



Dannel P. Malloy  
Governor

# STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

## OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER



Scott Semple  
Commissioner

Good Morning Senators Coleman and Kissel, Representatives Tong and Rebimbas and the members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Scott Semple, Commissioner of the Department of Correction and I am here to testify in support of **Senate Bill 456, An Act Concerning Community Supervision of Certain Former Inmates.**

The Department considers this legislation an important complement to Governor Malloy's Second Chance Society Initiative and our continuing effort to reduce recidivism. Currently, far too many inmates leave DOC facilities without the benefit of community supervision, administered either by the Department of Correction or the Judicial Branch's Court Support Services Division. As a direct result of this lack of support and supervision, this population of inmates has the highest rate of return to DOC facilities. By providing needed assistance to inmates leaving prison, the Department wants to break this cycle of re-incarceration and accelerate the decline in the inmate population.

This bill addresses this critical service gap. By providing supervision and case management to inmates returning to the community, the Department believes it will better serve inmates with their most important transitional needs, such as employment, housing and necessary treatment programs. The result will be safer communities, fewer victims and a lower re-incarceration rate.

This bill serves as a companion to the Risk Reduction Earned Credit program which has reduced recidivism, increased participation in evidence-based correctional programming, and lowered incidents of misconduct in our correctional institutions.

Any inmate who does not have community supervision to follow a sentence of incarceration will be subject to the provisions of the bill. Each such inmate will be supervised by a Department of Correction Community Services Division (Parole Officer) for the number of days his aggregate time in prison was reduced by the RREC program. Perhaps it is easiest to illustrate this point with an example:

Phone: 860.692.7482 ♦ Fax: 860.692.7483  
24 Wolcott Hill Road ♦ Wethersfield, Connecticut 06109  
Website: [www.ct.gov/doc](http://www.ct.gov/doc)

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Let us say that an offender with a significant substance abuse problem receives a 30 month sentence for possession and larceny. While incarcerated, the offender shows exemplary behavior. He completes his institutional work assignment and participates in an addiction treatment program. As a function of this compliance with his Offender Accountability Plan, the inmate receives 90 aggregate days of Risk Reduction Earned Credit. Normally this offender would be released without benefit of supervision at the conclusion of the sentence. Under this bill, he will now have a mandatory period of 90 days supervision in the community. While being supervised by his parole officer, he will have the benefit of continuing substance abuse counseling and a range of other community residential and non-residential contracted programs to assist his successful transition back into the community.

DOC believes that Senate Bill 456 will further reduce recidivism and our optimism is based on the research. The fields of corrections and recidivism reduction have changed a great deal in the past 10 years, and we have much better risk assessment tools and evidence-based interventions than ever before. Higher risk offenders will serve more time and receive more services while incarcerated and, importantly, when they transition back into the community. Low risk offenders will serve less time and require minimal supports upon return. The important thing to remember is every returning inmate will have the benefit of the supervision they need in response to their individual risk assessment. By actively engaging these offenders when they return to the community, the Department of Correction will increase their likelihood of success and lower the rate at which offenders return back into custody – saving the state significant dollars in fewer inmate beds, programs and services.

Thank you for your consideration of this important recidivism reduction measure. I will be happy to answer any questions.