



State of Connecticut
DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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Testimony of Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel, Director
Committee on Judiciary - Public Hearing March 14, 2018

Raised Bill 5466 – An Act Concerning the Protection of Children

Consistent with its position in the past in regard to mandatory minimums, the Office of Chief Public Defender is opposed to Raised Bill 5466, *AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN*. This is especially so as this proposed enhanced penalty could be imposed upon anyone convicted of a wide range of behavior that is related to the safety or morals of a child. The risk of injury statute, as drafted, is overly vague and applicable to a large number of circumstances where an act is likely to impair the “health or morals of a child.” As a result, anything that could put a child at risk even if no harm actually becomes the child, can be prosecuted under this statute. Behavior by an adult which may include shoplifting, verbal arguments between parents, reckless driving, excessive drinking of alcohol and not maintaining a clean and safe home, already a felonies, would now be subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of 30 days incarceration. The result of the imposition of a mandatory prison sentence for a custodial parent would disrupt a family home and delay any services for which the parent and/or children are in or in need of. The risk of injury statute already triggers the involvement of the Department of Children and Families. If a mandatory minimum period of incarceration is imposed, more children may need to be in the custody of DCF while the parent is incarcerated.

For these reasons the Office of Chief Public Defender respectfully requests that this Committee not take action on this bill. .