



State of Connecticut

DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

Office of Chief Public Defender
55 Farmington Ave. - 8th Floor
Hartford, Connecticut
(860) 509-6400 Telephone
(860) 509-6495 Fax

Christine Perra Rapillo
Chief Public Defender
Christine.Rapillo@pds.ct.gov

Susan I. Hamilton, MSW, JD
Director of Delinquency Defense and Child Protection
Susan.Hamilton@pds.ct.gov

Testimony of Susan I. Hamilton, MSW, JD
Director of Delinquency Defense and Child Protection
Office of Chief Public Defender

Judiciary Committee - March 14, 2022
Governor's Bill No. 16

An Act Addressing Gun Violence and Juvenile Crime

Mission Statement of the Division of Public Defender Services

Striving to ensure justice and a fair and unbiased system, the Connecticut Division of Public Defender Services zealously promotes and protects the rights, liberty and dignity of all clients entrusted to us. We are committed to holistic representation that recognizes clients as individuals, fosters trust and prevents unnecessary and wrongful convictions.

The Office of Chief Public Defender (OCPD) **opposes** certain sections of **Bill No. 16 - An Act Addressing Gun Violence and Juvenile Crime** as currently written, including Sections 31 and 32. **Section 31** would expand the list of offenses included in the definition of "serious juvenile offense" to include certain motor vehicle violations and theft. While perhaps unintended, this would preclude a child from participating in certain diversion programs aimed specifically at addressing motor vehicle offenses.

More specifically, PA19-110 created a suspension of prosecution program to allow children charged with motor vehicle offenses to participate in services to address this behavior under the supervision of probation. A program was designed to specifically target the risks and needs of children engaging in this behavior, and the outcomes from that program have been promising, particularly in reducing recidivism. However, children charged with a serious juvenile offense are ineligible for that program. In addition, this expansion would impact the child's ability to have their juvenile record erased in the future and would preclude the child from being considered a youthful offender in adult court.

March 14, 2022

Testimony of Susan I. Hamilton, MSW, JD

Section 32 would *require* the court to order electronic monitoring under certain circumstances as part of a suspended detention order. Under existing law, the court already has the authority to issue electronic monitoring under these circumstances and should retain the discretion to order this and any other individualized sanctions based on the unique needs of each case.

The Office of Chief Public Defender requests that the Committee take no action on these proposals.