



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

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Testimony of the Judicial Branch
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
March 18, 2016

H.B. 5476, An Act Expanding the Use of Drug Dockets

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of the Judicial Branch regarding H.B. 5476, *An Act Expanding the Use of Drug Dockets*. The Judicial Branch has serious concerns with this proposal, which would require the Chief Court Administrator to establish a separate drug docket in each court location or juvenile matters court location.

The Judicial Branch has numerous mechanisms in place to identify and treat drug dependent persons through its regular dockets. Judges are acutely aware that issues presented by individuals with substance use disorders often require treatment, not incarceration. Under current statute, judges can suspend prosecution of juveniles and adults with substance use disorders and remand those individuals into treatment. The Branch has incorporated many of the principles of drug courts into all dockets and currently provides the same level of services to people in need of treatment from any docket. This is a much more efficient way to appropriately address each case.

Moving forward, the Judicial Branch would be pleased to continue careful review of how to best meet the needs of this growing population. Specialized dockets often require additional resources and personnel, and limit the Chief Court Administrator's ability to manage the Judicial Branch. Especially in light of the current budget crisis, it would be the Branch's preference to address the needs that are articulated in this proposal within our existing infrastructure.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.