State of Connecticut

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Testimony of
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S.B. No. 1046
An Act Prohibiting Felons From Managing State Assistance Funds

Human Services Public Hearing - March 12, 2014

The Office of Chief Public Defender is opposed to **S.B. No. 1046 (Raised) An Act Prohibiting Felons From Managing State Assistance Funds.** The bill would prohibit anyone convicted of any felony, including non-violent offenses, unclassified felonies and drug offenses from ever being able to manage state assistance funds, even if the conviction was the only conviction a person ever had or was decades old. In a year when discussion is ongoing about providing second chances to offenders, this bill would be contrary to the good public policy this state has thus far enacted.

This proposal appears to be contrary to the current statutory prohibition against discriminating against a person "solely" because he/she has been convicted of an offense. *C.G.S. §46a-80* prohibits a person from being disqualified from employment by the state or any of its agencies, "solely" because of his/her prior conviction. See *C.G.S. §46a-80, Denial of employment based on prior conviction of crime. Inquiry re: prospective employee's past convictions. Dissemination of arrest record prohibited. C.G.S. § 46a-80,* however, does provide that a person may be denied employment if certain criteria are considered: (1) the nature of the crime and its relationship to the job for which the person has applied; (2) the information pertaining to the degree of rehabilitation of the convicted person; and (3) the time elapsed since the conviction or released, the state . . . ". The Office of Chief Public Defender believes that the existing statute provides the appropriate criteria for consideration for employment without requiring passage of this bill which would require a blanket prohibition of anyone convicted of a felony regardless of the offense, the person's rehabilitation or time period since the conviction. For the foregoing reasons, the Office of Chief Public Defender opposes this bill.