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**Testimony of
Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel, Director
Government Administration and Elections Committee
Public Hearing - February 15, 2017**

**Proposed Bill No. 482
An Act Concerning the Preparation of Racial and Ethnic Impact Statements**

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports passage of this bill which would require a racial and ethnic impact statement to be automatically created prior to the adoption of any criminal justice legislation. Currently, Connecticut law does not require such a statement to be drafted for every criminal justice bill. This bill would change that and require a statement for every criminal justice bill, much like the current practice of requiring a fiscal impact statement for proposed legislation.

Basically, a racial and ethnic impact statement provides lawmakers with information as to how it would impact minorities and identifies any unintentional impact upon minorities during the pretrial, sentencing, incarcerated or post-conviction stages, should the legislation be passed. For example, had a racial and ethnic impact

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statement been available prior to the passage of mandatory minimum sentencing legislation, it may have cautioned against its use as one that would substantially increase the incarceration of minorities, both pretrial and sentenced, while stripping all discretion from the judiciary. Requiring a racial and ethnic statement will bring, to the attention of policy makers, not only what might be the obvious but also any unintended impact upon minorities should such legislation be adopted.