



# State of Connecticut

## DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

**Office of Chief Public Defender**  
30 Trinity Street, 4th Floor  
Hartford, Connecticut  
(860) 509-6405 Telephone  
(860) 509-6495 Fax

**Christine Perra Rapillo**  
Chief Public Defender  
Christine.Rapillo@jud.ct.gov

### **Testimony of Christine Perra Rapillo, Chief Public Defender Office of Chief Public Defender**

**Judiciary Committee  
March 21, 2018**

#### **Senate Bill 14, An Act Concerning Special Parole for High Risk, Violent and Sexual Offenders**

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports passage of Senate Bill 14, An Act Concerning Special Parole. This bill will ensure that our limited state resources are focused on supervising the individuals who are most likely to pose a risk to public safety. Special parole was designed to provide supervision to individuals reentering society who had served their entire sentence, were not subject to parole or an order of probation and whose history at the time of sentencing indicated a need for community supervision after release. There has been a significant increase in the number of individuals on special parole and data from OPM shows that many of them could be adequately supervised by probation or could finish their sentences and be safely reintegrated home. This proposal will help ensure that special parole is being used as intended by the Legislature.

**Section 1** would require that any the presentence investigation required by C.G.S. Section 54-91a for felony convictions must include an assessment of the individual's history of violations, likelihood of being granted parole prior to the expiration of his or her sentence, risk to public safety upon release and ability to be supervised by the Office of Adult Probation.

**Section 2** would limit special parole to two years except that it would remain at ten years for individuals convicted on enumerated violent or sexual offenses. Data from OPM shows that individuals are being placed on special parole for lengthy time periods for less serious offenses. This results in ongoing supervision that utilizes extensive resource but provides little benefit to the community. Individuals could still be ordered to probation supervision after the period of special parole and the intensive supervision provided by special parole could be focused on those individuals who truly pose a risk.

**Section 3** would extend the current authority of the Board of Pardons and Parole to discharge a worthy individual and grant a pardon to individuals on special parole.

Special parole has become a plea bargaining tool that places people on lengthy supervision in return for a shorter prison sentence. This is not the purpose of the program. The changes proposed will limit its scope to situations where individuals truly need supervision and support in order to safely return home. The Office of Chief Public Defender urges this committee to favorably report on this Bill.