

Judiciary Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5499

AN ACT CONCERNING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION AND THE

Title: DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE.

Vote Date: 3/31/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/25/2022

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Judiciary Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Currently, the Criminal Justice Commission can remove the chief state's attorney. This bill expands the scope of the commission to allow for a chief state's attorney to be reprimanded and suspended. This is to help insulate our state's attorneys from corruption.

PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

Section 1 (c) was amended, with changes being made to lines 18-19. The removed section originally prohibited assistant state's attorneys and deputy assistant state's attorneys from serving as an elected official of any political subdivision of the state. This change reflects the testimony of the Division of Criminal Justice.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

State of Connecticut, Division of Criminal Justice

The Division of Criminal Justice is in support of the bill, except for lines 18-19. The Division is supportive of a change to the statutes to allow the Criminal Justice Commission the ability to reprimand or suspend the Chief State's Attorney in addition to its current authority to remove such individual from office. They also support the prohibition of the Chief State's Attorney, the three Deputy Chief State's Attorneys, and the thirteen State's Attorneys from holding any statewide or local elected office.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut, Policy Counsel, Jess Zaccagnino

Jess Zaccagnino, the policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT), supports the bill. The ACLU-CT believes that State's attorneys play a critical role in who enters the criminal justice system, and it is imperative to ensure that our state's attorneys are insulated from corruption. The bill would critically strengthen the oversight and independence of the Criminal Justice Commission by expanding its disciplinary powers to include the chief state's attorney in addition to the deputy chief state's attorneys and state attorneys. The bill insulates these officials from political influence by prohibiting them from concurrently holding elected office. Accountability for state's attorneys is a necessity for ending mass incarceration, the ACLU-CT believes that the bill is a step towards that endeavor.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed.

OTHER:

CT Resident, David Godbout

Mr. Godbout opposed the bill, stating that the virtual committee process constitutes a violation of his Fourth Amendment rights.

Reported by: Luke Tressy

Date: 04/14/2022