



State of Connecticut  
DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**TESTIMONY OF THE DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

IN SUPPORT OF:

**PROPOSED S.B. No. 18 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE  
TO STUDY HOARDING**

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY  
February 19, 2015

The Division of Criminal Justice respectfully recommends the Committee's **Joint Favorable Report** for Proposed S.B. No. 18, An Act Establishing a Task Force to Study Hoarding.

The Division of Criminal Justice has for many years through its Housing Prosecutors played a substantial role in assisting state and municipal police and other public safety officials on the proper response to cases of severe hoarding. It is our experience that Connecticut has a very serious problem with hoarding cases that municipal and state officials are ill equipped to handle well or certainly to handle long term under current law and available health, safety and mental health resources. We applaud and support the creation of a task force to provide for a careful review of the myriad complex questions connected to resolving severe hoarding cases. We further offer the services of the Chief State's Attorney or designee as may be needed in this effort.

Severe hoarding cases routinely present emergencies where a fire or other call results in the discovery of one or more violations of fire, health or other safety laws. The violation is due to extreme amounts of item hoarding which, after due process, continues to exist in violation of law and constitute a danger to life and public safety. Often, the hoarding conditions create a severe fire hazard from excessive combustibles that are in a position to be especially liable to fire (such as a room filled with papers piled 8 feet high, leading up to and against a working fuel burning stove or furnace), or from hoarding of items so densely that they have blocked the required egress (often we find the blockage also results in no visible walking paths inside the dwelling, and no open-able doors or windows). On many occasions hoarding conditions present a health hazard, which can greatly impact a neighbor or the general public health (as in the case of a sickening odor emitting from of a dwelling found to be filled with an excessive amount of animals and animal waste, garbage and other rotting conditions inside. This can also constitute a case of animal hoarding, determined in Connecticut to violate our animal cruelty statute).

In sum, human life and health in severe hoarding cases is at serious risk both to the inhabitants as well as to the first responders and others who enter or are nearby the potentially deadly environment. For these reasons, the Division of Criminal Justice supports Proposed Senate Bill No. 18. Please contact us if we can be of any further assistance on this matter.