

# Judiciary Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-1230

**Title:** AN ACT EXPANDING ACCESS TO PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES.

**Vote Date:** 3/27/2023

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/22/2023

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Judiciary Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

The intent of the bill is to allow more people to qualify for public defender services.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

**TaShun Lewis, Chief Public Defender, Office of Chief Public Defender:** The testifier supports the bill, noting that the office will need expanded resources should the bill pass. The testifier notes the sixth amendment guarantees the right to representation.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Christopher Dukes, Justice4Dukes Coalition:** The testifier supports the bill, especially for those who have the system weaponized against them.

**Laila Haswell, President, Council 4 Public Defenders:** The testifier supports the bill as it allows more financially disadvantaged individuals access to public defenders. The testifier suggests an amendment to increase the number of full-time public defenders, as increased caseload will have an impact on representation quality, and the increased stress from greater workload will only serve to disparage individuals from becoming public defenders.

**Senator Martin Looney, Connecticut General Assembly:** The testifier notes that the people just above the poverty line are the most vulnerable in the justice system and therefore an expansion to 250% would be a fair and important step.

**Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, ACLU:** The testifier supports all people having access to competent defense. The testifier also supports increasing funding for the Office of Public Defenders.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None expressed.

**Reported by:** James McNealey

**Date:** March 29, 2023