS)
 - A web-based data collection system with client-level data dates back to 2007. The system is the foundation for reporting client outcomes and program performance
- Bi-annual review of all program performance with executive management and quarterly review with regional personnel
- Results-Based Accountability (RBA)
 - CSSD has participated in the General Assembly's RBA initiative since its inception with many program models having been highlighted. Submission of annual report cards to the General Assembly
- Performance-Based Contracting
 - CSSD has incorporated program performance into contract monitoring and procurement decisions

Governor's Cabinet Membership

The Executive Director of CSSD is an appointed member of the Governor's Cabinet on Nonprofit Health And Human Services, which was established in September of 2011 to analyze existing public-private partnerships with respect to the state's health and human services delivery systems and to make recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of those systems in regard to client outcomes, cost-effectiveness, accountability and sustainability.

**JUDICIAL BRANCH
COURT SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION
AWARDS, ACCREDITATIONS, CERTIFICATES**

FAMILY SERVICES

- Innovations in American Government Award (Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government) – 2008
CSSD developed the first family civil intake screening tool in the country.

ADULT PROBATION AND BAIL SERVICES

- American Correctional Association
CSSD's Adult Probation was initially accredited in 2006 and has been reaccredited every three years since then.
- National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies
CSSD's Bail Services was the first statewide system in the country to be accredited (2014).

JUVENILE PROBATION SERVICES

- American Probation and Parole Association
CSSD's Juvenile Probation was initially accredited in 2010 and was reaccredited in 2013.

JUVENILE RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

- American Correctional Association
CSSD's Juvenile Residential Services was initially accredited in 2003 and has been reaccredited every three years since that time.
- National Commission of Correctional Health Care
CSSD's Juvenile Residential Services was initially accredited in 2004 and has been reaccredited every three years since that time.
- Performance Based Standards (PBS) Level 3 and 4
CSSD'S Juvenile Residential Services received Level 4 awards for providing the highest standards of operations, programs and services.
- Barbara Allen-Hagen Award
National recognition for exceeding confinement conditions standards.
- Prison Rape Elimination Act Certification(PREA)
CSSD'S Juvenile Residential Services became the first facility to be PREA-certified in 2014.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- Adult
 - Received national acclaim for Women Offender Case Management (WOCM)
 - Exceeded expectations of revenue maximization in Adult Behavioral Health Services (ABHS), permitting service delivery to more clients
- Juvenile
 - CSSD opened the first residential Multi-Dimensional Family Therapy (MDFT) program in the country.
 - Under CSSD's guidance, our provider, Connecticut Junior Republic's (CJR) Waterbury Multi Systemic Therapy (MST) teams awarded Top 1% Worldwide performer for providing MST Services
 - The following programs are accredited under the Council on Accreditation (COA):
 - CJR Boys Intermediate Program
 - CJR Boys Therapeutic Respite and Assessment Center
 - NAFI Girls Intermediate Program
- Recognition Awards
 - Certificate for Effective Interventions for the Role of Administration from the US Department of Justice National Institute of Correction
 - Certificate for The Yale Leadership Program in Behavioral Health from the Yale School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry
 - Whatever It Takes Award for MST System Development in 2006 and 2013 from the MST Services International Headquarters
- Recognition Articles
 - The Comeback States, The National Juvenile Justice Network and The Texas Public Policy Foundation, http://www.njjn.org/uploads/digital-library/Comeback-States-Report_FINAL.pdf
 - Juvenile Justice Reform in Connecticut: How Collaboration and Commitment Have Improved Public Safety and Outcomes for Youth, The Justice Policy Institute, http://www.justicepolicy.org/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/juvenile_justice_reform_in_ct_executive_summary.pdf
 - Common Ground: Lessons Learned from Five States that Reduced Juvenile Confinement by More than Half, The Justice Policy Institute, <http://www.justicepolicy.org/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/jpicommonground.pdf>

- “A Handful of States Lead the Way on Juvenile Crime Prevention”, Gest, T., The Crime Report, December 4, 2012, <http://www.thecrimereport.org/news/inside-criminal-justice/2012-12-juvenile-best-practices>
- Technical Assistance, Grant Opportunities and System Reform Efforts
 - CSSD was one of four states afforded the opportunity to participate in Georgetown’s Juvenile Justice System Improvement Project (JJSIP).



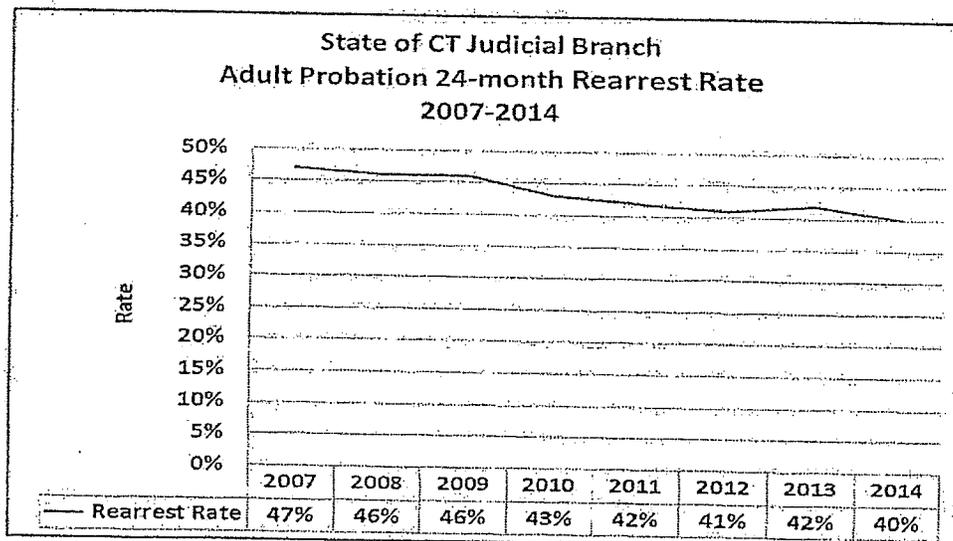
AFT Connecticut

A Union of Professionals

Challenges Associated with Adult Services Moving to Executive Branch

Adult Probation

- Probation has been affiliated with the Branch since 1979.
- Significant changes to Practice Book Rules and Statutes would be required.
- Criminal practices and business functions formed over the past 36 years would need to be modified.
- Branch directly controls the oversight of personnel decision making. There will be a significant impact if the Branch loses this capacity.
- Branch controls the program development, operational practice and quality assurance over programs and staff. Obvious and gradual erosion/impact if this oversight is lost, as Executive Branch oversight standards are not as comprehensive.
- One of Probation's primary functions is to ensure that Court's order is upheld - - erosion of importance if shifted to another branch of government.
- Probation officers are sworn officers of the Court and as such, have the accompanying authority and responsibility.
- As officers of the Court, the State has avoided countless law suits because probation officers have quasi-judicial authority/immunity.
- Adult Probation Services have been interwoven into CSSD over the past 15 years and is currently experiencing historically low recidivism rates (see chart below). This effectiveness is directly attributed to the combined elements of an evidence based probation system based on best practice research and literature. A re-structuring, particularly across Branches of government, would disrupt all of these critical components and compromise outcomes and public safety.



Adult Contracted Network

- All contracts (125+) for private-provider services would need to be transitioned from the Judicial Branch procurement process to the Executive Branch process. EVERY contract would need to be terminated and re-procured. These programs serve over 25,000 court and probation referrals annually.
- Quality Assurance of contracted programs is also procured through the Judicial Branch. This function would have to be eliminated or re-procured by the Executive Branch.
- Fiscal and contract compliance, and the associated Judicial Branch information systems supporting each function, would need to be rewritten to Executive Branch standards. Functionality may be significantly compromised.
- Some adult programs serve a diversity of Judicial Branch clients, including domestic violence offenders referred by the court and family services. Contracts would need to be structured in such a way to allow this to continue.
- Outcomes at the Alternative in the Community (AIC) program, which serves over 10,000 clients per year, are excellent. Recidivism rates are trending lower over the past several years (see chart below).

