



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
*DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES*  
*A Healthcare Service Agency*

Dannel P. Malloy  
Governor

Miriam Delphin- Rittmon Ph.D.  
Commissioner

**Memorandum:**

TO: Judiciary Committee

FROM: Commissioner Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D., DMHAS

DATE: March 23, 2016

SUBJECT: Written Testimony on House Bill 5529

Senator Coleman, Representative Tong and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. I am Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) and I am writing to today to address raised House Bill 5529 AN ACT CONCERNING SEXUAL OFFENDER REGISTRATION LAWS, RESIDENCY RESTRICTIONS FOR REGISTERED SEXUAL OFFENDERS.

Housing has been an important piece of the recovery equation for our clients, especially when there are so many struggling to find a place to live and the supply of reasonably priced housing throughout the state is limited.

DMHAS is a healthcare agency. The individuals we serve are persons with a psychiatric disability or substance use disorder. We are committed to helping the people we serve to achieve the highest possible level of recovery from their psychiatric disability or substance use disorder. Recovery includes helping individuals to learn how to manage their illness. Success is more likely when individuals have a safe, decent place to live, which supports prospects for sustained recovery. Housing is a basic right for all Connecticut citizens. Unfortunately, lack of housing is one of the biggest obstacles that people face in their recovery efforts. As a department, it is an ongoing struggle for us to find decent, affordable housing for the people we serve.

Raised HB 5529 Section 45 may adversely impact the ability of our Department to find housing for the clients we serve who have been found Not Guilty By Reason of Insanity and are under the jurisdiction of the Psychiatric Security Review Board. These individuals may be registered sex offenders. These clients, who are very closely monitored by our programs, often live in residential programs that have ready access to clinical services. Larger cities provide

opportunities for affordable housing and nearby clinical and recovery services. They also have a plethora of schools and day cares. Eliminating the possibility of housing for registered sex offenders if it is within one thousand feet of a public or private elementary or secondary school, or a facility where child day care services, would severely restrict DMHAS ability to discharge and adequately serve clients that may be on the registry.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter. I appreciate the opportunity to address this important issue today.