



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
SENATE
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD 06106-1591

SENATE REPUBLICAN OFFICES

**Testimony - Judiciary Committee
March 13, 2015**

Good Afternoon Chairmen Coleman and Tong, Ranking members Kissel and Rebinbas, and members of the Judiciary Committee. As Senate Minority Leader, I am here today representing the Senate Republican Caucus in testifying in support of some of the proposals put forward in Governor Malloy's Second Chance Society plan.

The Senate Republicans support SB 1066 to create a program where prisoners with drug addictions are given all the tools and opportunities they will need to succeed upon their release back into the community. This proposal falls in line with one of our caucus bill proposals, included in our caucus's Plan for Progress and Opportunity in Connecticut Cities. In our legislation, we propose creating a pilot program in two courthouses where prosecutors can identify early on after an arrest if a person is drug addicted, homeless, or mentally ill. Then, rather than prosecute them, officials can help place them in any assistance programs available. This plan aims to get people the help and resources they need and provide them with the tools to avoid offending the laws again. There are many instances where treatment or help can get a person onto the right track and avoid prison. We feel the Governor's proposal aligns with ours in this realization, and we offer our support.

In addition, we support the proposal in SB 952 regarding classifying the possession of small amounts of narcotics as misdemeanors. Nonviolent drug offenders who only possess an amount that can be viewed as a "personal use supply" need to get necessary drug treatment, as opposed to being locked up at great cost to our communities and our state budget. We appreciate that the proposal does not go so far as to trivialize the crime of drug dealing, and we think this is a step in the right direction for the state.

However, we do not support at this time the portion of SB 952 that pertains to alterations to the Board of Pardons and Parole and we feel more examination and investigation of the current system's shortfalls is needed before we can agree to considering faster Parole hearings.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today concerning these pressing issues.

Len Fasano
Senate Minority Leader