

Ned Lamont  
Governor

Carleton J. Giles  
Chairperson

# STATE OF CONNECTICUT



Telephone  
(203) 805-6605

Fax  
(203) 805-6652

**BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLES**  
55 West Main Street - Waterbury, CT 06702

**Testimony of Carleton J. Giles  
Chairperson  
Board of Pardons and Paroles**

**In Support of:**

**Senate Bill 880, An Act Increasing Fairness and Transparency in the Criminal Justice System**

**Joint Committee on Judiciary  
March 25, 2019**

Good morning Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, Senator Kissel, Representative Rebimbas, and honorable members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary. My name is Carleton Giles, and I am Chairperson of the Board of Pardons and Paroles ("Board"). I am here today to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 880, *An Act Increasing Fairness and Transparency in the Criminal Justice System*—specifically—sections 3 and 4 of this bill.

As an agency, the Board is vested not only with the independent authority to grant pardons, commute sentences, and grant or deny parole, but also the power to rescind or revoke parole. The ability to revoke parole is accompanied by a responsibility to administer the revocation process in a fair and impartial manner, while promoting outcomes which adequately consider both the successful reentry of convicted individuals into the community and public safety.

Sections 3 and 4 of this bill directly address this process. Section 3 establishes a pilot program to provide representation for indigent individuals charged with violation of parole and section 4 mandates that the Board report data on the parole revocation process to the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management. We believe that both of these provisions further the Board's mission to facilitate the successful reintegration of suitable offenders into the community, and do so in a cost effective and efficient manner. I will briefly address each of these sections respectively.

### ***Pilot Program***

SB 880's pilot program to provide representation to indigent parolees charged with violation of parole will increase efficiencies and provide invaluable services and resources in a cost-effective and resource targeted manner. The Office of the Chief Public Defender (OCPD) is uniquely positioned within our criminal justice system to provide legal services to parolees with the proposed additional resources.

First, we believe that this program will drastically decrease the amount of time it takes to appoint counsel and reduce or eliminate the possibility of scheduling delays. Currently, the determination as to whether a parolee is eligible for appointed counsel is conducted on a request basis by Board staff who have other primary responsibilities. Under this pilot, OCPD will conduct eligibility investigations and make eligibility determinations under section 51-296 of the Connecticut General Statutes utilizing specialized staff. OCPD currently has a same-day turn around for these determinations.

Second, with only a modest staffing increase, this pilot allows OCPD to draw from its extensive experience and position within the Connecticut criminal justice system. OCPD will be able to more efficiently and effectively resolve criminal matters, quickly gather and package information on a parolee's behalf, and locate services to better address parolee medical and behavioral needs—with the goal of decreasing recidivism and increasing public safety.

### ***Data Reporting Requirements***

SB 880's data reporting requirements simply codify our commitment to transparency and evidence-based practices. As an agency we have and will continue to develop our ability to report and analyze data. This is evidenced by the recent expansion of our Planning, Research, and Development Division; our continued collaboration with the Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division of the Office of Policy and Management; and the regular reporting available on our website ([www.ct.gov/bopp](http://www.ct.gov/bopp)).

Therefore, the Board respectfully recommends the Committee's JOINT FAVORABLE report on Senate Bill 880. We are happy to provide any additional information the Committee might require, or to answer any questions you might have. Thank you.