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Testimony of
Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel, Director

Judiciary Committee Public Hearing March 18, 2016

Raised Bill No. 5476
An Act Expanding the Use of Drug Dockets

Although not opposed to the general concept of "drug courts", the Office of Chief Public Defender strongly opposes *Raised Bill No. 5476, An Act Expanding the Use of Drug Dockets* due to the enormous fiscal reality facing the state and this agency. The bill would take away any discretion of the Chief Court Administrator to establish drug courts in court locations for adults and juvenile. Instead, without any funding included in the bill, drug dockets would be created in every such court location.

Currently, there are two jurisdictions, Danielson and New Haven, which have drug courts or Drug Intervention Programs. A recent OLR report indicated that "[a]ccording to the Judicial Branch, as of November 9, 2015, there were seven active participants in the Danielson program and 33 active participants in the New Haven program. As of November 17, 2015, there were 12 additional candidates being assessed for acceptance into the programs." *Connecticut's Drug Courts, 2016-R-0048, Office of Legislative Research, Christopher Reinhart, Chief Attorney.*

Because there is no funding contained within the bill, the creation of a drug court in every court location would need to be staffed by current staff. However, this would not be possible due to the recent proposed cuts to this agency's budget. As this agency's ability to provide constitutionally required legal representation in criminal and juvenile proceedings is already threatened by the substantial cuts that have been proposed, it cannot support this bill.