



30 Bank Street
New Britain, CT 06051
T. (860) 223-4400
F. (860) 223-4488

www.ctbar.org

Karen DeMeola, vice president
CT Bar Association

IN SUPPORT OF

Governor's Bill 18, Section 27
An Act Concerning a Second Chance Society

Judiciary Committee

My name is Karen DeMeola. I am the assistant dean for enrollment management and students at UConn School of Law. I am also the vice president of the Connecticut Bar Association, and chair of its Pro Bono Committee.

I would like to express my support for Section 27 of Governor's Bill 18, *An Act Concerning Second Chance Society*. The CBA and the CBA Pro Bono Committee has a history of supporting funding for legal services to Connecticut's poor including recent legislation in including Senate Bill 428, *An Act Concerning Funding for Legal Services to the Poor*.

While Senate Bill 428 would provide much needed support, there remains a \$2 million dollar gap in funding to address the legal needs of Connecticut's poor. Section 27 of Governor's Bill 18, proposes that cash bail bonds posted by criminal defendants be deposited in interest bearing accounts. The interest earned on such deposits and bonds forfeited by accused individuals who fail to appear for a court date would be used to fund civil legal assistance for low income residents. This revenue would supplement other funding sources and would help to reduce unmet legal needs of our neediest residents.

As a leader of the Connecticut Bar Association, I am very concerned about access to justice. In the years ahead, I intend to continue to work with the Pro Bono Committee and the CBA to support bills, like Section 27 of Governor's Bill 18 which will help fill the gap in funding for unmet legal needs.