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Testimony of
Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel, Director

Judiciary Committee Public Hearing - March 23, 2016

Raised Bill No. 469
An Act Concerning Nonviolent Misdemeanor Drug Violations or Convictions

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports *Raised Bill No. 469, An Act Concerning Nonviolent Misdemeanor Drug Violations or Convictions.* This is a good bill which would stop the pre-trial incarceration of persons charged with a minor drug offense who cannot post any bond. The bill requires the court to release a person charged with a nonviolent misdemeanor drug offense under the misdemeanor section of *C.G.S. §21a-279, Penalty for Illegal Possession,* on a Promise To Appear (PTA) or a Conditional Promise To Appear (CPTA) with certain nonfinancial conditions.

The Office of Chief Public Defender requests that the language of this bill be expanded to include persons who are charged with violating the misdemeanor sections of C.G.S. §21a-267, Penalty for use, possession or delivery of drug paraphernalia, immunity. It makes sense that if persons who are charged with the actual possession of drugs can be released on a PTA or CPTA, then a person possessing drug paraphernalia receive the same consideration for release.

In addition, the bill requires the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) to maintain data on persons convicted of such and erase such conviction if the person has not been arrested during the 5 year period following the drug conviction and there is no knowledge that the person used illegal drugs.

This Office requests that this Committee vote favorably on this Bill.