



State of Connecticut
DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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Testimony of Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel
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JUDICIARY COMMITTEE - MARCH 31, 2025

**H. B. 7257 - ACT CONCERNING REQUIRING A STUDY OF LAWS AND
PROCEDURES CONCERNING CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

**H.B. 7261 - AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF CRIMINAL LAWS OF THIS
STATE**

**S.B. 1549 - AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE
LAWS OF THIS STATE**

The Office of Chief Public Defender (OCPD) supports *H.B. 7257 Act Concerning Requiring a Study of Laws and Procedures Concerning Criminal Justice*, *H.B. 7261 An Act Concerning a Study of Criminal Laws of This State*, *S.B. No. 1549 An Act Concerning a Study of the Criminal Procedure Laws of This State*. However, OCPD requests that the Chief Public Defender be added to the membership of these groups as it carries out its charge to study the criminal laws and criminal procedures of this state. OCPD's substantial experience in the Connecticut courts gives this agency a unique perspective on Connecticut's criminal and juvenile delinquency laws and procedures.

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Judiciary Committee

Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel, Director, Office of Chief Public Defender

H. B. 7257 **An Act Concerning Requiring a Study of Laws and Procedures
Concerning Criminal Justice**

H.B. 7261 **An Act Concerning a Study of Criminal Laws of This State**

S.B. 1549 **An Act Concerning a Study of the Criminal Procedure Laws of This
State**

Pursuant to C.G.S. 51-296¹, the Division of Public Defender Services, as a state agency, provides legal representation to indigent adults and juveniles in criminal proceedings, including direct appeals:

(a) In any criminal action, in any habeas corpus proceeding arising from a criminal matter, in any extradition proceeding, or in any delinquency matter, the court before which the matter is pending shall, if it determines after investigation by the public defender or his office that a defendant is indigent as defined under this chapter . . . “

See C.G.S. 51-296, Designation of public defender for indigent defendant, codefendant. Legal services and guardians ad litem in family relations matters and juvenile matters. Contracts for legal services.

OCPD’s viewpoint can provide insight into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to the courts, dockets, and those areas where change may be needed is needed. For these reasons, OCPD supports the bill and requests that it be included in these groups.

¹ C.G.S. 51-296 also requires the Division of Public Defender Services to provide: “(A) *Legal services and guardians ad litem to children, youths and indigent respondents in family relations matters in which the state has been ordered to pay the cost of such legal services and guardians ad litem, provided legal services shall be provided to indigent respondents pursuant to this subparagraph only in paternity proceedings and contempt proceedings; and (B) legal services and guardians ad litem to children, youths and indigent legal parties in proceedings before the superior court for juvenile matters.*”