



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
ATTORNEY GENERAL WILLIAM TONG

Representatives Stafstrom and Rebinbas, Senators Winfield and Kissel, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony on House Bill 7187, *An Act Concerning Revocation of a Public Official's Pension or a State or Municipal Employee's Pension*.

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) supports this bill and asks that you report it favorably. As you will note, the changes to the underlying statute are minimal, but the impact of the proposed changes will greatly benefit the work of our office.

When a public official or state or municipal employee is charged with a crime related to state or municipal office, there are two sequential steps to revoking or reducing that individual's pension. First, the State's Attorney brings the criminal case, which may include counts of embezzlement, felonious theft and/or bribery. Second, if the individual is convicted or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to one of the predicate crimes, the Attorney General is required to bring a civil action in Superior Court for an order to revoke or reduce the individual's pension.

Notably, Sec. 1-110a, the statute that provides the Attorney General with the power to bring the civil action, currently requires the Attorney General to inform the prosecutor in the criminal case of the pension revocation statute. This notice provision in subsection (f) is precisely what this bill tweaks; instead of putting the notice requirement on the Attorney General, the notice requirement would instead fall to the State's Attorney.

The reason for this proposed change centers on the interplay between access to information and increasing our ability to fulfill our statutory responsibilities. Our office is not aware in the first instance of every qualifying criminal case. Indeed, it seems odd to have a requirement that the OAG provide notice to the prosecutor concerning a case that the prosecutor is already aware of, but the OAG is not. As such, our office has often relied upon the media or the public to learn of qualifying cases. This flow of information is imperfect at best, and puts the OAG at risk of not being able to fully execute our duties as directed by the legislature. However, with a flip of the notice requirement, information would flow in the correct direction and more pension revocation or reduction cases could be pursued.

For all the foregoing reasons, we ask for your support on this bill. Thank you once again for the opportunity to offer testimony, and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.