



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN T. SHABAN  
ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-FIFTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 4200  
300 CAPITOL AVENUE  
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

TOLL FREE: (800) 842-1423  
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8700  
John.Shaban@housegop.ct.gov

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Public Testimony  
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RANKING MEMBER  
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MEMBER  
FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE  
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 5476: AN ACT EXPANDING THE USE OF DRUG DOCKETS.

Good Morning Co-Chairs Senator Coleman, Representative Tong; Vice Chairs Senator Doyle, Representative Fox; Ranking Members Senator Kissel, Representative Rebinbas; and fellow members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 5476 -- An Act Expanding the Use of Drug Dockets. I proposed a similar version of this bill, HB 5073: AAC Increased Funding For Drug Intervention Programs To Increase The Use And Oversight Of Dedication Court Dockets For Drug Offenses.

As you may know, our state actually has at least two "drug courts" operating as part of our existing court system, utilizing the same staff and facilities, operating in New Haven and Danielson. See attached OJR report. These "courts" were created by PA 95-131, and are actually dedicated drug dockets managed by one judge with access to special contracts and/or arrangements with drug service providers. (Today these courts and are generally considered to be part of our state drug intervention program.) These drug courts/dockets handle cases where drug use and/or addiction as a major contributing cause of the charged offense, with a goal of addressing and treating substance abuse issues through court monitored residential and/or day treatment, supervision and other strategies.

My bill would have expanded this laudable mission to the entire state. Indeed, in a session where opioids, addiction and "second chances" are taking center stage, the expansion of our drug court structure would be a crucial tool in addressing these issues. Dedicated drug courts could help prevent the unneeded incarceration of otherwise nonviolent offenders, who are more likely to achieve rehabilitation through a monitored therapeutic treatment process rather than being placed in a traditional prison program.

I urge adoption of and passage of HB 5476. Thank you for your consideration and your time. I am available to answer any questions in reference to this issue.